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# Shifting Course: Drawing on Feminist Principles to Inform Community-Engaged Teaching in Uncertain Times

Amie Thurber, Sarah Suiter, and Susan Halverson

**Abstract:** This autoethnographic case study explores teaching community-engaged courses during the onset of COVID-19. As educators who teach applied program evaluation courses at two universities, we consider how principles of feminist community engagement—relationality, border crossing, reflexivity, and disruptive pedagogy (Iverson & James, 2014)—ground our courses. Drawing from instructor reflections, interviews with community partners, students’ written reflections, and course evaluations, we explore how these principles informed our pedagogical response to teaching through the tumultuous spring of 2020, and the degree to which these practices enabled the continued participation of students and community partners. We close with implications for community-engaged teaching in these—and all—times.

**Keywords:** community-engaged teaching, pedagogy, feminism, evaluation

## Introduction

After weeks of slow-building uncertainty as to if, when, and how COVID-19 would reach our communities, in-person instruction at many universities ceased with startling abruptness. In the spring of 2020, like thousands of our colleagues around the world, we found ourselves scrambling to move our in-person courses to an online, remote learning format within days, as we and everyone we knew stocked our homes ahead of stay-at-home orders; studied the rapidly emerging and shifting science of the disease; and juggled our particular constellations of children at home, laid-off family members, fears for vulnerable loved ones, and an overlying sense of dread. We waded through the flood of emails from our respective institutions detailing changing protocols and the flurry of academic blog posts and opinion articles circulating with instructional resources and online teaching tips. While many of the tools were invaluable (particularly to those of us new to remote and online teaching), most seemed to reduce the difficulties of the moment to technical challenge, minimizing the human impacts of teaching in a pandemic for educators and learners alike. Moreover, none provided a road map for our courses, which engaged both students and human service professionals in co-learning program evaluation.

As hundreds of thousands of residents of our states lost their jobs and faced threats of eviction and a public health crisis, could we—and *should* we—continue to ask some of the very community leaders charged with meeting the needs of vulnerable populations to participate in this course? As our students navigated unprecedented anxieties, fears, and disruptions, could we adequately support them in a demanding graduate experience that requires high levels of professionalism and initiative? How could we move forward in ways that were responsive and relevant to the needs of the community and to our students? To answer these questions, we turned to one another, as touchstones and sounding boards, and grounded in feminist principles to infuse our community-engaged teaching with concern for the human impacts of the pandemic.

## **Feminist Approaches to Community-Engaged Teaching**

As there is no singular feminism (Olesen, 2005), there is no uniform method of feminist community-engaged teaching (Dean et al., 2019). However, in their introduction to *Feminist Community Engagement: Achieving Praxis*, editors Iverson and James (2014) identify four themes to the book that may serve as anchoring principles of feminist community engagement: relationality, border crossing, reflexivity, and disruptive pedagogy. As explored below, these principles can serve to address tensions and limitations in traditional approaches to community-engaged teaching.

### **Centering Relationality**

Courses that incorporate service to the community have been criticized for reinscribing problematic binaries of those who need help/who can help and deepening the othering and essentializing of communities that have long been marginalized (Bickford & Reynolds, 2002; Hui, 2009). Feminist approaches reject forms of community engagement that presuppose transactional relationships between those who are seen as needing help and those who are seen as helpers, and instead move toward relationships of reciprocity and accountability (Sheridan & Jacobi, 2014). Such relationships reflect an ethic of care (Held, 2006) where all parties of a helping interaction are both carers and cared-for and expect to be changed in the process (Meagher, 2004). In the context of community-engaged teaching and learning, attention to relationality requires students to hone the ethical and interpersonal skills needed to work in collaboration and in community (Warren et al., 2016). A commitment to relationality also involves structuring community-engaged projects to be dually accountable and responsive to both community partners' needs, timelines, and expectations (Thurber & Suiter, 2019) and students' learning goals—infusing a spirit of reciprocity to the work (Twill et al., 2011).

### **Encouraging Border Crossing**

Community-engaged teaching generally takes the form of a traditional academic course (and the requisite set of readings, assignments, and in-person instruction) augmented by student activities in the community. These activities are often framed as community service and occur on-site at a local organization. Feminist approaches to community engagement encourage border crossing by challenging the often-assumed boundaries that constrain where community engagement can occur, the forms of that engagement, and the roles played by community members, students, and instructors (Iverson & James, 2014). Whereas traditional community-engaged teaching imagines learning in the classroom and service in the community, feminist approaches integrate learning and community engagement in both academic and community spaces (Dean et al., 2019). Such approaches emphasize the multiple roles students, educators, and community members occupy, including those of learner, consultant, expert, and facilitator.

## **Integrating Reflexivity**

Though the integration of action with reflection is posited as the defining characteristic of service learning (Twill et al., 2011), traditional service learning courses often offer insufficient opportunities for critical reflection, obscuring structural causes of inequality with a focus on meeting individual needs (Bickford & Reynolds, 2002; Hui, 2009). Feminist approaches to community engagement integrate reflexive practices. Social work scholar Jan Fook (2015) describes reflexivity as a process of critical reflection that “helps us make specific connections between ourselves as individuals and our broader social, cultural and structural environment” (p. 444). In reflecting on their preparation of community-engaged researchers, Warren et al. (2016) note: “Learning to narrate the stories of self—stories that articulate the deeply embedded values that shape our identities and purpose as researchers—is no easy feat” (p. 252). As Warren et al. (2016) conclude, such narration requires “being willing to be vulnerable to each other and to community partners in a way that is seldom taught” (p. 253). Like a muscle, reflexivity must be practiced so it can be strengthened; instructors can facilitate such development through formalized reflective processes as suggested by Fook, 2015, in-class writing, and discussion prompts.

## **Utilizing Disruptive Pedagogy**

The structure and products of engagement can easily privilege the learning goals of the academy over the needs of the community (Sheridan & Jacobi, 2014; Stoecker et al., 2009). Feminist community engagement is pedagogically disruptive in that it unsettles traditional norms related to the purposes, processes, and forms of community-engaged teaching. As Iverson and James (2014) suggest, “community engagement must move beyond its charitable orientation to instead cultivate activist-oriented attitudes, knowledge, and skills” (p. 6). As such, an activist orientation reflects both a critical analysis of the root causes of social problems and a commitment to meaningful participation within social change efforts. Such an approach is attentive to the manifestations of power within society and the academy, and explicitly works to build power within social justice movements (Bisignani, 2014). Pedagogically disruptive approaches may inform the choice of community partnerships (for example, instructors may intentionally seek to collaborate with, and in doing so build the capacity of, organizations with a strong equity orientation) as well as the approach to teaching. Instructors encourage students to look to the community—in addition to the classroom—for expertise, and to evaluate the quality and significance of their contributions to their community partner—in addition to any work completed for class.

Importantly, adopting these principles of feminist community engagement—an emphasis on relationality, border crossing, reflexivity, and disruptive pedagogy—does not ensure that community-engaged teaching/learning will be just, that outcomes will be meaningful or relevant, or that the work will be uncomplicated by the thorny interplays of power and privilege. As noted by Bergman and Montgomery (2017), “trust and responsibility are not guarantees that things will go well or that oppression and violence will not happen” (p. 163). Rather, these principles serve

as an invitation to engage in community-engaged teaching and learning that actively grapples with these complexities as part of our responsibility to ourselves, one another, and those with whom we seek to partner. As feminist educators who teach applied program evaluation courses at two universities, we take up that invitation to reflect on how these principles are reflected in our course designs as well as in our pedagogical response to teaching through the tumultuous spring of 2020.

### **Context and Methods**

This study centers on two community-engaged graduate courses in program evaluation taught at two universities while our communities were reeling from the effects of COVID-19, as well as nationwide uprisings following the Minneapolis police murder of George Floyd. Given that the courses required—and sustained—a high level of investment from both students and community partners, our interest is in tracing the principles and practices that enabled this participation. The two courses use a shared design that brings representatives from four to seven local community organizations into a graduate-level course. Community partners that desire to build their program evaluation capacity apply to participate in the course; those that are selected attend at no cost. Through the course, community partners and students learn the principles of evaluation design and apply these principles in real time to meet organizational needs. Community partners have access to all course materials, though they are not expected to complete readings. Each week, students are assigned course content related to an aspect of evaluation design. In class, the instructor provides a brief synthesizing lecture to prepare students and their community partners to apply the week's content to their project. The majority of the class time is reserved for students to work in project-based teams with their organizational partner. Over the course of the term, each team develops a comprehensive evaluation plan for later implementation within the partner organization. The final plans include an evaluation rationale and design, a program logic model, a sampling plan, data collection tools and timelines, and plans for data analysis and dissemination (for a more comprehensive description of the course and outcomes, see Suiter et al., 2016).

Sarah Suiter developed the course at Vanderbilt University and has refined the 16-week curriculum over several years. In 2016, Amie Thurber served as a TA in the course. Following her move to Portland State University (PSU), Amie modified the curriculum to accommodate an 11-week quarter. In spring of 2020, Sarah taught the course for the seventh time at Vanderbilt with a class of 20 students and five community partners, and Amie, assisted by teaching assistant Susan Halverson, piloted the course at PSU with a smaller class of 12 students and four community partners. In mid-March, the pandemic brought in-person instruction to an end at both institutions. At the time, Sarah was halfway through the term, and Amie's quarter was two weeks from beginning. As such, though the authors, students, and community partners were similarly impacted by the spread of COVID-19, the effects on the teaching-learning experience varied. This differential impact was heightened by differences in the student populations. Though both courses enroll graduate students seeking careers in social welfare and social

change, Amie's students were more likely to be precariously housed, have increased at-home care responsibilities, and be otherwise directly affected by the pandemic.

Blending a multi-case study and autoethnographic approach (Ellis & Adams, 2014; Simons, 2014), this paper explores the practices that enabled students and community partners to continue engagement during a pandemic and considers the transferability of these practices to future teaching conditions. Instructor reflections serve as the primary data for this analysis, complemented by interviews with community partners and student written reflections and course evaluations. Collaborative reflection was ongoing as Amie and Sarah spoke before, during, and following the spring term about our respective plans, modifications, difficulties, and successes, and Amie and Susan worked closely together over the course of our 11-week term. To deepen our analysis, Amie and Sarah completed written reflections of our teaching experiences, which we later analyzed in a recorded and transcribed session in order to surface through-lines and points of distinction. In addition, Susan completed reflective interviews with community partners in the PSU course, and analyzed these transcripts, along with student course evaluations from both courses, looking for complementary and contrasting themes.

## **Reflections**

Using the four principles of feminist community engagement as an organizing heuristic, this paper presents findings from our analysis. We consider how relationality, border crossing, reflexivity, and disruptive pedagogy are built into the course design, and how we leveraged these principles to adapt the courses and our instruction in the context of the pandemic.

### **Heightened Relationality**

Given that both courses are designed to engage students in an applied team-based project with a community partner, the courses require multiple layers of relational accountability for both students and instructors. Ideally, students endeavor to meet the evaluation needs of their community partner, while also tending to their individual learning goals, the goals and needs of their peers, and the course requirements. The instructors balance responsibility to students and community partners, working to support the learning needs of students while also ensuring accountability to community partners who expect to gain increased evaluation capacity and an actionable evaluation plan. The pandemic heightened the relational aspects of the course.

Sarah's course was well underway when the university moved to remote instruction, and Nashville was still recovering from a recent tornado. She recalls her student's concern about the strains these placed on their community partners: "Students felt a lot of anxiety around, okay, we just had this tornado, and now we have COVID, and nobody knows what's going on in the world, and...does this organization still need an evaluation plan?" Across the country, Amie was wondering the same thing as her class was two weeks from beginning. She reached out to each partner to reassess their capacity to participate in the course. In both contexts, all community partners recommitted to their participation. As Sarah reflects, "We did have that conversation

about, like, is this the best thing for your organization right now? We gave people that out, and people said, ‘No, we need this. Now, more than ever.’” For these partners, the pandemic underscored the critical importance of understanding the impacts and limitations of their work so as to better advocate for additional support and to more clearly discern where to invest existing resources. Yet, reassessing capacity and recognizing that partner needs may have changed since the initial course application was an important and appreciated expression of relational accountability.

In Amie’s course, it was equally important to also reassess the student’s shifting capacity and needs. Before the term began, Amie sent students a brief survey regarding their access to a computer, reliable internet, a workspace, and to also identify other basic needs (food, shelter, medical, and mental health care). A quarter of the students expressed concern about being able to participate without disruption (primarily as a result of increased care responsibilities toward children and siblings). Several identified technology and connectivity limitations, and others raised concerns about meeting their basic needs. In completing the survey, a number of students expressed appreciation for this attention to their wellbeing, saying things like, “I sincerely appreciate you offering this question. I might need this resource in the future.” As appropriate, Amie referred students to resources and, once in class, worked to normalize the complexity of the shift to remote teaching, learning, and working along with the increased stress caused by the pandemic.

### **Navigating New Border Crossings**

The applied evaluation courses are designed to encourage border crossing. Unlike traditional service learning courses in which students go out of the classroom to engage the community, this course brings community members into the course. The course challenges binaries between the classroom and community, academic and applied work, students and teachers, novices and professionals. This disruption is intentional, and it is an important part of the graduate students’ professional socialization. Students move from seeing themselves primarily as learners to applying their skills and knowledge and building an emerging professional identity (Weidman et al., 2001).

Simultaneously, there are clearly defined roles that support the overall success of the course: Each community partner’s expertise is needed to ground the evaluation to the organization’s needs; student’s engagement with the course content is needed to develop a robust evaluation design; and the instructor’s teaching and consultation is needed to ensure that all understand and can apply the guiding principles of evaluation design (American Evaluation Association, 2018).

The onset of COVID-19 pushed the border crossing dimensions of this course in new directions. Our professional interactions immediately became more personal as students, community partners, and instructors logged into class from their home spaces, with children, pets, siblings, and roommates moving in and out of earshot and view. These intimacies were at turns endearing and embarrassing, highlighting unexpected similarities and stark differences. Some logged into

class from spacious home offices and others from closets; some never had to worry about connectivity and others were constantly freezing on screen or kicked out of the video call. Amie recalls readmitting one student to Zoom to rejoin her team multiple times in a single class. The fifth time, the student appeared on screen flushed and teary-eyed, exasperated and also embarrassed, concerned that the constant technological challenges reflected poorly on her as an emerging professional.

The challenges of shifting to remote teaching and learning were not just technical. Sarah recalls how the shift altered the ways she takes in information about the students in the class as a whole while focusing attention on individual groups. Key features of course instruction such as pacing group work, noticing student frustration, and responding when groups get stuck suddenly required new cues as exemplified in Sarah's experience:

One thing that I found the hardest about teaching online that I had never paid attention to before, is how much information I take in that is mostly unrelated to what people are saying—so noise level, you know, posture... energy...the things that are taken in intuitively.

Amie remembers a time when a student suddenly turned off their video in the midst of a somewhat heated conversation with their small group and community partner. At the time, Amie felt unsure how to interpret that decision without additional context: "Like, was it because something's happening in your house, or are you reacting to something that was said? ...And it's so hard to know what to do." While it is important for students to develop the professional skill of staying engaged in and working through difficult conversations, Amie realized, "I know this person also is sharing a house with three siblings and there's like, all these other things going on in the space, and she absolutely has the right to do that."

The increased stress of these new border crossings—struggling with new technologies, working from home while balancing care responsibilities—impeded some students' ability to cross other borders. Amie reflects, "I think it made it harder for students to feel like being risk-takers and lean into the discomfort, to embrace some of that discomfort of like, stepping out of being a student into being an emerging professional." While encouraging students to step into independent professional practice and view the instructor as a colleague and consultant, students demonstrated—through frequent emails, texts, and requests that the instructor join their team meetings—an increased reliance on the familiar role of instructor to provide reassurance that their work was progressing as expected.

Community partners also reported struggling with some of the same challenges experienced by students: boundaries between their work and home lives and between their work and class responsibilities. One community partner noted that their focus may have been greater had we met in the classroom: "I found it a bit harder to concentrate on, like, a lecture as well...when I'm in my living room. It's harder" (personal communication, August 19, 2020). Another community

partner reflected on the challenges of managing concurrent expectations of her agency work and her engagement in the course:

I felt the most distracted during Amie's lectures, even though I found them all to be valuable. There were times that I was like, I actually have to respond to this email. It's more important than me absorbing this. It's hard to say, because I found it all valuable, um, but based on the hierarchy of needs, considering the pandemic, there were times that I was like, I actually have to pay attention to this right now. (personal communication, July 29, 2020)

Simultaneously, community partners found that holding sessions remotely allowed for greater accessibility. Every community partner interviewed reported that participation was easier without having to deal with transportation. One community partner said, "not having to commute to [campus] and park was really nice" (personal communication, July 13, 2020). Another community partner, who holds both a full-time job and leads another organization, expressed appreciation for the time-saving benefits of remote instruction. In addition to being able to schedule other meetings immediately before and after class, he recalled several times when he attended class late due to scheduling conflicts, which, had the class met in person, would have forced him to miss a full session.

### **Deepened Reflexivity**

The courses are designed to engage students in ongoing practices of reflexivity, which link reflection and action related to the skills requisite to program evaluation. As students practice the "soft skills" of collaborative and consulting work each week, instructors encourage reflexivity through assigned self and peer reflections on the competencies needed to work effectively in groups. As students apply the "hard" or technical skills of evaluation design, instructors facilitate small and large group discussions regarding the ethical and practice challenges of the field. The pandemic expanded the range of topics about which both students and partners wanted and needed to be reflexive. As Sarah reflects:

Whereas the conversations would have started with, "okay, what progress have you made on this in the last week...What did you learn from the reading," you know, it was more things like, "How are you doing? Are you holding things together today?" And so it sort of had to start at a more basic place, but also potentially a more important place.

Amie also worked to intentionally integrate more holistic reflexivity into the curriculum, turning the first thirty minutes of class into an optional time for peer support, without the community partners present. Students were invited to take turns sharing with and listening to one another in small groups, reflecting on any stresses or successes that surfaced that day. Students frequently commented that this time helped them feel more grounded and ready to engage in class, and also more attuned to their peers. As one student reflected in their course evaluation, "It helped me

build compassion to hear how [my teammates] were both struggling and talk openly about what each person was capable of bringing to the table and what additional supports everyone needed.”

The importance of reflexivity was also highlighted for the instructors during this time. The loss of visual and auditory cues typically available in-person made it all the more important to critically reflect on where students and community partners seemed to be learning and struggling, to engage in more frequent checks for understanding, and to process difficulties with colleagues. Amie recalls the value of having a TA, even in a small course, to help circulate between team breakout groups and debrief observations: “Those conversations really helped me to see that there were additional needs that, had I not had the chance to debrief each week, I don’t know that I would have been aware of...I would have just sort of marched ahead with what I saw.”

In retrospect, we realize that the spaces for reflexivity—such as assigned written reflections and peer support spaces, and weekly debriefs between instructor and TA—were designed primarily for students and instructors. We did not consider the potential value of reflexive activities for community partners. This may have been useful in processing their own experiences, and, if integrated with students, offered helpful insights in how both students and community partners were experiencing and navigating this particularly challenging time.

### **Strategically Disruptive Pedagogy**

The courses embody disruptive pedagogy in a number of ways. Instructors recruit community partners who are engaged in local social justice work, and the primary course deliverable—a tailored evaluation plan—is designed to be highly relevant to and actionable for these organizations. The community partners serve as experts regarding the needs of their community and organization, while the students and instructors commit to helping the partners effectively assess and communicate the impact of their work. The course is strongly scaffolded by curriculum and in-class activities that support students through each stage of crafting an evaluation plan. At the same time, the course requires a high level of initiative within each group, enabling students to “practice” being professional consultants to their partner.

The upheaval caused by the pandemic caused instructors to reassess what content and assignments were most relevant to students and community partners. For example, in the first week of online classes, Sarah decided to drop an assigned paper on cost analysis: “It’s something that I want students to be familiar with, but it’s also unlikely that they’re going to do cost studies...that’s just outside of the skill set of most people.” Mindful of the increased stress students were experiencing, instructors made real-time adjustments to readings and assignments to both lighten the load and preserve the most critical aspects of the course.

Attempts to reduce student stress also resulted in pedagogical shifts. Amie quickly realized that her students needed more support than anticipated with the process of writing an evaluation plan. The TA migrated the evaluation plan components outlined in the assignment description into a

Google Doc template for each team. As teams worked through sections of the template (for example, completing a logic model for the program under evaluation one week and outlining the evaluation goals and design another), they invited the instructor to provide feedback on their work. Amie recalls how this transformed relationships and learning in the course:

The biggest shift is I really became a member of each team...I was like, commenting, adding, you know, editing, making recommendations, much more so than I would be generally. And yet I think in the end, students felt very proud of the work they'd done, and felt like it was their own, and like they got to see a version of their work that was more polished than they'd ever seen before. I hadn't planned on providing that level of engagement, but it was like disrupting the assumption that they have to do it themselves.

While it is atypical for an instructor to be a co-author on students' assignments, in the context of the applied evaluation course, this level of collaboration was an important form of professional mentoring. Moreover, it modeled the continued collaboration and learning that practitioners can expect in the field: We learn from one another and make each other's work better. As reflected in this evaluation comment, students appreciated this hands-on approach:

I liked that we had the opportunity to continuously ask questions and seek support because the majority of us were learning to engage in this content for the first time as consultors. [The instructor] did a great job at supporting every group...and would even meet with us on Saturdays to go over the evaluation plan and make edits where needed.

In this case, the instructor's engagement in the writing process also ensured that community partners received a robust, well-written evaluation plan.

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, students and community partners overwhelmingly expressed high levels of appreciation for their experiences in the course. One student wrote in their course evaluation, "I had no idea that I was going to literally fall in love with evaluation and make a commitment to use evaluative processes in all of my work going forward." A community partner reported, "I really felt like having that evaluation designed for us was, it was like a Christmas gift or something. It was so awesome that we had these students." When asked what they would say to a potential community partner regarding the class, all of the partners said that they would encourage others to participate.

## **Discussion**

Teaching a course rooted in feminist principles of community engagement during the onset of a global pandemic underscored the function and value of feminist modes of engagement, in these and all times. Although attention to relationality, border crossing, reflexivity, and a commitment to utilizing a disruptive pedagogy were already reflected in our course design, when the

COVID-19 pandemic forced the transition to remote instruction, these principles helped instructors further adapt the courses to support the continued engagement of students and community partners, and also to notice where meaningful engagement was challenged.

Attention to the emerging and shifting needs of students and community partners during this particular crisis underscored the importance of relationality and engaging all participants in continually reassessing what is needed for the partnership to be successful. We are reminded that the heart of community-engaged teaching is an ethic of care (Held, 2006) for students and community partners, anchored in a spirit of reciprocity. Navigating new technologies that were unevenly accessible within our learning communities, and the intimacies of “working together” while surrounded by the sights and sounds of our home-spaces, encouraged us to reimagine and expand our awareness of the border crossings inherent in community-engaged teaching. It also left unanswered questions about how to bridge the gaps created in the absence of in-person social cues and interaction, and how best to develop professional communication and collaboration skills in online spaces. As students and community partners grappled with personal challenges through the pandemic, we witnessed the critical value of spaces for reflexivity, and the difficulties in expressing vulnerabilities with one another, alongside gaining technical knowledge and skills. Teaching through the pandemic pushed us to recommit to a disruptive pedagogy through reassessing both content and teaching practices in order to reduce student stress and support development, while preserving the integrity of the course goals.

There is no doubt that things were lost in the switch to remote instruction; we missed the opportunities to build relationships with students and community partners through informal interactions before and after class, the feeling of being in a room buzzing with generative energy, and the ability to monitor and interact with multiple groups in real time. Though students and community partners agreed that the course was a success, most would concede that the amount of learning was diluted by the stress of the time and the switch to online teaching and learning. Yet, alongside these losses, many of the adaptations and accommodations made in the context of the pandemic also produced gains in accessibility for community partners, and more fully supported student learning. As a result, this case study offers a number of implications for this and other community-engaged courses, when such accommodations may be optional rather than required.

First, while designed as an in-person class, our experience demonstrated that these courses can be modified to a fully remote environment and still provide a robust graduate experience and be of value to community partners. As noted, this has particular implications for community partners. The option to participate in the class remotely may increase accessibility to local partners concerned about the impact of travel time, and enable the participation of partners in distant locations, or those who do not feel comfortable coming to campus. The possibilities of remote instruction raise a number of additional questions for instructors: Could we invite partners to participate remotely, even if students are meeting in person? Could the class also work as an online course, with some synchronous group activity? There are certainly logistical difficulties to think through and, given that we will be experimenting with both these approaches

in the months ahead, we will continue to consider how we can reimagine the course design while preserving the desired learning objectives and outcomes for students and community partners alike.

Second, while the course design initially called for student's primary written work—the final evaluation plan for their partner agency—to be completed in teams and evaluated by the instructor, we see great potential in a mentoring model of student writing. This approach may have particular relevance in courses meant to bridge emerging practitioners from their role as students into practice. Given the increased time required to support and scaffold students in both learning program evaluation and gaining competence in technical writing, we find great value in having a TA in the course. We also wonder about the possibility of distributing the mentoring load by cross-listing the course in PhD programs and assigning a doctoral student (or students) to each group. These students can simultaneously increase their own program evaluation competence while learning to mentor others in acquiring and applying these skills.

Ultimately, we are reminded that despite our own desire for structure in uncertain times, feminist principles of community engagement are best reflected in emergent practices rather than fixed protocols. At the beginning of the pandemic—and even in other, less extreme, uncertain territories—it was, and is, natural to want a map to help us navigate. Maps let us know where we are, where we are going, and the various routes that might help us arrive. Maps also require a known (to someone) and documented terrain, which was not presented this spring. We needed a different tool to help us navigate, and found in the feminist principles of relationality, border crossing, reflexivity, and disruptive pedagogy a *compass*—adept at guiding us in anchoring directions even when the path from here to there was uncharted.

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