Editor’s Message: Focusing on the Scholarship of Community Engagement

Sheri Spaine Long

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The Scholarship of Community Engagement: Advancing Partnerships in Spanish and Portuguese

Josef Hellebrandt & Ethel Jorge

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Editor’s Message:
Focusing on the Scholarship of Community Engagement

Welcome to our Special Focus Issue on “The Scholarship of Community Engagement.” Foreign language learning has undergone a notable transition from an elite pursuit to one that is actively linked to real-world activities. Therefore, our approaches to language learning have changed significantly over the last several decades from instructor-centered to learner-centered, and we are becoming more and more community focused. Language instructors of all levels have reconsidered many practices. The benefit of emphasizing community engagement is irrefutable because it provides linguistic relevance and cultural context.

The AATSP Executive Council and the Hispania Editorial Board agreed that this topic is of timely interest to our membership and readership and the academic/teaching community at large. Besides this Special Issue, the AATSP recently approved its first Special Interest Group to provide a discussion forum on the topic of the Scholarship of Community Engagement. This publication, therefore, is only the beginning of a continuing scholarly conversation hosted by the AATSP.

I am proud that this issue contributes significantly to the body of knowledge—both in theory and practice—about the Scholarship of Community Engagement. Definitions of community engagement in language education are present. Included are qualitative and quantitative research and case studies. Over the last two years, I have had the distinct pleasure of collaborating with several leading experts in our discipline, including Dr. Josef Hellebrandt and Dr. Ethel Jorge (see bios on the following page), who served as our Guest Editors. They did a stellar job shaping the issue. I thank them for reading, editing, and exchanging ideas about this important topic to develop the volume conceptually. I experienced the breadth and depth of their knowledge and steadfast work ethic. I invite you to read the words of our Guest Editors in “The Scholarship of Community Engagement: Advancing Partnerships in Spanish and Portuguese,” where they describe the articles and share their observations about the development of the Scholarship of Community Engagement in the context of Spanish and Portuguese studies.

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The Scholarship of Community Engagement: 
Advancing Partnerships in Spanish and Portuguese

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This Special Focus Issue of *Hispania* on “The Scholarship of Community Engagement” is both a celebration and an opportunity to reflect on our practices and accomplishments. We can be justifiably proud of how far we have come since Edward Zlotkowski, former senior scholar at the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE), challenged us in 1999 to consider incorporating community partnerships into our language teaching. A membership survey in April 2012 conducted by the authors and facilitated by the AATSP indicates that there is a discrepancy between the way we think languages should be taught and the way they are currently being taught. Eight hundred five people (representing approximately 10% of the AATSP membership) responded to the survey. Of those, 75% said that some form of community engagement (CE) should be an important component of language teaching, but only 55% actually incorporated CE or service-learning (SL) experiences into their classes. Thus, in addition to celebrating our significant achievements to date, this volume is designed to encourage and assist more of our members to bring their classrooms and communities closer together, while also attempting to contribute to current discussions about the state of language teaching in the United States and beyond and to advance the scholarship of community engagement. The contributions that are part of this Special Focus Issue offer examples of diverse practices and portray our collective efforts to explore community-based and SL approaches to language education, to meet some of the challenges of our times, and to participate in the general discussion about language instruction at the national level. It is our hope that there will be useful information here for faculty who are experienced in community-engaged teaching and learning as well as those who are considering these approaches for the first time.

There have been numerous articles published about CE in many disciplines, and an emerging presence in languages other than Spanish, such as French (Thomas 2005), German (Mueller 2007), and Japanese (Heuser 1999). This volume is an attempt to take the current pulse of CE and SL in language teaching in relation to the following topics: an overview of the state of thinking at the programmatic level, the role of language learning and CE as part of the humanities tradition, the diversity of CE models applied to teacher education programs, heritage speakers, national and transnational/international programs, translation, and course design. We hope the articles will spur discussions around models and practices of SL and the scholarship of community engagement.

1. Context

Although the philosophical roots of CE can be traced to John Dewey and Paulo Freire, we start our timeline in 1985 with the creation of Campus Compact, which now represents...
“a national coalition of almost 1,200 college and university presidents—representing some 6 million students—who are committed to fulfilling the civic purposes of higher education” (Campus Compact). Then, in 1994, the Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning began publishing research, theory, and pedagogy articles related to academic SL in general. In 1996, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) presented its Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century with the strategic goal standards we refer to commonly as the “five C’s,” one of which is “Communities,” bringing the language curriculum in line with earlier attempts to incorporate CE into other disciplinary areas. Almost universally agreed upon as the most difficult to address, this fifth “C” lays out two objectives. The first (5.1) says students should “use the language both within and beyond the school setting,” and the second (5.2) says they should “show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.” The ACTFL standards have provided crucial guidelines for language professionals for the past couple of decades. Although the “five C” areas (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities) are interconnected, it is the fifth’s emphasis on students’ “participation in multilingual communities at home and around the world” that is the focus of this issue.

These standards provide a common base for revisiting our vision of language teaching and learning, and this compilation of articles is a part of our collective efforts to find ways to implement, reflect on, challenge, and improve upon the standards. Our colleagues provide clear contributions regarding the diversity of methods and models by which CE can occur, within diverse sociocultural situations, placing language learning in the context of social interactions and bridging theory and practice. In fact, some of the articles deal with the very contemporary issue related to working with communities that are not territorially bound. New technologies and the national and transnational fluidity in communications have facilitated virtual CE. Darhower (2008) makes the point that there should be an objective 5.3 that would read: “Students engage in intercultural communication in the target language by becoming active participants in a community of speakers of the language” (96; emphasis original), and he refers not only to a territorially bound community but a virtual one as well.

A significant milestone was reached at the AATSP Annual Conference in Denver in 1999, where keynote speaker Edward Zlotkowski challenged us to think about our work in light of the new standards. With the support of Zlotkowski and the AATSP, CE achieved a disciplinary academic presence with the publishing of an AAHE volume (Hellebrandt and Varona 1999), the securing of a Campus Compact disciplinary grant, and the funding of two SL conferences. And, in November 2012, with the support of Executive Director Emily Spinelli, the Executive Council of the AATSP voted to approve CE as the association’s first Special Interest Group (SIG). With these moves, CE has gained significant organizational recognition within the AATSP.

Other parallel threads can be traced through the Modern Language Association (MLA) reports “Foreign Language and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World” (2007) and “Report to the Teagel Foundation on the Undergraduate Major in Language and Literature” (2009), which address important issues regarding the need for curricular reform and the future of language teaching in our increasingly interdependent world. Unfortunately, both of those documents fail to recommend community-based learning as an important language class component (Jorge 2010). Clearly, there is still some political work to be done. Another significant step forward resulted from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching’s reexamination of its classification system in 2006; it created a new elective category that gave national recognition to seventy-six US colleges and universities classified as “engaged institutions” (Driscoll 2008).

Recent scholarship is advancing research on the standards. It analyzes the outcomes of Spanish community SL regarding the Connections goal area (Abbott and Lear 2010), makes the point that we need to conceptualize learners’ outcomes with regard to all of the five C’s in
order to advance the implementation of the goals (Troyan 2012), and examines study abroad in relation to the Communities standard (Allen and Dupuy 2013). Some authors refer to the fifth Communities standard as the “lost C” (e.g., Allen 2010; Cutshall 2012) because many language instructors ignore it since they encounter difficulties in assessing the standard and incorporating it in their curricula. In their report “A Decade of Foreign Language Standards” (2011), Phillips and Abbott also conclude that “Communities” is one of the standards that faculty find “nebulous, out of their control, and not assessable” (11). However, in sharp contrast to faculty, students value the Communities standard goal the most and they view it as reflecting their own goals (Magnan et al. 2012). All the authors recognize the perception that the Communities standard is more challenging to implement, is thought of as extra-curricular, and lacks presence in class curriculum and teacher professional development. But, we believe that in the AATSP that “C” is not lost. In fact, the authors in this volume would argue that the opposite applies, and that, in the case of AATSP, the “fifth C” is enjoying a growing popularity among its members, including conference and workshop presenters.

2. The Scholarship of Community Engagement

Not surprisingly, in light of the current national and disciplinary reform and classification efforts in higher education, the role of scholarship has received renewed attention in the academy generally and within our very own professional association specifically.

The term “scholarship of community engagement” is integrally tied to the work of Ernest Boyer, a former president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. As reflected in two of his publications, Scholarship Reconsidered (1990) and The Scholarship of Engagement (1996), Boyer broadened and reenvisioned scholarly work. Lee Shulman, his successor at the Carnegie Foundation, recalls Boyer expressing the need to “move beyond the tired old ‘teaching versus research’ debate and give the familiar and honorable term ‘scholarship’ a broader, more capacious meaning” to include efforts in the areas of discovery, integration, application, and teaching, and emphasizes that Boyer “sought to bring greater recognition and reward to teaching, suggesting that excellent teaching is marked by the same habits of mind that characterize other types of scholarly work” (149).

Boyer’s reflections on scholarship culminated with his call for a “scholarship of engagement.” For Boyer:

At one level, the scholarship of engagement means connecting the rich resources of the university to the most pressing social, civic, and ethical problems, to our children, to our schools, to our teachers, and to our cities, just to name the ones I am personally in touch with most frequently. . . . [A]t a deeper level, I have this growing conviction that what’s also needed is not just more programs, but a larger purpose, a larger sense of mission, a larger clarity in the direction of the nation’s life as we move toward century twenty-one. (qtd. in Ward 227–28)

As Ward (2005) clarifies, Boyer’s “scholarship of engagement” was not to take the place of traditional research, but instead offer faculty another, different perspective of scholarly work. She argues that “engagement provided a vision, a way to think about the totality of faculty work in ways that connect it with the greater public good” (227).

As faculty became more engaged, one question that gradually surfaced was how to integrate and value their work at the department level. The “Engaged Department Toolkit” published in 2003 by Campus Compact provided an answer. As envisioned by its authors, its purpose was “to help the department develop strategies for including community-based work in its teaching and scholarship, making community-based experiences a standard expectation for majors, and encouraging civic engagement and progressive change at the department level” (Battistoni
et al. 2003). However, for the toolkit to become a valuable resource for building the engaged department, the authors argue, faculty must be willing to share their work and departments must promote collaboration.

Interestingly, already in 1996, as Bringle, Games, and Malloy (1999) inform in their preface to *Colleges and Universities as Citizen*, a few institutions of higher education had been invited by Indiana Campus Compact to explore institutional reform along Boyer’s idea of the engaged campus. Thus, this movement at the institutional level actually preceded the engaged department initiative. And, with the recent introduction of the Carnegie Foundation’s community engagement classification, Boyer’s vision appears to have truly come full circle.

Boyer’s scholarship of community engagement is reflected in the articles in this issue, although we note that only two of the fourteen essays specifically mention his work and vision for scholarship. We also found that twenty of the twenty-one authors and coauthors are affiliated with colleges or universities. This suggests that our K–12 colleagues who were among the 75% of survey respondents who supported the use of CE pedagogies in language teaching are not represented in this focus issue. For CE and the scholarship of community engagement to further grow, involvement of members from all institutional categories must be encouraged and supported.

Throughout this movement, there has been a philosophical discussion about whether SL is solely a pedagogy or also a way to advance the public good and effect social change. Benson, Harkavy, and Hartley (2005) argue that SL is much more than a pedagogy. Their definition of SL includes “collaborative, community-based, community action-oriented, reflective, real-world problem solving designed to develop the knowledge and related practice necessary for an optimally democratic society capable of continually advancing the public good” (190). They argue, therefore, that “the impact of service-learning on student learning should be one component, not the primary focus, of any evaluation of its utility” and that “we should evaluate service-learning by the extent to which it actually advances democracy in our classrooms, communities, and society” (190). They offer the following observation: “[I]ncreased acceptance of service-learning in the disciplines, while important, is not an indication that anything like serious, substantial, significant change in higher education is occurring,” and go on to warn that: “If research on service-learning conceptualizes learning outcomes and acceptance by disciplines as *ends*, rather than as *means* to larger educational and societal ends, the service-learning movement will lose its way and result in the inevitable reduction of service-learning to just another technique, method, or field” (190; emphasis original).

Therefore, this issue on “The Scholarship of Community Engagement” explicitly intends to advance three ancillary goals: 1) inform and encourage partnership efforts from K–16, 2) advance engagement efforts with community partners, and 3) empower/encourage AATSP members at their respective schools and institutions to share their engagement efforts with their colleagues and thus become advocates for school- and institution-wide engagement.

Pickeral (2003) observed that “[p]artnerships between higher education and K–12 are part of the heritage of American education” (174). Following this tradition, AATSP members at colleges and universities have collaborated with education faculty to conduct and write about SL projects in teacher education, but in the majority of cases K–12 faculty do not become authors. Unfortunately, this is also reflected in this special issue. Likewise, there is a similar lack of representation of community partners. Community-engaged faculty generously acknowledge the role of community partners in their engagement efforts, but when it comes to joint authorship only very few examples exist, underscored by the lone coauthor of one article in this special issue.

For CE to be effective across institutional and community boundaries, practitioners must be more inclusive and collaborative, by sharing their scholarly efforts with their departmental and institutional colleagues. This will also further disciplinary efforts to become engaged. Language and culture learning as reflected in the AATSP is becoming an engaged discipline,
and the scholarship of community engagement marks a significant step towards connecting faculty work to the common good.

The scholarship of community engagement is thriving in the AATSP. Over the last twenty years, SL and/or community-engaged activities have become a growing presence in Spanish classes, as seen by the increasing number of presentations at conferences and articles published in *Hispania*. A cursory examination of the programs of the AATSP annual conferences shows that the number of presentations and workshops on topics related to CE has more than doubled in the last ten years—from two in 2001 to eleven in 2010. And, our recent survey showed that there is significant CE activity and interest within our ranks; 75% of the respondents (608/805) said that we should incorporate CE in our classes. As can be seen in Table 1, advanced language classes received the strongest endorsement (a 3.6 average rating on a scale of 1 to 4). Pedagogy courses, intermediate language classes, and linguistics classes came next (3.2), but even literature courses and beginning language classes received strong support (3.0).

### Table 1. Community Engagement by Curricular Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Options</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Rating Average</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning language</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate language</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced language</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature courses</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy courses</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic courses</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please explain below)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, when asked how frequently respondents involve students in CE efforts (Table 2), it seems that more work is needed because the rating averages indicating what we actually do are somewhat lower.

As seen in Table 2, of the types of CE actually employed, volunteerism was the highest (2.5), followed by SL (2.4), and community-based learning (2.1); internships and community-based research were last (1.9).

In other findings, short-term programs (10–15 weeks) were preferred over long-term programs (longer than one semester) (with respective rating averages of 2.7 versus 2.3), and US-based programs were more prominent than international ones (with rating averages of 2.4 and 2.0).
Table 2. Frequency of CE Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Rating Average</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service-learning</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-based learning</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-based research</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internships</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteerism</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please explain below)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We also asked why AATSP members involve the community in their engagement efforts (Table 3). What encourages us immensely is that many more people reported that they utilize CE because it is a good way to teach (3.2) than because they receive financial incentives (1.6); we all know that funding is declining.

Table 3. Community Engagement Involvement (Reasons)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Rating Average</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think this is a good way to teach</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I receive encouragement from my Department</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I receive financial rewards for incorporating service-learning</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It allows me to promote community engagement within my professional</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It helps me to pursue scholarly efforts in the area of community engagement</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please explain below)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unfortunately, since there were no submissions, this volume does not have any articles that represent Portuguese, but we are aware of initiatives by the Romance Studies Department at Boston University to include community-based language learning workshops in their teacher training. This is coherent with the fact that New England is a hub for Portuguese-speaking populations from Brazil, Cape Verde, and Portugal. As an outcome of this effort, there will be an intermediate-level, community-based Portuguese course at Tufts University in spring 2013. Also, in 2005, *Hispania* published Jouët-Pastré and Braga’s article “Community-based Learning: A Window into the Portuguese-speaking Communities of New England.” While we did not get much data through the survey we conducted with regard to Portuguese, we have other information that some community-engaged learning in Portuguese is happening in that area of the country, and we hope that this volume will lead to more interest among members of the AATSP.

3. Articles

We open this collection of articles with Barreneche and Ramos-Flores’s “Integrated or Isolated Experiences? Considering the Role of Service-Learning in the Spanish Language Curriculum.” The authors review forty language programs in the United States, and offer a systematic overview of current practices and trends in SL integration. The article also discusses the “Engaged Campus” (a higher education reform initiative spearheaded by Campus Compact), and makes a good case for CE in response to and support of the MLA report. Barreneche and Ramos-Flores bring up important issues that surround the implementation of engaged pedagogy in individual language courses, and also elucidate the contexts and complexities related to attempts to institutionalize SL across the whole Spanish curriculum.

Still looking at the field broadly, Carney’s article, “How Service-Learning in Spanish Speaks to the Crisis in the Humanities,” attempts to show how SL could help address the “crisis” in the humanities. The humanities deal with fundamental questions about the human condition, so it is possible that the type of reflective practices involved in SL could speak to this purpose. The author refers to this crisis as related to the “corporatization” of education and to varying approaches for connecting pedagogy to society (“ivory tower” or not). The author discusses the debate between Fish and Boyer, and how SL can speak to both sides. It is an advantage as well as a challenge trying to teach the utilitarian aspects of languages while also connecting them to other more humanistic goals. This article also brings to the fore the discussion about the purposes of CE—as a “mere” pedagogy for advancing learning goals vs. also as an approach for promoting social change.

3.1 Diversity of CE

The next three articles reveal the diversity of CE as it is carried out in various contexts. The first example of the kind of diversity of engagement that we see is Lear and Sánchez’s article “Sustained Engagement with a Single Community Partner,” which addresses the need for business advisory services among entrepreneurs from a local Hispanic community. The authors used a clear research framework to analyze the stages of relationship development culminating in a sustained partnership, reflecting how transactional or transformational approaches affect the stakeholders. Coauthoring the article, the university professor and the community partner demonstrate not only the importance of the community organization’s role in community service-learning (CSL) partnerships, but also the complexities associated with sustainability, time intensiveness, and appropriate partnership design. In this case, as in other articles in this section, CSL helps Spanish faculty and teachers establish connections to other disciplines, not only within a local university or college setting but through the development of AE (Acción Emprendedora, founded in Chile in 2003) programs across the continent.
“Social Networking, Microlending, and Translation in the Spanish Service-Learning Classroom” by Faszer-McMahon points out the advantages of web-based social networking and a unique matching of needs and course objectives for intermediate-high Spanish SL courses in a geographic area with limited opportunities to interact with Spanish speakers face to face. The non-profit organization, Kiva, provides small loans to micro-entrepreneurs in sixty-one countries (twelve of which are Spanish speaking); they need to translate short biographies of the people requesting the loans. Students in the United States provide translation services from home for the Spanish speakers abroad who need financing; they actually never have to leave their campus/town. Faszer-McMahon explains that this international SL model overcame the limitations of the geographical context, but she also acknowledges that there was no onsite collaboration, personal relationship development, or synchronic face-to-face access to the Spanish speakers. This made it impossible for the SL to be an interactive bidirectional process, in which learners can participate in the translation, for example, going back and forth as if meeting face to face with a client in a company office abroad. The author’s contribution further showcases the role of virtual collaboration and might inspire teachers and students from different institutions to jointly provide translation services for Kiva. This would widen Darhower’s notion of “communities of learners” and further advance his call for an expanded Communities standard.

“Linking Service-Learning Opportunities and Domestic Immersion Experiences in US Latino Communities: A Case Study of the ‘En Nuestra Lengua’ Project” by Tijunelis, Satterfield, and Benkí is a good example of using a community-building approach to provide the service of the university to members of nearby communities. A Spanish-language Saturday school for elementary school heritage learner children is hosted on the grounds of a university. Some of the students doing the SL, who are proficient heritage speakers themselves, serve as lead instructors and role models; other advanced L2 students serve as their assistants. A new kind of community emerged from the organization of parents, children, students, faculty, and facilitators in a program focused on language maintenance and development. The article shows that such a community cannot be simply created through an artificial partnership, but requires patience, as it emerges through the honest and authentic participation of all involved. This process was probably helped by people self-selecting to enroll their children in the school and their shared identity as Spanish speakers, but the coalescence of this emergent community overcame differences of generations, countries of origin, ethnicities, and social classes. That suggests that there are some broader experiences that can be transferred from this program to other community-building projects.

Jovanović and Filipović’s article and Carracelas-Juncal’s article discuss SL in relation to teacher education programs. Teacher education programs’ involvement and partnership with the communities that they serve can increase students’ success while tapping into a wealth of knowledge, resources to support schoolwork, and an understanding of context for their professional practice. By engaging and partnering with stakeholders in the connected social contexts, future teachers gain the ability to reflect critically on their own teaching. True partnerships build support for the professional development of teachers who will, in turn, advocate for the children and families in the surrounding communities. A very interesting example of teacher education in an international setting is Jovanović and Filipović’s article, “Spanish Teacher Education Programs and Community Engagement.” This is an intriguing case study in the complex sociopolitical situation of Serbia, a long way from our usual context of the US/Mexican border. It emphasizes the need to understand specific sociocultural processes, awareness of teachers’ agency, and knowledge about relevant policies and their effects on complex contexts in order to implement viable language education programs. Carracelas-Juncal’s article, “When Service-Learning Is Not a ‘Border-crossing’ Experience: Outcomes of a Graduate Spanish Online Course,” addresses two distinct issues. The first is that an online SL graduate teacher education course can be developed in several different locations. The second is that the participation of native Spanish
speakers highlights SL for students who are actually part of the communities being served. The important issue of border crossing in SL or the lack thereof in the case of heritage learners is a subject that is further developed in the following article.

3.2 Heritage Speakers

Petrov’s article, “A Pilot Study of Service-Learning in a Spanish Heritage Speaker Course: Community Engagement, Identity, and Language in the Chicago Area,” provides a very needed reflection about how ethnicity and social class can change some program outcomes. The author closes the article with a discussion about the role that SL can have if targeted to students of Hispanic heritage. This is a case study of a Spanish course with a SL component for students who are heritage speakers. Most research has focused on white students who gained an awareness of their positionality in society through their SL practice. By focusing on the involvement of heritage speakers in their own Hispanic communities, Petrov shows how ethnicity and social class can bring about other outcomes of SL, as evident in the reflections written by diverse students (on race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, etc.). She offers an important and thought-provoking reflection regarding the benefits of programs dedicated to the academic success of underrepresented minorities. Service-learning can connect the success of minority students with the wellbeing of their own community of origin, so their success is not just personal, but also communal in nature. As the author puts it, “it begs the question of educational success to what end?,” which is perhaps at the core of why we engage with communities after all.

Tacelosky brings another crucial issue to the discussion about heritage speakers—transnational students (generally sons and daughters of returning migrants) who drop out of US schools and move to Mexico. They are not part of the world’s elite of transnational students. This is a growing issue of worldwide magnitude as movements of people across borders in both directions intensify. This “migración de retorno” connects migration and education, where language is a central component. Community-based SL is a way to meet the linguistic needs of transnational students in Mexico. There is quite a complex array of stakeholders in this particular case: the faculty member from the United States who engages in an international SL experience, the transnational students themselves (“los retornados”), the Mexican university willing to implement community-engaged language learning or perhaps SL in a course to meet some of the transnational students’ needs, and the community that is to benefit from the class’s applied research work.

Tacelosky’s article, “Community-based Service-Learning as a Way to Meet the Linguistic Needs of Transnational Students in Mexico,” defies simple categorization as it exemplifies the complexity of the times in which we are living and the central role of language in the migration/education paradigms necessary to foster models for global citizenship. It provides a transition to two other articles that deal with transnational and international contexts, and the fluidity of national boundaries in the construction of this curricular experience.

The article by García, Pierce, and Zambrano, “Programas comunitarios de educación audiovisual como alternativa al aprendizaje-servicio en el extranjero,” matches the needs of Ecuadorian and American youth through an experiential, community-rooted learning program of visual arts. In this community-based learning project, members of different global communities meet and work collaboratively, creating a new community, learning together as they complete a visual/documentary project. This type of collaboration project is an important model for global citizenry education and offers a viable alternative to traditional study abroad programs.

Hartfield-Méndez’s article, “Community-based Learning, Internationalization of the Curriculum, and University Engagement with Latino Communities,” discusses what can be done at the programmatic level. They developed a sequence of SL courses rather than isolated experiences. Also, they point out how other disciplines collaborate in the effort of internationalizing
curricula, with the goal of educating for global citizenship—or new cosmopolitanism—through experiential and service-learning with local Latino communities. This is significant not only because many institutions have not taken this step, but also because it shows that internationalizing the curriculum can take place in addition to—rather than in lieu of—an institution’s engagement efforts.

3.3 Translation

“Translation as a Multilingual and Multicultural Mirror Framed by Service-Learning” by Bugel brings up the potential to serve community needs through translation services and illustrates the important link between translation theory—as it applies to its teaching—and SL. This practice places the students in interactions that provide the socioeconomic, cultural, and political constructs to better understand the choices for translating a specific text, as well as to grasp in depth the role of the translator in today’s society.

3.4 Course Design Basics

Sánchez-López’s article, “Service-Learning Course Design for Languages for Specific Purposes Programs,” addresses not only the growing need of programs for special purposes, but also offers guidelines for curriculum design and assessment. A three-way partnership in designing and creating the course is needed in order to appropriately connect the students’ experiential learning and their areas of special or professional interest within a capstone SL course for language for specific purposes programs.

We end with Ebacher’s article, “Taking Spanish into the Community: A Novice’s Guide to Service-Learning.” It provides a detailed guide for incorporating SL into an upper-division Spanish translation course. The article is an honest and encouraging perspective on the importance of SL in Spanish (but it would also be beneficial for instructors of other languages). The author outlines the essential elements and considerations for designing a successful SL course for the neophytes among us.

4. Conclusion

The articles included in this Special Focus Issue on “The Scholarship of Community Engagement” speak to the breadth, integration, and depth of experiential learning among teachers of Spanish and Portuguese. They reflect the challenges faced by our students in national, transnational, and international contexts, and the spirited, creative, and successful responses and resourcefulness of their teachers.

The range of contributions has also allowed us to reflect on the authors’ efforts in light of our CE membership survey. What we found was inspiring and uplifting, as well as surprising, and presented us with this opportunity not only to take stock of the scholarship of civic engagement in our field, but also to offer recommendations for moving ahead.

We firmly argue that the scholarship of community engagement should be an inclusive and collaborative effort, allowing its stakeholders to share their work in scholarly venues through articles and presentations. Disciplinary associations and their journals play an important role in impacting departments and institutions. Like the AATSP and Hispania, they can:

1. Encourage joint scholarly publications and presentations
2. Recognize CE projects that have built long-term partnerships
3. Highlight efforts by departments/institutions to support CE
The combination of our colleagues’ efforts portrayed in this volume, together with our association’s support in the area of civic engagement, make us optimistic for the years to come. We believe that with the enthusiasm shown in the AATSP membership survey for CE, we can in the next five years:

1. Create a CE web platform within the AATSP site to facilitate collaborative efforts among K–16 educators, as well as students and community members
2. Inform about CE at AATSP regional chapters
3. (Re-)create a CE award for K–16 that recognizes project efforts that are sustainable beyond the short-term
4. Promote SL work and scholarship through the CE SIG

With interest in CE so prevalent among our colleagues teaching in K–12 schools, these steps could allow them to take greater interest in AATSP efforts to promote collaboration among schools, colleges, and universities for the advancement of the common and disciplinary good. We expect that within five years we will read articles in *Hispania* by colleagues teaching Spanish and/or Portuguese throughout K–16, working in partnership with students and learners in our diverse institutions and communities. This will truly reflect CE as a mutually beneficial participatory effort for all stakeholders of learning—on and off campus. Like Paul Rogat Loeb (1999), author of *Soul of a Citizen*, we believe that those involved in their communities, “savor the journey of engagement and draw strength from its challenges. Taking the long view, they come to trust that the fruits of their efforts will ripple outward, in ways they can rarely anticipate” (9).

We have embarked on this journey laid out by Dewey, Freire, Boyer, and others, but we need more intentional and purposeful efforts to reach our goals. We hope that this Special Focus Issue on “The Scholarship of Community Engagement” will make a useful contribution to this endeavor.

WORKS CITED