Service-learning is a powerful, yet challenging, method of teaching. It has the potential to transform learners, deepen understanding, stimulate instructors, bring community and campus into closer partnerships, and provide additional assets to meet community needs. Understanding the possibilities of service-learning is not very difficult—at least for those who have ears to hear and eyes to see—but mastering the art of teaching it well, and understanding all its nuances and tensions, can take much longer. The multiple facets of service-learning, coupled with the differing ways in which different people understand knowledge, higher education, and society, may go a long way to explain why it is a topic worth exploring. Service-Learning: Intercommunity and Interdisciplinary Explorations is purposed to contribute to that exploration.

Service-learning is the pedagogy of the focus on higher education civic engagement. This book is the project of a class of the Indiana Campus Compact (ICC) Faculty Fellows Program, and includes chapters written by several former Faculty Fellows. The variety of the approaches to the impact of service-learning is intentional and the book offers plenty of ideas, examples, intuition, and encouragement, as well as a few warnings, about how to develop effective service-learning projects, and about why service-learning can be so valuable and stimulating. It also provides an illustration as to why Indiana Campus Compact, in the first ten years or so of its existence, has emerged as one of the innovative leaders among state-level Campus Compacts.

It may be the variety of backgrounds among the authors that gives an added depth to this volume. While the authors were not asked to address specifically any differences arising from their varied backgrounds, the volume does contain a significant range of perspectives on service-learning that influence how, for each author, service-learning was seen to contribute to the understanding of their student learners, benefit the community, and enhance the author’s sense of purpose and commitment as a civically engaged scholar and educator.

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