Immersive Learning provides a framework for Ball State faculty and students to connect with Indiana businesses, nonprofit organizations, communities, and state agencies through mutually beneficial projects.

**Students** benefit by gaining experience and expertise beyond the boundaries of the classroom.

**Faculty** benefit when they adapt traditional teaching into a collaborative applied model, which leads to deeper community connections and possible avenues for scholarly publications.

**Community partners** benefit when students examine their challenges from a fresh perspective.
There is a lack of standardized recipes for thickened liquids used to treat patients with dysphagia, or difficulty swallowing. This project focused on using physics and objective testing of viscosity, specifically examining the type of thickening agent used, time required to obtain viscosity, and temperature that is optimal for serving the thickened product. Students used viscometers to conduct testing and compared results to the new International Dysphagia Diet Standardization Initiative flow test to create a reference for clinical recipes for patients’ home use.
Community Partners: Ball State University Honors College, Ball State University Libraries’ Archives and Special Collections

The Ball State University Honors College Oral History Project recorded 34 long-form interviews with individuals who were or are associated with the Honors College as administrators, faculty, staff, or alumni between 1959-2019. The videos and interview transcriptions are being archived by the Ball State University Libraries’ Archives and Special Collections and will be available for streaming and downloading from the collection site on their Digital Media Repository along with a short documentary film that was produced about the project.

Ball State University Honors College Oral History

Emma Cieslik, Hannah Gunnell, Jocelyn Hall, Anna Leigh Hawk, Melissa Kraman, Margo Morton, Noah Nobbe, Elise Schrader, Erica Smith, Ben Wilson

Michael Doyle
Department of History
Bringing in and Branching Out: Recruiting Employees and Building Community Connections

According to data from the Indiana Department of Workforce Development in 2016, the poverty rate in Delaware County was 21.6%, and poverty among children under the age of 18 was 25.7% (www.stats.indiana.edu/profiles/). These alarming statistics speak to the need for Open Door Health Services (ODHS) and the services it provides our community. In this two-semester project, the immersive learning team helped ODHS draw and retain qualified service providers by updating their website, producing new recruitment videos and materials, and updating the onboarding process for both medical and non-medical employees. The team also assisted ODHS in determining current marketing needs through interviews and focus groups, assessed and improved the new patient orientation process, and upgraded its social media presence.

Abigail Bensman, Haley Collison, Marisa Conatser, Ryan Cosey, Olivia DeSalvo, Margo Morten, Gaylan Owens, Taylor Ross, Erica Smith, Ashley Taylor

Peggy Fisher
Department of Communication Studies
Students enrolled in a two-course practicum partnered with Wes Del Elementary and learned about life-challenges faced by children in the Muncie community. Areas of research involved such difficult topics as food insecurity, child neglect, divorce, drug addiction, in addition to other challenges. Ball State students then evaluated and selected children’s literature that provides support to these children and the immediate community. Supportive text-related activities were developed around book selections and students worked within the school to provide in-service training for the curriculum. Finally, they worked to determine the impact of the project on the school community and the students themselves.
In this project, students explored the intersectionality of cultural identities, history and impact of structural racism, positionality of race, and strategies for promoting inclusion and civic engagement through family and history research, presentations, oral storytelling, and the development of traveling exhibits. Students worked along with community members to develop and administer Talking Race Human Library in Muncie, Fort Wayne, South Bend, and Indianapolis, using the book, Facing Racism, as a resource. The course is designed as an interactive seminar to foster student discussion, discover family histories, and promote community involvement. The course is constructed from curriculum developed in the community program; It is Well With My Soul.
Under mentorship from faculty, Dance Education Laboratory Ambassadors, and an Indianapolis Public School professional, Ball State students worked together to bring dance education to the Muncie Community Schools. The immersive team conducted research and developed dance curriculums for grades 1-4, implemented curriculum at each of the 6 elementary schools, and disseminated findings through presentations and a curriculum handbook. Through this project, students have gained a greater understanding and appreciation for the importance and power of dance in young lives, are well-versed in effective teaching methods, and have developed strong collaborative skills.

Hannah Bertrand, Natalie Bollinger, Victoria Bullick, Katrina Conte, Lily Deeg, Carmen Gorsuch, Eugenia Jones, Kailyn Kelley, Darcy Kummerow, Greta Linder, Drew Mack, Kali Marquart, Annika Pairitz, Eddie Ramos, Samantha Shoufler, Caroline Tribl, Jillian Wilschke, Keely Wissel

Melanie Swihart
Department of Theatre and Dance
Many neighborhoods throughout Muncie are working to make the places they live great. With a little support and guidance, their efforts can also contribute toward making the places they live a little healthier. In this immersive learning project, students helped community members develop a Healthy Neighborhood designation program to promote better overall health and wellness in Muncie neighborhoods.
With the Discovery New Works Festival in April 2019, the Department of Theatre and Dance looked to substantially retool the festival based on what was learned from the first iteration in 2017. The students curated a festival of new theatrical works submitted by students from across the Ball State campus. The aim of the project was to develop young theater artist-producers to enrich the local performance community.

Nicoletta Calabrese, Audrey Fosson, Layke Fowler, Elizabeth Gee, Katherine Layman, Aiszah Rangel, Emma Rund, Tayler Seymour, Kirsten Smigiel, Ciara Smith, Devin Summan, Maggie Williams

Thomas Horan
Department of Theatre and Dance
In this immersive energy assessment course, students received instruction in current assessment techniques and then used tools and equipment to assess energy utilization for small local commercial buildings in partnership with business professionals. After learning the proper role and methodology for each energy assessment tool, the collected data was turned into readily understandable remediation information for building owners. Additionally, the class investigated the feasibility of implementing the suggested measures along with the anticipated long-term financial return.
In the United States, opioid prescriptions and subsequent use are on the rise, particularly among pregnant women. Opioid-addicted women, however, face numerous obstacles in receiving care. These obstacles are shaped by cultural and environmental factors surrounding them, such as access to transportation and community-wide stigma that often exacerbates addiction. In this immersive learning project, students worked with the Suzanne Gresham Center to learn about the opioid epidemic in the Muncie community. Students conducted interviews with community members, learned how to analyze qualitative data, and developed an educational product that provides the community information on the opioid epidemic among pregnant women in Muncie.

Caitlyn Leonardson-Placek & Jennifer Wies
Department of Anthropology
Jean Marie Place
Department of Nutrition and Health Science
The Children’s TherAplay Institute in Carmel, Indiana, utilizes hippotherapy, an innovative and life-changing rehabilitative treatment for children with special needs. Because these children often experience the world differently, they can be adversely affected by sensory inputs such as light, texture and sound. Using evidence-based research gathered in Phase I of the project, students created design solutions that take these factors into consideration, optimized available space that encourages play and safety, met and exceeded building codes and regulations, and provided a custom furniture solution for clinic therapy rooms. Partnering with TherAplay, the students developed design solutions for TherAplay’s therapy clinics and administrative offices. Project deliverables included: floor plans, construction documents, and material and furnishing selections that meet and exceed safety codes. Additionally, each student designed a custom furniture piece for use in therapy clinics to assist in treatments.
Working with representatives from Ball State’s Facilities Planning and Management department as the actual client, an interdisciplinary team of students assessed, evaluated, prioritized, and certified the Ball State Jo Ann Gora Student Recreation and Wellness Center LEED O+M: EB (LEED Operations and Maintenance for Existing Buildings). Ball State currently has thirteen LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified buildings, with two more anticipating certification. All are (or hopefully, will be) certified under LEED BD+C:NC (LEED for New Construction) or LEED ID+C:CI (LEED for Commercial Interiors), with the first certifications awarded in 2010. These certifications evaluate the buildings during design and construction, but LEED for Existing Buildings evaluates buildings during occupancy, to see if they are performing up to their potential. 

Benjamin Babb, Jacob Fuerbringer, John Geller, Alex Groff, Mackenzie Kirk, Joshua March, Sara Nedroscik, Matthew Potter, Andrew Swidan, Brian Szymanski, Zachary Taylor, Boyd Warner, Ross Williams

Janet Fick & James Jones
Department of Construction Management and Interior Design
Sustainability reporting is a strategy for monitoring and improving an organization’s environmental, social, and economic progress toward sustainable development goals. Partnering with the Council on the Environment, a diverse student team prepared the 8th sustainability report for Ball State University using the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Standards. GRI is the international leader in mainstreaming sustainability reporting with the majority of largest 250 global companies, as well as non-profit organizations and municipalities.

Rebekah Box, Elizabeth Candelario, Lauren Hunter, Ted Irwin, Samantha Kubiak, Spencer Martin, David Mata, Emily Peterson, Racheal Stenger

Mary Annette Rose
Department of Family, Consumer, and Technology Education
Today media professionals need strong strategic, analytical, financial, and managerial skills to be successful in the industries. This immersive learning course focused on equipping students with these skills as well as providing them with entrepreneurial leadership qualities by working with a local television station in Indianapolis. Through managing complex media projects (a strategic plan report and a digital marketing proposal), students developed knowledge in strategic direction setting, deployed business-planning skills, and excelled in leadership and concept realization.

Aaron Cavinder, Kirk Eby, Steven Hall, Michael Huffer, Elizabeth Juday, Trea Kates, Chase Keller, Harrison MacKay, Kyle Scott, AJ Tatman, Emily Tonner, Kendal Walter

Miao Guo
Department of Telecommunications
In this immersive learning project, students worked with the Office of Immersive Learning to create a multifaceted series of videos to highlight the immersive learning work of Ball State faculty and students and encourage future faculty and students to work on projects that bring them into contact with the Muncie community and other partners throughout the state.

Justin Brown, Shaylin Dennis, Austin Keough, Michael Kingrey, Andrew Klawiter, Dallas O’Hern, Benjamin Ritter, Brittany Smith, Mitchell Snyder, Adam VanDam, Elijah Williams, Anika Winters

Tim Pollard
Department of Telecommunications
Students administered surveys to Whitely residents to develop an understanding of their overall perceptions of citizen-police interactions. They also interviewed representatives of the local police department to understand community engagement protocols. Students produced a manual that can be used to help citizens understand citizen and police engagement. A day-long forum was held highlighting the stories from The Facing Project, the findings of the survey, and face-to-face dialogues between the Whitely community and police/city officials.

Demetrius Bilbrey, Kurtis Bowsher, Logan Boyer, Dakota Carlton, Arica Crenshaw, Rachel Ginn, Eliot Gonzalez, Kyle Hyde, Devin Ice, Justin Martinez-Beckmann, Derek Meneely, Zachary Milam, Camryn Page, Melaja Prentiss, Billy Rollings, Dakota Stalbaum, Benjamin Tritch, Alivia Varvel, Jakhari Wilbert, Dana Woodworth

Kiesha Warren-Gordon
Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology
Philosophy for High School Students

Mendim Akiti, Hannah Bartholf, Kasey Brandenburg, Grace Dudas, Daniel Klinestiver, Zoe Lawson, Abigail Meus, John Rash, Cameron Surdyk, Dusti Troyer, Alexis Wood

Sarah Vitale
Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies

Community Partner: Muncie Central High School

Philosophy encourages students to ask questions, look at familiar things in new ways, listen to one another, and examine personal beliefs and positions. It is a fantastic way for high school students to learn about themselves and the world around them. It also helps them prepare for their futures in a complex, ever-changing world. Students in this immersive learning class explored best practices in philosophy education for high school students, ran a high school philosophy club at Muncie Central, and finally, planned and hosted an innovative, state-wide, high school philosophy conference at Ball State.
This immersive project involved a partnership with Kidz Korner Child Care Center in downtown Muncie. The project team organized and implemented family nights that involved other community agencies. Additionally, the student team promoted and fostered collaborative partnerships between the center and these local agencies. The ultimate goal of this project was to establish and maintain community connections while strengthening parent and family relationships between the school and daycare center and homes.
Rehabilitating Houses S19

Nicholas Beamish, Joshua Brann, Jenna Effinger, Matthew Johnston, Leonard Kline, Spencer McKenney, Jon Miller, Nicholas Murphy, Adycin Rager, Paynter Rhed, Emily Schripsema, John Spencer, Aaron Strayer

Janet Fick
Department of Construction Management and Interior Design

Community Partners: Greater Muncie Habitat for Humanity, Muncie Mission, Urban Light LLC

In this immersive learning course, an interdisciplinary team of students worked on rehabilitating existing houses for local non-profit organizations. The class involved the design and pre-construction phases. Each project started with creating measured existing drawings, determining the scope of work needed, making recommendations for revisions, and then creating plans for the remodeling of the houses. They worked with representatives from the non-profit organizations throughout the process, to ensure the designs meet the needs of the clients. This project began in Fall of 2012, and over the course of eleven semesters, has produced plans for the renovation (or new construction) of 30 houses. Additionally, this semester, the students completed three sets of plans for rehabilitating houses in the 8Twelve area.
Community Partner: Second Harvest Food Bank

Second Harvest Food Bank’s mission is to provide food, education and advocacy for people experiencing food insecurity. Most people in the area are familiar with Second Harvest’s hunger-relief and food banking activities, but the organization offers a range of lesser known programs and services that focus on the root causes of food insecurity and assist people in becoming more financially independent. This digital media project was Phase I in a series of projects that will explore how digital media assets, especially video, could help Second Harvest prioritize and promote its continuum of programs and, in doing so, help to attract more clients, volunteers and supporters in the future.

Second Harvest Food Bank Video Project

Miguel Arteaga, Troy Baker, Emma Brashear, Matthew Carson, Daniel Clements, Courtney Correll, Randal Dorsett, Malorie Gill, Briana Hale, Colton Howard, James Johnson, Lauryn Jones, Sean McGarry, Sherill Osborne, Nikolas Risser, Mariana Rodriguez

Suzanne Plesha
Office of Immersive Learning
Tim Pollard
Department of Telecommunications
Sociology Capstone students partnered with Second Harvest to conduct face-to-face interviews to gather program evaluation data regarding community member needs and to measure the impact that school pantries are having on student and family engagement.

Second Harvest School Pantries Study

Adriana Arthur, Katrina Brown, Katina Clark, Whittney Coffman, Julia Conn, Jazmin Deshazer, Laura Drascic, Sam Fields, Sara Garland, Tonya Gregorash, Jennifer Harkcom, Jaze Harris, Stacey Hodges, Griffin Janosky, Devaughn Jones, Drea Kolkinn, Amber Levi, Kerrigan Mccormack, Katie Morris, Sam Mulholland, Emily O’Lena, Malik Paeham-Dunner, Sarah Powell, Ian Quasat, Shelby Sims

Melinda Messineo
Department of Sociology
A multidisciplinary team of undergraduates has worked with Minnetrista to develop an original, interactive, educational video game about food preservation. We have tied our research and development process into Minnetrista’s revision of Oakhurst, the historic home where the original Ball Blue Book canning recipes were developed. The team worked together to create a game for families who visit the museum, to get them working together in an exciting simulation of canning.
Tips and Tactics on Prevention of Human Trafficking

Madeline Bailey, Kiabeth Barrera, Mary Burns, Marlena Cox, Christina Davidson, Blair Earnest, Shawntia Gramelspacher-Zehr, Kerri Hogue, Sydney Husar, Alyse Jenkins, Katherine Jenkins, Mariah Jenks, Karlee Miller, Jackie Nordmann, Monica Nowicki, Alaina Parks, Taylor Petruska, Emma Pierson, Joseph Polizzotto, Jessica Reed, Rylee Reed, Alyssa Romack, Kelsey Spridgeon, Mackenzie Stahl, Kaitlin Stephens, Emma Stevens, Marla Summers, Yula Sung, Kirstynn Wampner, Kathryn Watson, Kristin Weaver

Ronald Dolon
Department of Social Work

Community Partner: A Better Way

Human trafficking is considered modern day slavery. Human trafficking is both a criminal act and human rights violation that affects individuals and communities worldwide. Human trafficking is believed to be the third largest criminal activity in the world. It is an increasing concern and social workers require training on the latest knowledge to provide informed services. The students who participated in this immersive learning experience gained an in-depth, hands-on knowledge of the real-world concerns of human trafficking victims. They also gained a new respect for the collaboration of agencies that are providing service for human trafficking victims. With the community partner, the students researched and developed a training manual and protocol to assist social workers in supporting human trafficking victims.
In 2016, a class of Ball State students examined the use of meth in Delaware County. “Unmasked: The Stigma of Meth” resulted in www.stigmaunmasked.com, a website with original content that included a 30-minute documentary, and a 40-page magazine. The focus of the work was on Muncie couple and recovering addicts Brian and Rhea Graham. In 2018-19, a new cohort looked at the growing recovering community of addicts in Delaware County and throughout Indiana. “Unmasked: Recovery and Redemption,” reported on what has changed for the Grahams, as well. There was a focus on recovery and rehabilitation. We heard from addicts in search of recovery and the obstacles they face, including funding for residential treatment. We talked to experts in the field of addiction and endeavored to create a resource guide for recovering addicts and their families and friends. The report included stories, web videos, audio reports, and photography to update the existing website and a second edition of the Unmasked Magazine. The project culminated in mid-April with a “Story Walk,” an interactive event with sources and artifacts from student research to interact with the public.
Immersive Learning offers students the opportunity to connect with communities, businesses, and state agencies to collaboratively develop solutions to community challenges.

The information presented here, correct at the time of publication, is subject to change. Ball State University practices equal opportunity in education and employment and is strongly and actively committed to diversity within its community.

www-bsu.edu-immersive