

HOW TO DEVELOP A METHODOLOGY USING A DEMOCRATIC MINDSET

“Civic professionals find ways to meaningfully engage the people affected by an issue, seeing them as partners in deliberative processes, knowledge creation, and collaborative work.”

(Longo, Nicholas V. (2023, p.4). *Practicing Democracy: A Toolkit for Educating Civic Professionals*. AAC&U and Campus Compact)

LEARNING OUTCOME: Develop skills to foster a democratic and culturally aware approach to tackling an issue (LO3).

Secondary Outcomes

- Learn to elevate individual and community assets (LO3a)
- Learn to approach a project with cultural humility and an equity lens (LO3b)
- Respect local knowledge through active listening and empathy (LO3c)
- Build trusting relationships to create consistent collaborations and partnerships (LO3d)
- Develop skills for naming and framing issues in ways that empower communities (LO3e)

ASSIGNMENT:

- **WATCH (required):** Ted Talk: [Ernesto Sirolli: Want to help someone? Shut up and listen! | TED Talk](#)
- Consider the following questions:
 - What did the Italian’s do wrong when they went to Zambia?
 - What is required of you when you work with communities?
- **READ (required):** A Goose Story and The Goose Approach to Research, Chapter 2¹
- Consider the following questions:
 - What does it mean to be an interloper?
 - What are the essential components of participatory research?
 - How can you avoid being an interloper in your work with communities?
- **Additional Resource (optional)**
 - Podcast, *Rethinking* with Adam Grant “Fixing college campuses with political scientist Danielle Allen” from 9/3/24 (37 minutes), <https://www.podchaser.com/podcasts/rethinking-1661668/episodes/recent>
- **REVIEW AND DISCUSS:** review the table below, and as a team, discuss and take notes on what steps you can take to approach your project with a *democratic mindset* and how you can avoid being an interloper. Choose one member of your team to share your thoughts in class.

¹ Stoecker, R. R. (2012). The goose approach to research. In *Research methods for community change: A project-based approach* (2nd ed., pp. 25–46). SAGE

	OUTSIDE EXPERT MINDSET	DEMOCRATIC MINDSET
MOTIVATION	Altruistic service	Co-creation, joint problem Solving
WHO IS IN CHARGE?	Experts	Community members, both professionals and amateurs
GOAL	To fix problems	To empower marginalized and underrepresented community members, tackle issues and build community ties
METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH	Expert intervention	Catalyze public participation across diverse stakeholders, facilitate constructive dialogue, recognize community assets.
APPROACH TO TEACHING & LEARNING	Didactic (expert teaches community members)	Apprenticeship, joint learning
SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE	Abstract theory, book learning	Local community members, sponsoring organization staff, impacted individuals, and book learning
KEY ROLE OF STUDENT/ PROFESSIONAL RESEARCHERS	Service providers	Learner, catalyst, helper

Adapted from Harry Boyte, *The Citizen Solution: How You Can Make a Difference* (Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2008), as cited in Nicholas Longo, *Practicing Democracy: A Toolkit for Educating Civic Professionals* (2023).