




THE STORY OF A BROKEN SOFA: SERVICE-LEARNING MEETS ACTIVIST ART

2021 Australian Catholic University and DePaul University
Online Conference on Community Engagement and Service Learning

Pandemic, Pivots, and Potentials
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The Broken Sofa: A Metaphor for Self- and Community Empowerment



Upholstering the Sofa: An approach to problem-posing ...

- All too often, we just look at the surface of community issues; ignore what does not appear to directly impact upon us; and turn away from what seems too overwhelming to fix
- We dismiss opportunities for making change, just like we toss out worn and broken furniture
- This approach offers a creative and safe space to critically think about what is at the root of community issues and to move toward solutions

... and problem-solving

- By collaboratively refurbishing an old sofa, we work together to peel back the layers of issues and critically analyze what emerges
- We see that the “sofa” has good bones and can still provide solid support
- We learn that we can work together in a team to re-store the “sofa”
- We recognize how all of us can play a part in creating solutions.



Testimonial

Dr. Prophetess Anna C. Williams

Bring Your Chair to the Table

A Project at the *Daughters of Destiny Ministry*

Jamika Smith created a safe space where a group of women uncovered perceived barriers, reflected on them, and openly expressed their feelings. Being guided through the six-step process of *Teena's Legacy*, each participant reupholstered a chair and, as a group, identified and addressed personal and community issues.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8T-g47grcQE>

Collaboration & Benefits of Collaborative Activist Art Projects for Service Learning

- Proven *Teena's Legacy* process undergirds the activist art project
- Individual and community empowerment project designed *with* NfPs and University
- Complete curriculum with lessons plans, ready for implementation
- Staff development for faculty on process and on developing competence appropriate to student study/interest

Collaboration & Benefits of Collaborative Activist Art Project for Service Learning

- Training for NfP staff to conduct a workshop and scale to community engagement
- Orientation for students to the activist art context for service-learning experience
- Competences to be gained during during the service-learning activist art project are developed with student and faculty
- Learning contracts to guide competence development and assessment

Your Facilitators Jamika and Gabriele

Contact us for more information!

Jamika Smith, Founder of Teena's Legacy

Teena's Legacy began in 2013 in honor of founder Jamika Smith's grandmother, Alberteen Stredrick. *Teena* as the family called her, was a very creative woman with a vibrant spirit. She was an accomplished seamstress and a self-taught interior decorator with a keen eye for fashion. Her talents and passion led her to design and model unique clothes in fashion shows that she personally hosted and coordinated in the basement of her home and different local venues. She expanded her growing business to include restoring old furniture back to its original glory. Teena and Uncle Albert, her twin brother, both ran their businesses from their garages in those days. Jamika founded *Teena's Legacy* to work with young women to creatively and holistically use upholstery as a context to empower and inspire participants. *Teena's Legacy* creates safe spaces where young women can organically walk in their authentic selves, using upholstery as a conduit for self-reflection, reconstruction, and economic transformation. Teenaslegacy@gmail.com or www.teenaslegacy.com

Gabriele (Dr. G.), Founder of the Pilsen Storefront & Professor Emerita, DePaul University

After years of implementing an agile community-based teaching and learning approach that benefits from our diverse City neighborhoods as *classrooms*, Dr. G. created a loosely-knit network of DePaul University students and community residents. This group, known as *Community Connexions*, encouraged discourse about the ~isms in our City. The mutual learning projects are grounded in liberatory education practices and the ABCD Model of community development. CC's *Urban Educated-World Ready* education activities are rooted in instructional models that are informed by principles of Metagogy, Competency-based Education, Popular Education, and Community Organizing. Upon retirement in 2019, CC was incorporated into the *Pilsen Storefront*, a community space that is home to many artistic, cross-cultural, and educational activities.

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