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Editor's Note

In compiling this eJournal, it was decided to group the papers into three groups – the first group contains papers which are research based, the second which are essays of a more philosophical kind and the third are papers describing case studies and projects. This decision was made at this time because Community Engagement is an emerging field and a mix of research, background and exemplars of good practice seemed a useful way to enhance the Australian based literature and to encourage others to not only engage with their communities, but to document the process and further enhance the Engaged literature in this country.

Each of these papers was presented at the 4th Annual AUCEA Conference which was held at Charles Darwin University in Alice Springs from July 2-4, 2007. Each paper was refereed for the conference, and was further refereed before being chosen for inclusion in this journal.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance from Professor Barbara Holland and Di Paez

Professor Barbara van Ernst AM
Editor

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RESEARCH

Considering Student Voice in the Context of Community

Demand for a Regional University Campus

Leonard John Pullin

University of South Australia

Abstract

A commonly raised issue in regional communities is the exodus of young people from the region where they were born and raised and the unlikelihood of them returning to the region on a permanent basis (Webb 2005; Magennis 2005; Pullin, Petkov, Munn and Crozier 2007). Regional communities argue there is a link between undertaking University study in a region and retaining young people the region or other regions when they complete their studies (Hillman and Rothman 2007). The young people the communities refer to are school leavers, those who have successfully completed Year 12, usually at a very high level of achievement.

This paper reports on findings of a feasibility study on establishing a University campus in a regional area (Pullin, Petkov, Munn and Crozier 2007). The findings indicate that four regional stakeholder groups, business and industry, community members, parents of high school students and existing University students, strongly support the establishment of a University campus in the region. In exploring senior high school student voice on the same issues, the paper questions whether the four stakeholder groups' judgment of student preparedness to study in the region reflects the intentions of high school students.

Introduction

In efforts to gain University, government and political support for the establishment of a University campus in their region, some regional communities have commissioned consultant reports on their University campus needs (Webb 2005; Magennis 2005; Pullin, Petkov, Munn and Crozier 2007). Not surprisingly, some reports (Webb 2005; Magennis 2005) tend to justify their findings on regional community needs and may fail to develop a broader understanding of the issues involved.

This paper examines the view of regional communities that the presence of a regional University campus will significantly reduce the exodus of young people from their region. To achieve this aim, the methodology adopted for the study is examined and then some of the broader perspectives and issues associated with University campuses being established or situated in regional areas are outlined. This discussion is followed by an analysis of the responses of five regional stakeholder groups on the importance they place on a University campus being located in their region. One of these stakeholders groups comprises senior high school students in the region. The paper concludes with a brief summary of the main issues and implications of the findings.

Methodology

This paper sources quantitative data from the Mount Gambier University Campus Feasibility Study sponsored by the Mount Gambier University Steering Committee. The feasibility study was conducted by a multi-disciplinary team from the Centre for Regional Engagement, University of South Australia. The study was completed between May to September 2005 and comprises a combination of desk research, quantitative and qualitative primary data. This paper also sources qualitative data on small regional branch campuses and University regional centres from a series of visits and unstructured interviews undertaken by the author in 2005/2006.

A questionnaire survey methodology was developed specifically for the Mount Gambier University Campus Feasibility Study. The survey was conceptualised as a set of common questions constructed to determine the respondents' views on a University campus and/or regional centre in Mount Gambier, the community and other benefits of such initiatives and types of tertiary programs that should be offered in the region.

To ensure adequate representation from key stakeholders in the Limestone Coast Region, the study's survey population was stratified across five stakeholder groups: business and industry, university students, senior high school students, parents of high school students and community members. The common question set was then utilised to form the basis of a separate survey questionnaire specifically designed and developed for each of the groups. Each questionnaire design comprised specific demographic information relating to each group, the set of common questions relating to all respondents, and a set of questions which only related to that particular group. The questionnaires comprise a mix of open, closed and scaled questions where the scaled questions utilised a Likert type scale of 1-7.

The questionnaires were served on a stratified sample of 3800 Limestone Coast residents. A total of 1030 valid responses to the five stakeholder group surveys were received equating to an acceptable overall response rate of 30%. One-Way ANOVA is used to test equality of variances, where this fails Welch's test for the difference of means was applied. Post-hoc tests were carried out with least significant differences or, in the case of unequal variances Tamhane's test was used.

Setting the Scene

Those regional communities arguing, fighting and even pleading for a University to establish a campus in their region are often blithely unaware of the difficulties they face in even gaining passing interest from the University sector. For many Universities, the risk associated with opening and operating a regional campus is far too high. This especially the case from a cost and quality perspective in an era increasingly dominated by government accountability initiatives such as the Teaching and Learning Performance Fund (TLPF), the Research Quality Framework (RQF) and the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA).

The operating costs of regional campuses can be compared to those of outer urban campuses which Inglis argues pose similar organisational problems as branch campus operations in regional and remote settings (2001). He states that the operating costs of small branch campuses of Universities 'are typically significantly higher than the main campuses of the Universities to which they belong because of the need for the provision of services such as cafeterias, libraries, and general access computer laboratories, as well as the higher costs of teaching smaller classes (Inglis 2001, pp.2-3). On the positive side, Inglis argues that the smaller class sizes offered on these smaller campuses 'confer[s] on them a feeling of greater intimacy' 'They [smaller campuses] may be regarded by their communities as expressions of community pride'. (Inglis 2001, pp.2-3)

Regional and remote branch campus operations also have difficulty in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified staff (Inglis 2001). Due to their relatively low enrolment numbers, they may lack a sufficient critical mass of staff in key discipline areas to be able to successfully contribute and compete in terms of teaching and research.

The interview data identified that some University branch campus and centre operations in regional and remote areas rely almost entirely on casual academic staff for teaching, occasionally supported by a token full time academic position. The casual staff academic tend to contribute little to their host Universities teaching and learning curriculum development as they are essentially required to teach what they are given. Unless these casual academic staff are in the process of completing higher research degrees, they tend to contribute little to the host Universities research outcomes and academic profile.

The interview data also found that regional and remote branch campuses and centres have difficulty attracting students with the same or similar Tertiary Entrance Ranking (TER) compared to the same courses offered by the same institutions on campuses situated in major city centres. The lower TER for entry to programs on some rural and regional campus can give rise to claims that the quality of these students is not as high as those students studying on metropolitan campuses.

From a community perspective, University campuses in rural and regional centres are much prized possessions, highly valued by their communities and highly sought after by communities who do not have them (Webb 2005; Magennis 2005). However, as the above discussion highlights, smaller regional campuses and centres may not be cost effective and may add little to University prestige factors such as high quality research and teaching outcomes and high TER enrolments. Inglis argues those regional and rural branch campuses and those small campuses on metropolitan margins 'may be seen by staff of their [central] institutions as costly extravagances' (2001, pp.2-3).

The combination of factors discussed above make it difficult for those communities who do not have an existing University campus or centre in their region to convince a University to invest in their community. This is especially the case if their regional population is less than 100,000 which according to Shoemaker et al (2000) appears to be the minimum population in the catchment area required to sustain a viable University campus.

For many Universities, operating a campus in a regional area can be a two edged sword. As 'Our Universities Backing Australia's Future' policy framework (DEST 2006e, p.1) openly acknowledges, regional higher education providers make a significant contribution to their communities 'which goes far beyond traditional education activities'. This recognition is balanced by a strong dose of economic realism that regional institutions and campuses face higher costs, often have less opportunity to diversify revenue sources, have less ability to enrol fee paying students and less opportunity for commercial partnerships (DEST 2006e).

There is also an argument that the presence of a University campus in a region may not address University access issues. Stevenson, Evans, Maclachlan, Karmel and Blakers 2001 explore the effect of campus proximity and socio-economic status on University participation rates in regions. The paper's findings indicate that 'building campuses in non-metropolitan regions is not the way to bring' ... regional ... 'University participation rates up to metropolitan levels' (Stevenson, Evans et al 2001, p. 5).

The difficulties regional communities face in gaining a University campus in their region is further exacerbated by the Commonwealth Government's higher education policy framework (DEST 2006e). This framework makes significant provision to reinforce existing regional campuses by including: a regional loading for students enrolled on regional campuses; the Collaboration and Structural Reform Fund to foster collaboration between higher education providers and their communities; and the establishment of additional places in nursing courses in regional campuses. There is not specific provision in the Act or the Commonwealth Government's policy framework for the establishment of new University campuses in regional areas.

Despite these limitations, regional communities still seek to convince politicians, governments and Universities that they have a justifiable case for a University campus to be established in their region. One of their underlying

arguments is that the establishment of a University campus in their region will significantly reduce the ongoing exodus of young people from their communities. The findings in the next part of the paper explore the credibility of this hypothesis.

Findings

This section tests the hypothesis by exploring the importance different stakeholder groups place on having a University campus in the region and then examining the benefits they perceive might accrue from actually having a University campus in the region. Consideration is then given to the importance that two of the stakeholder groups, parents and senior high school students, place on undertaking tertiary study in the region and the desire to stay in the region by high school students. The main aim of the statistical analysis is to determine significant differences, if any, between the five sub-groups on any of the specific issues tested.

The stakeholder group findings (Table 1) indicate that having a University campus in Mount Gambier is important to them ($M = 5.23$). A between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed a significant difference ($P = 0.000$) between the views of senior high school students and the other four sub-groups where the senior high school student group is essentially neutral or indifferent to a University campus being situated in the region.

Table 1: Importance of a University Campus Situated in Mount Gambier

Group Surveyed	M	N	SD
Business	5.49	89	1.603
High School Students	3.98	361	1.899
Community	6.06	216	1.542
University Students	5.72	206	1.557
Parents	6.28	138	1.189
Total	5.23	1010	1.900

The stakeholders' views were then examined on a range of potential social, economic and educational benefits associated with a University campus situated in a regional area. The questionnaire listed 11 categories of potential family, community and/or individual economic and social benefit which could accrue to the region from having a University campus in a region (see Table 2).

Table 2: Benefits of a University Campus in Mount Gambier

Benefit	BUS (M)	HSS (M)	COMUN (M)	UNIST (M)	PRNTS (M)	Sig.
Reducing the financial strain on students' families	6.47	5.74	6.63	6.59	6.77	0.000
Reducing student study costs	6.43	5.61	6.56	6.56	6.69	0.000
Providing University study opportunities for more people	6.27	5.55	6.54	6.54	6.63	0.000
Encouraging young people to stay in the region	6.53	5.36	6.63	6.49	6.69	0.000
Providing access to University study for disadvantaged groups	5.88	5.23	6.29	6.41	6.36	0.000
Improving study outcomes for students	5.92	5.27	6.43	6.13	6.41	0.000
Providing better economic outcomes for the community	5.93	4.98	6.26	6.07	6.24	0.000
Local economic development	5.92	4.72	6.23	6.09	6.23	0.000
Meeting the needs of professionals	5.79	4.86	6.18	6.08	6.04	0.000
Improving social outcomes for students	5.71	4.96	6.15	5.85	6.14	0.000
Adding to the region's prestige	5.68	4.82	6.00	5.85	6.04	0.000

Stakeholders were asked to rate each potential benefit by the degree of importance they attached to it. As Table 2 indicates, the mean average response across each benefit category is consistently lower for senior high school students (HSS) compared to the mean average response for each of the four other stakeholder groups: business (BUS), community (COMUN), university students (UNIST) and parents of high school students (PRNTS). This difference is significant ($P= 0.000$) for each of the benefit categories.

It can be interpreted from this analysis that senior high school student respondents place significantly less importance on the benefits of a University campus situated in Mount Gambier than the four other stakeholder groups surveyed (the community, current University students, businesses and parents of senior high school students). This finding is consistent with the lower value senior high school students place on the importance of a University campus being situated in Mount Gambier compared to the other four stakeholder groups.

The survey also tested the issue of young people leaving the region and a potential link between the opportunities to undertake University study in their community increasing the potential for young people to stay in the region. The underlying issue being tested was whether young people themselves share the community desire for them to undertake tertiary study in their region. The survey was limited to testing the views of two sets of stakeholders: the parents of high school students and senior high school students themselves. The two stakeholder sets were asked different but related questions about desirability to stay and study in the region (parents) and intention to leave the region (students).

Parents were asked to provide a rating to the following question 'If your children intended to undertake a University education, how important to you would it be for them to study on a Mount Gambier campus? Assuming their

desired program was available?' The parents of high school students rated the opportunity for local tertiary study to be very important to them (M = 6.01).

In contrast, the senior high school students survey sought to establish 'intention to leave' Mount Gambier in the students future planning. The findings indicate that leaving Mount Gambier was an important factor in these students future plans (M = 4.9). There is no significant difference in the response across gender and year levels. The survey then sought to establish if these students might be enticed to undertake tertiary study in the region if their desired programs were available there. Sixty three per cent of senior high school students indicated they would study in Mount Gambier if their program choice was offered there. There is no significant difference in responses across gender and year level. Further analysis sought to determine an association between respondents' intentions to study in Mount Gambier and the future study option they indicated.

A Chi-Square test found a significant association between studying and staying in the region amongst those senior high school students considering enrolling in TAFE courses. The test found no significant association between study in the region and University study. The last finding needs to take into account the consistent statistical pattern of significant difference, already identified in this paper, between the views of the other four stakeholder groups on establishing a University campus in the region and the views of senior high school students. Given the context, the finding may be indicative that having a University campus in a regional area will not significantly deter the exodus of young people from the region.

The implication that young people may not be attracted to stay in a region just because it has a University, reaches beyond the impact on a regional area; it also impacts on the potential nature and culture of a University campus situated in a regional area serving thin markets. A typical city based campus undergraduate enrolment might comprise a homogenous student population where the majority of students are full-time, year 12 graduates studying courses offered predominantly during the day and spread over the entire week. These students are computer literate, tertiary education aware, gain entry through high tertiary entrance rankings and require relatively little support once past their first semester. They also attend campus for long hours and add to the culture, vitality and life of the campus by doing so.

In contrast, a heterogeneous regional campus population where year 12 students do not dominate provides quite a different challenge to the University. The likelihood is that the majority of students will be mature age, part time and seeking to study their courses in the evening, over one or two days or by intensive mode. These students are unlikely to be computer literate, are not tertiary education aware, often gain entry by alternate means such as a Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT) or an enabling program, and may be relatively high maintenance in terms of student support. These students are likely to attend campus for shorter hours and as a result are less likely to contribute greatly to the culture, vitality and life of the campus.

Conclusion

The paper explores the commonly raised argument by regional communities of a link between undertaking University study in a region and retaining young people the region or other regions when they complete their studies. Using findings from a feasibility study on establishing a University campus in a regional area (Pullin, Petkov, Munn and Crozier 2007), the paper argues that a University campus situated in a regional area may not be the youth retention panacea regional communities argue it is.

The paper contrasts the views of four regional stakeholder groups, business and industry, community members, parents of high school students and existing University students, who strongly support the establishment of a University campus in the region, with those of a fifth stakeholder group, the region's senior high school students. The paper presents a pattern of significant difference between the views of these four stakeholder groups on establishing a University campus in the region and the senior high school students. It finds that senior high school students do not attach as much importance to the benefits associated with a University campus situated in their regional area as the other stakeholder groups. The senior high school student group also indicated a strong desire to leave the region, whether or not a University campus was located there.

The paper does not argue that Universities should not establish campuses in regions with thin markets as the author would be extremely pleased if they would do so. It does present a realistic perspective of the inherent difficulty facing regions with thin markets in attracting Universities to open a campus in their region. The paper questions the veracity of the argument that a University campus presence in a region will curtail the exodus of youth from the region; the findings suggest it may not. Given these findings, it is likely that a University campus serving a thin regional market may have a different student population profile to a City based campus.

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Evaluating Community Engagement: Lessons for an Australian Regional University

Catherine Arden, University of Southern Queensland

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Abstract:

Community engagement, along with personal fulfilment and economic resilience, is an integral element of lifelong learning (Global Learning Services, 2001). This paper reports the processes and outcomes of a collaborative community engagement research project undertaken by university researchers, and local and state government and community partners that provides a testing ground for the principles and practices of regional and community engagement, lifelong learning and e-democracy in a rural community context.

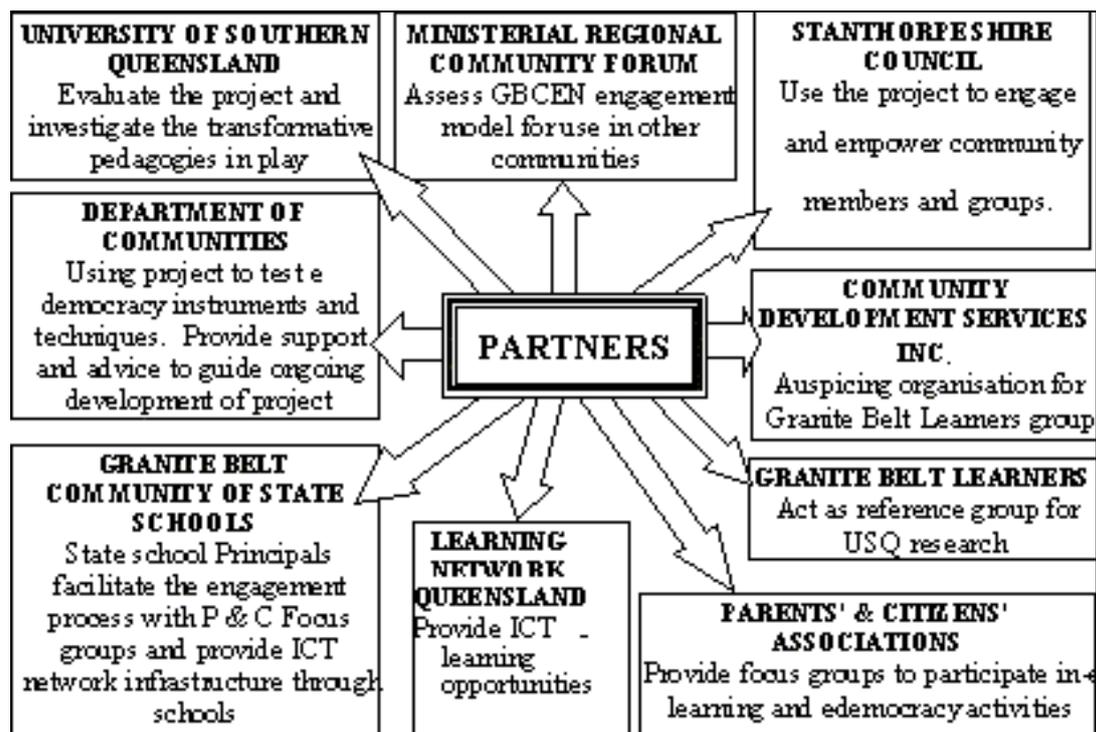
The purpose of the research project was to evaluate the Granite Belt Community Engagement Network (GBCEN) Project being conducted as part of Stanthorpe's Learning Community initiative by the Stanthorpe Shire Council and the Granite Belt LEARNERS Group during July-December 2006. The evaluation utilised a participatory action research (PAR) approach to evaluation designed to foster as well as measure effective community engagement practices.

The paper reports the evaluation findings in terms of the perceived benefits, limitations and challenges of using e-democracy for improving local government community engagement, and the potential for utilising school and community leaders, networks and interactional infrastructure to enhance lifelong learning and community engagement in rural and regional communities. Drawing on applications of social capital theory in rural and regional communities in Australia, lifelong and transformative learning theory and community engagement research, the paper also discusses implications of the evaluation processes and outcomes for the enhancement of university regional and community engagement through collaborative research and evaluation projects that build 'bridging and linking ties' between formal educational institutions and situated, informal and non-formal learning that occurs in communities and organisations. The paper goes on to make recommendations for enhancing the relevance of research and scholarship in a regional university to the needs of the communities it serves.

Background to the GBCEN Evaluation Project

The Granite Belt Community Engagement Network Project aimed to build a network based on the Granite Belt State School system to encourage civic engagement, community learning, and the use of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) for the purposes of enhancing community engagement through e-democracy and informal e-learning. Using the established community networks of local school Parents and Citizens Associations (P&Cs), interactional infrastructure (in the form of ICTs as well as opportunities for regular face-to-face meetings) and community leadership provided by school principals and P&C members, the project aimed to establish a dialogue between the Stanthorpe Shire Council and the local community around priority issues for the Shire and use feedback obtained to inform local government decision making. In doing so, it was envisaged that the project would also encourage a more general engagement of the Granite Belt community in deliberative discussion on local issues and development of ICT skills to support lifelong learning. Beyond the local context, the project aimed to provide a model for community engagement that could be used as a basis for the wider engagement of rural communities in the decision making processes of local and state government. Underpinning all of these objectives lay the basic aim of enhancing the capacity of the Stanthorpe Shire and the Granite Belt as a declared Learning Community. Assistance was sought from various community and regional partners to support achievement of the project aims and objectives as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: GBCEN partnership arrangements



The project was designed as an action learning/action research project progressing through a series of three phases:

- Phase 1:** Pilot e-survey with P&C Association members of one school
- Phase 2:** Administer e-survey (topic – waste management) to broader respondent group (P&C members of 13 local schools)
- Phase 3:** Administer second e-survey (topic to be decided based on respondents' suggestions from the waste management survey).

Responsibility for facilitation of the project phases and communication and consultation with project partners rested with the members of the Granite Belt Learners group (GBL) as project facilitators. The evaluation component was unfunded and completed as part of the researcher's "community engagement" or "service" workload component.

Evaluation methodology

The methodology adopted for evaluation of the GBCEN project was a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach to evaluation, as described by Yoland Wadsworth (1997; 1998), designed to foster as well as measure effective community engagement practices by:

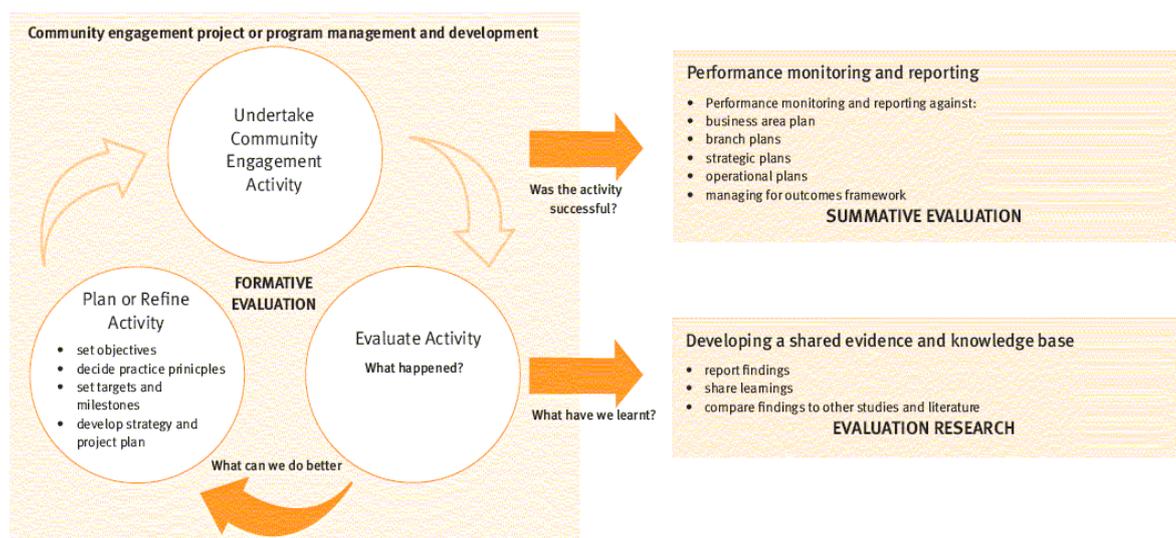
- involving community partners as co-researchers (described by Wadsworth as the "critical reference group") (1997, p. 17)
- focussing on formative evaluation through a cycle of action and reflection on action "by those who are parties to that action" (1997, p. 10)

- being cognizant and respectful of the roles and perspectives of insiders (community) and outsiders (researchers) in the evaluation process
- approaching the evaluation as an experiential, “cogenerative” action learning process that aims to build capacity of community members as well as researchers (Elden and Levin, 1991)
- using the researcher as a “broker” to build “bridging and linking ties” between the community and the university, thereby building community capacity and social capital (Kilpatrick, 2000, p. 4).

Development of the evaluation framework was informed by the Queensland Government Department of Communities publication *Engaging Queenslanders: Evaluating Community Engagement* (Johnson, 2004) and involved elements of formative, summative and research evaluation as shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: The roles of community engagement evaluation

Figure 1. The roles of community engagement evaluation



Source: Queensland Government Department of Communities (Johnson, 2004)

The evaluation plan devised by the research partners was designed to coincide with the three phases of the GBCEN project, which would serve as a vehicle for the participatory action learning/action research process. Specific formative, summative and research evaluation questions were identified including a number of key evaluation questions devised to measure achievement of the project's Community Engagement (CE) and Lifelong Learning (LLL) objectives.

Limitations

In practice, the GBCEN project completed only two of its three phases due in the main to problems with timing and logistics; timing became a problem in terms of the ability of school personnel to participate in the evaluation process as they were moving into their busiest time of the school year (terms 3 and 4), and logistical problems posed by a lack of researcher capacity to follow up on a face-to-face basis with the thirteen schools which are distributed over a wide geographical area. In spite of these limitations, sufficient data were gathered to enable qualitative analysis and conclusions to be drawn in response to most of the key evaluation questions.

Evaluation Findings

In total, 35 P&C members responded to the waste management e-survey, 27 P&C members and Council representatives submitted responses to the evaluation questionnaire, and 12 participated in focus groups. In addition, the five members of the Granite Belt Learners group met as co-researchers to conduct formative evaluation on seven occasions during the project.

A preliminary analysis of data against the key evaluation questions has been completed and common themes and issues emerging from the data identified, which can be summarised under the following headings:

- Perceived benefits, limitations and challenges of using e-democracy for improving local government community engagement
- The potential for utilising school and community leaders, networks and interactional infrastructure to enhance lifelong learning and community engagement in rural communities.

Although community respondents overwhelmingly reported a positive experience with actual completion of the electronic waste management survey, they expressed concerns that the method excluded people in the community who had limited or no access to computers, computer skills and/or the confidence to participate, and secondly, scepticism as to whether any action would be taken by Council based on the input provided. Similar concerns were expressed by Council respondents in relation to issues of access and equity as well as their capacity to respond effectively and manage community expectations. Council's primary concern, however, was that the respondent group (P&C Association members) was not representative of the broader community – a concern that was validated in demographic data from

evaluation surveys, which found that most P&C members were tertiary educated and had above average incomes, literacy and ICT skills. (Interestingly, UK and US community engagement literature supports this conclusion, reporting that university graduates are more than three times likely to be members of voluntary associations than non-graduates, be involved in their children's school and participate in civic and democratic activity (Wilberforce, 2005; Benson & Harkavy, 2002; Benson, Harkavy & Hartley, 2005 cited in Langworthy, n.d.).

Results nonetheless indicated strong potential for using school-based 'interactional infrastructure' such as ICT facilities as well as P&C Association meetings and communications to enhance community learning and engagement networks, consistent with the findings of research conducted by the Centre for Research and Learning in Regional Australia (CRLRA), which found that

“informal or deliberately arranged interactions can help people develop networks...increase people's confidence to act for the benefit of the community and its members, and build a commitment to members of the community and the community as a whole (Kilpatrick, 2000, p. 4).

Implications of evaluation processes and outcomes for enhancement of university regional and community engagement – lessons for an Australian regional university

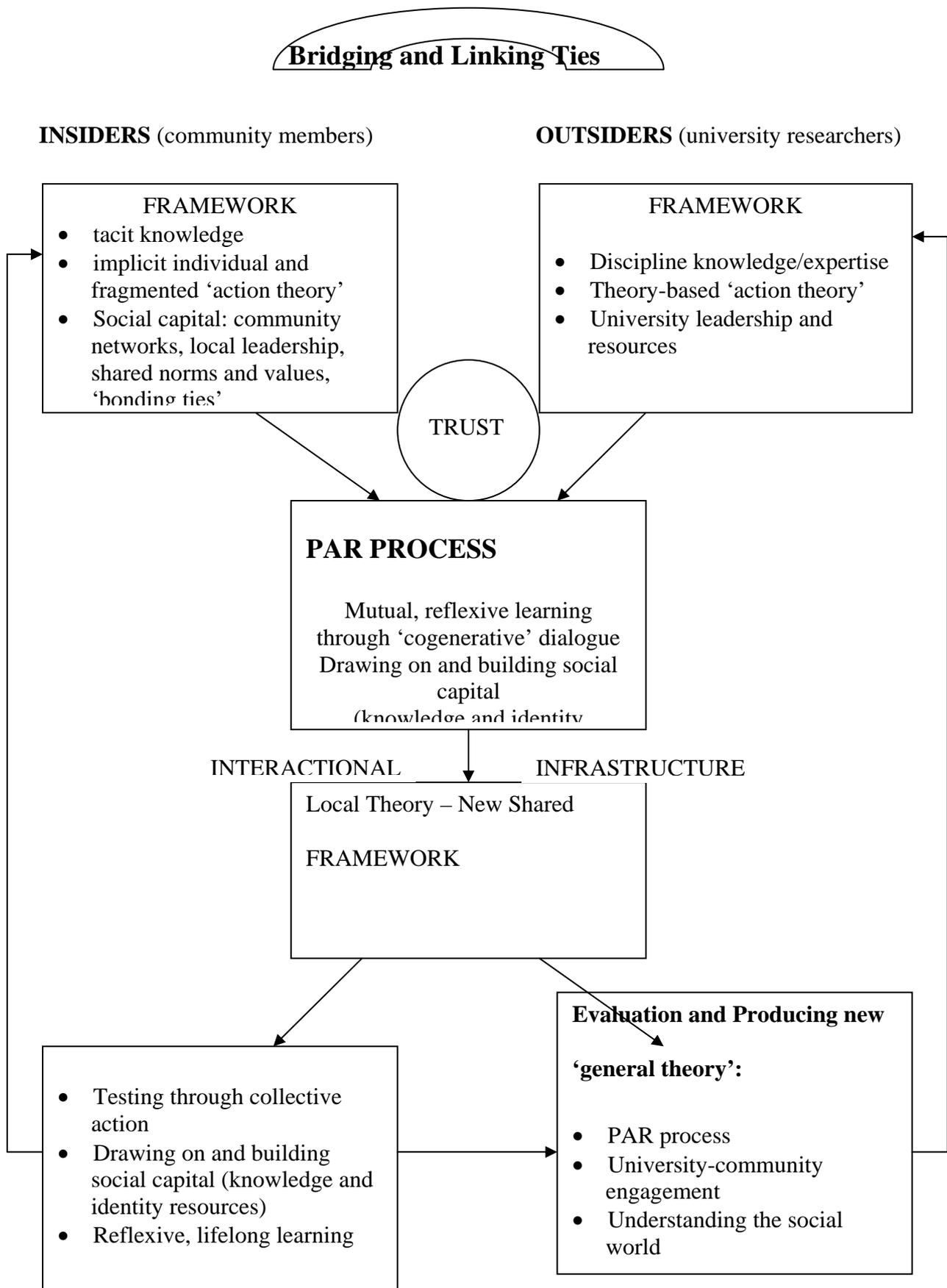
Using participatory action research to enhance university-community engagement, foster lifelong learning and build social capital

The authors contend that successful engagement of universities with their communities through ongoing cycles of collaborative, participatory action research (PAR) and evaluation projects such as those that are the subject of this paper have the potential to foster lifelong learning and build social capital in these communities whilst contributing to a better understanding of people's relationships with their social or 'lifeworlds'. The diagram at Figure 3, which builds on Max Elden and Morten Levin's (1991) "Cogenerative Model" of PAR, illustrates how, through the processes of inquiry, dialogic learning and reflection on action inherent in the participatory action research process, participants are engaging in a "reflexive" (Edwards, Ranson and Strain, 2002) and "transformative" (Mezirow, 1996) learning process that both draws on and builds social capital (Balatti and Falk, 2001). The model illustrates how collaborative research and evaluation projects can build bridging and linking ties between formal education institutions and communities to enhance both the situated, informal and non-formal learning that occurs in communities and organisations by facilitating a more structured, systematic and reflexive

learning process as well as more formal, academic learning through the generation of theory that is grounded in practice.

The diagram highlights the importance of the role of the 'broker', seen as critical in the establishment of relationships based on trust and mutual respect. In this case, the role of broker is undertaken by a long-standing member of the local community who is also an employee of the university in question.

Figure 3: Using PAR to foster lifelong learning and build social capital



Critical Success Factors for University-Community Engagement

In *Building a culture of improvement through evaluation in university/regional community engagement*, Garlick and Langworthy (n.d.) present six criteria of “mutuality or reciprocity” against which universities can measure their engagement activities. The following table measures the evaluation of the GBCEN project against these and other criteria and makes a comparison between that project and a subsequent collaborative research project currently being undertaken with the same community. Additional criteria have been added to those identified by Garlick and Langworthy based on the outcomes of this research and validated in the community engagement literature.

Table 1: 10 critical success factors for university-community engagement

10 Critical Success Factors for University- Community Engagement	GBCEN Evaluation Project	Current collaborative PAR project
Having a clear and agreed purpose to the relationship	✓	✓
Having a demonstrated commitment of resource and leadership		✓
Evidence of trust	✓	✓
Results oriented to meet agreed priority areas identified by the community		✓
Having a shared vision	✓	✓
Sustainable over the long run		✓
Interdisciplinary involvement from the university		✓
Enshrined in a written agreement (MOU)		✓
Commitment to learning	✓	✓
Acknowledgement of and respect for ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ roles, knowledge, expertise and perspectives	✓	✓

It is quite clear, in retrospect, that the absence of a number of critical success factors presented significant challenges for the success of the evaluation of the GBCEN project and contributes to the limitations of the research identified earlier. In contrast, it is evident that the current project – which has all 10 critical success factors – is more mature and has greater chances of success. An important point to note here is the need for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of university-community engagement activities to ensure these learnings are taken on board for the benefit of future projects, as recommended by Garlick and Langworthy. The risks to successful university-community engagement of well-intentioned but under-resourced collaborations cannot be over-estimated and unfortunately, even with the best

of good will, trust and honourable intentions, irreparable damage can be done when university researchers are unable to follow through on their undertakings due to absence of the critical 'community engagement infrastructure' listed above.

Drawing on learnings from this and other current PAR projects, the authors are in agreement with many of the recommendations of Garlick and Langworthy (n.d.), who state that "enhancing human capital outcomes, contributing to social capital and developing the skills to translate new ideas into meaningful outcomes ('enterprising') is core business for higher education institutions" (p 15). This requires universities to transform their understanding of community engagement as "service to the community" that takes third place after "teaching" (conceptualised exclusively as students enrolled in formal programs and courses) and traditional academic research, and explore new ways of doing teaching, learning and research through authentic and meaningful engagement with the communities they serve. Investment in ongoing evaluation of community engagement will serve to ensure that, over time, the real value of connections between universities and their communities can be realised.

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Events Research As A Means Of Fostering University-Community Engagement

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Abstract:

In an Australian context, the pursuit of economic rationalism by successive governments at both the federal and state level has had a profound effect on the workings of local municipalities. A direct outcome of the rationalist agenda has been that local authorities have reformed their internal structures and developed a commercial orientation that mirrors that of the private sector. In particular, local authorities have introduced strategic practices that are responsive to their outside environment. As a case in point, local authorities recognise the importance of strategically allocating resources to 'local events' in order to promote economic development and tourism within their respective regions. At the same time, local authorities appreciate that while 'local events' affect the social fabric of the local community, the social impact of some events is obviously going to be far greater than others. From the perspective of local authorities, this poses a number of questions; most notably, to what extent should local events be supported, and correspondingly, what form should the support take. The effective allocation of scarce local resources requires that local events are assessed in a systematic and objective manner. Universities are well placed to respond to community needs in this regard. To this end, the current study, commissioned by the City of Greater Bendigo with the support and assistance of the Elmore Field Days Organising Committee, sets out to investigate the economic and social impact of the Elmore Field Days on the Bendigo regional economy, and identify how visitors to the field days perceived Bendigo as a tourist destination. At the same time, a key objective of the research was to provide the Elmore Field Days Organising Committee with a comprehensive evaluation of how patrons and exhibitors perceived their 'Elmore experience'. The research is part of the City of Greater Bendigo's strategic plan to work collaboratively with event organisers and imbed major events into the social and economic fabric of the Bendigo region. A key facet of the research was the involvement of students in the collection of data. This enabled students to apply and reflect upon the skills learnt at University in a 'real world' environment. The 'real world' nature of the study invoked a high level of emotional involvement on the part of students. The current study provides an exemplar of how a community oriented project undertaken in a collaborative framework has the capacity to be mutually beneficial for all stakeholders, namely; the local authority, event organisers, the local university and its students, and most importantly, the local community.

Introduction

In an Australian context, the importance of university-community engagement has taken on added significance as a result of government reforms to the higher education sector. In short, Australia's political leaders, particularly at the federal level, have called the tertiary sector to account. A key component of the prevailing policy regime is the need for universities to demonstrate the relevance of their research and teaching activities to the economic, social and cultural objectives of the communities that they serve. This is in line with the views of Boyer (1994), who argues that the activities of universities need to be more directly related to the realities of contemporary life. Thus, as opposed to being merely 'in' the community, universities are striving to be 'of' the community (Paterson, 2001). More specifically, universities are actively seeking to engage with communities in meaningful and mutually beneficial ways that unite town and gown and enrich the common good (Bond & Paterson, 2005). The aim of this paper is to present a framework for university-community engagement using events research as the interface. In pursuit of this objective, the paper is structured as follows. First, the terms 'community' and 'community engagement' are defined. This is preceded by an overview articulating how local authorities in Australia have become focussed on providing 'best value' to the communities that they serve. Integral to the process of providing 'best value', is the need for local authorities to determine the extent and form of assistance to extend to 'local events.' The paper posits that universities are well placed to assist local authorities in making evaluative decisions vis-à-vis local events by facilitating the development of sustained partnerships between local authorities and event organisers that are mutually beneficial for all stakeholders, namely; the local authority, event organisers, the local university and its students, and most importantly, the local community. The event under analysis for the purposes of the paper is the 2006 Elmore Field Days. In this regard, the paper outlines the method adopted in the analysis of the said event, and provides an overview of the findings of the investigation. This is followed by a discussion highlighting the benefits gained and lessons learnt from participating in the engagement process. Finally, the paper closes by providing a succinct summary of the arguments presented throughout its discourse.

Community and Community Engagement Defined

The concept of community is a contentious issue that has been examined by numerous scholars from varying disciplines (Harrington, 1997). While an authoritative definition of community is yet to be provided, a review of the literature reveals that two broad themes underlie the nature of community. First, community is a function of locality (Dawson, Burnett & O'Donohue, 2006). In this regard, a major regional centre such as Bendigo and its surrounding service area provides an exemplar of a spatial community. Service area in this context includes people who live in small surrounding

townships, which for the purposes of this paper is Elmore and its encompassing district, and who commute to the central hub, in this case Bendigo, in order to access work opportunities, retail facilities and government services. Second, community is defined in terms of common interest (Chipuer & Pretty, 1999). Thus, in relation to a particular 'event', the various stakeholders to same have a shared common interest that the said event is a success. To summarise, based upon the themes identified above, the term community implies that people form relationships as a result of either common proximity or common interest. Each of these notions, namely, common proximity and common interest, underpins the definition of community adopted for the purposes of this paper.

Having defined the term 'community', it is important to operationalise what we mean by 'community engagement'. For the purposes of the paper, community engagement is defined as a two way dyadic interaction in which a university forms a relationship with a community that yields mutually beneficial outcomes and builds community capacity (Holland, 2001). Capacity in this context refers to the ability of a community to face issues, deal with problems and realise aspirations (Hartley, 2002). Key to our definition of community engagement is the sharing of knowledge between the various stakeholders constituting the dyadic relationship. As espoused by Holland (2001), community in this sense is more than a client with a problem in need of investigation; rather, the community influences and shapes the research process adopted by the university in the investigation of the said problem. Thus, engagement in our mind embodies co-operation and shared power, and results in a pareto improvement for all stakeholders – i.e. an improvement in their welfare. In terms of the current project, community engagement involved the development of a deep and meaningful partnership between three parties, namely; the Office of City Futures at the City of Greater Bendigo, the Elmore Field Days Organising Committee and the Centre for Sustainable Regional Communities at La Trobe University Bendigo. The engagement process previously outlined provided the intellectual bridge that connected the three parties in a sustained partnership and enabled them to achieve outcomes that were mutually beneficial.

Local Authorities in Australia

Since the early 1990's, local authorities in Australia have undergone wholesale reform as a result of policy changes implemented by successive governments at both the federal and state level (Worthington & Dollery, 2002). Under the rubric of microeconomic reform, both Commonwealth and State Governments, regardless of their political persuasion, have emphasised the need for local authorities to be more accountable and transparent in their operations, to be more responsive to their external environment, and to be more efficient and effective in the pursuit of their objectives (Chapman, 1997). The advancement of this rationalist agenda by both the Commonwealth and the States has resulted in local authorities reforming their internal structures and developing a commercial orientation that mirrors that of the private sector.

Integral to the prevailing policy regime has been the requirement that local authorities undertake strategic planning which seeks to satisfy the needs and aspirations of their local communities. The over-riding goal of this strategic planning process has been to ensure that local resources are allocated as efficiently and effectively as possible.

As a result of the policy induced changes described above, there has been a sea-change in how local authorities perceive their function. Whereas the philosophy of local authorities in the past was one of regulation and stewardship, their current philosophy involves ensuring that their resources are utilised as efficiently and effectively as possible, and that they provide 'best value' to the communities that they serve on an ongoing basis (Wensing, 1997). Universities are well positioned to assist local authorities in the pursuit of this latter philosophy (Nanere & Reimers, 2006). In particular, universities can utilise their intellectual resources to help local authorities achieve 'best value' by facilitating the development of sustained partnerships between local authorities and outside entities. In terms of the current paper, events research provides the vehicle by which we illustrate how a university can foster a collaborative relationship between disparate parties which is mutually beneficial for all stakeholders; namely, the local authority, event organisers, the local university and its students, and most importantly, the local community.

Local Authorities and Events

Events are not only part of the social fabric of communities, more often than not they are important drivers of economic and social development. In this sense, local authorities recognise the importance of strategically allocating resources to local events in order to promote economic development and tourism within their respective regions. At the same time, local authorities appreciate that while local events affect the social fabric of the 'local community,' the social impact of some events is obviously going to be far greater than others. From the perspective of local authorities, this poses a number of questions, most notably, to what extent should local events be supported, and correspondingly, what form should the support take. In line with the policy regime outlined earlier, the effective allocation of scarce local resources requires that local events are assessed in a systematic and objective manner (Wood, 2005). It is vital that information is gathered during and after each event in order to ascertain whether the event is meeting its economic and/or social objectives. An evaluative framework provides local authorities a mechanism by which to assess events in terms of the criteria previously specified. In effect, the development of a comprehensive evaluative framework provides local authorities a method by which to make informed decisions as to: (1.) how much support they should offer to particular events, and (2.) what form the support should take. The intellectual resources and capabilities of universities are ideally suited to assist in the development of such a framework.

The Elmore Field Days – An Opportunity for Engagement

The Elmore and District Machinery Field Days hereafter referred to as the 'Elmore Field Days,' or alternatively, the 'field days,' is an annual event that was first staged in 1964 along the banks of the Campaspe River. The event has progressively improved since its inception in 1964, so much so, that it is now regarded as one of the premier field day events in Australia (Holmberg, 2004). With respect to the 2006 field days, in excess of 48,000 patrons attended the event over the three days it was held, correspondingly, 600 exhibitors accompanied by 1400 auxiliary staff were present at the event.

The field days are administered by an elected committee consisting of local farmers and district residents. The committee is voluntary in nature and consists of thirty-five members. In addition to the organising committee, 600+ volunteers from the local community are pivotal to the success of the event. The over-riding objective of the field days is to present the farming community of Victoria and Southern NSW with the latest innovations in agricultural products and services, with a particular emphasis on innovations in farm machinery (Shotton, 2006). At the same time, the committee has recognised the need to include exhibitors within the field days that appeal not only to the agricultural sector, but to the community in general (Shotton, 2006).

Profits generated from staging the field days are used to further develop and maintain the field days site. Surplus profits are distributed throughout the surrounding community in the form of donations to help fund infrastructure and local activities. As a not for profit event, the Elmore Field Days is an exemplar of what an engaged rural community is capable of achieving, i.e. in excess of \$1.7 million in surplus profits have been donated back into the community over the forty-three years of the event (Elmore & Machinery Field Days Incorporated, 2006). In light of the preceding points, two things are abundantly clear. First, the field days are administered by the community for the community, and second, the event provides the rural township of Elmore with a truly unique identity, an identity which members of the local community are only too happy to perpetuate.

Over and above its impact on the township of Elmore, city officials at the City of Greater Bendigo are of the opinion that the Elmore phenomenon has a positive affect on the regional Bendigo economy. By way of illustration, many people 'stay over' in the Bendigo area over the course of the field days, these visitors, in turn, stimulate income and output in the Bendigo region. In a similar vein, many of the exhibitors at the field days are based in and around the Bendigo district, elementary economic theory infers that a significant portion of the sales made by these firms at the event are retained and expended within the district. Juxtaposed with the economic impact of the field days is the social impact of the event. The general consensus amongst city officials is that the event enhances social connectedness within the broader Bendigo region.

Based upon our discussion above, both the City of Greater Bendigo (CGB) and the Elmore Field Days Organising Committee (EFDOC) have a vested interest in developing the potential of the field days, hence their willingness to engage in a collaborative research relationship with the Centre for Sustainable Regional Communities (CSRC) at La Trobe University Bendigo. The objective of the partnership is to expose the field days to rigorous investigation and provide the CGB and the EFDOC with useful research and management intelligence with a view to improving the outcomes of the event from the perspective of both parties.

Stakeholders and Their Research Objectives

The Local Authority – The City of Greater Bendigo

The City of Greater Bendigo is confronted by a multitude of competing demands in deciding the extent and form of assistance to extend to local events. In order to assist city officials in deciding the level and nature of support to offer to future Elmore Field Days, the following broad research objectives were identified as being relevant to their decision.

- To identify the number of Bendigo based firms exhibiting at the field days and quantify the level of sales made by these firms as a result of their presence at the event.
- To quantify the benefits the city receives in terms of accommodation and entertainment expenditure as a result of visitors attending the Elmore Field Days.
- To identify how visitors to the Elmore Field Days perceived the City of Greater Bendigo as a visitor/tourist destination.
- To identify the perceived social benefits of the event.

The Elmore Field Days Organising Committee

As stated, the Elmore Field Days is administered on a purely voluntary basis. The business structure that the committee utilises is that of an incorporated association, namely; Elmore & District Machinery Field Days Incorporated, hereafter referred to as Elmore Incorporated. Elmore Incorporated owns the field days site and recently renamed the property the 'Elmore Events Centre.' While the core objective of the organising committee is to preserve the tradition of the field days and develop the events future potential, the committee is equally keen to use the field days site and its facilities for functions and events other than the field days; for example, conferences, demonstrations, expos and festivals. In consultation with the organising committee, the following research objectives were identified as being relevant to the goals specified above.

- To determine how patrons and exhibitors viewed the Elmore Field Days.
- To identify what improvements and/or changes patrons and exhibitors suggest need to be made to the facilities and/or services at the field days site.
- To provide cross sectional profiles of the patrons and exhibitors in attendance at the event.

La Trobe University – The Centre for Sustainable Regional Communities

The research objectives of the authors, both of whom are attached to the Centre for Sustainable Regional Communities, can be summarised thus:

- To build collaborative relationships with the stakeholders previously identified and demonstrate the potential for ongoing links between the university and the said stakeholders.
- To involve students in a research project predicated by reciprocity and educate the students as to the nature of community engagement.
- To provide students with practical research skills.
- To obtain data and experience for the purposes of advancing our research and teaching activities.

Methodology

Given the nature and objectives of the project, participatory action research (PAR) was considered the most appropriate method to adopt for the purposes of the investigation. Participatory action research is an inclusive form of research that concentrates on understanding the relationships among people, and between people and their environments (McNiff, Lomax & Whitehead, 2003). As a research technique, PAR requires co-operation between researchers and their client personnel (Friere, 1990). In this sense, participatory action research emphasises the idea that knowledge generation is an outcome of dialogue between researchers and their clients (Coughlan & Coughlan, 2002).

The first step in the PAR process involved making contact with stakeholders, namely, city officials from the City of Greater Bendigo and senior representatives of the Elmore Field Days Organising Committee. The aims of the project were identified from the perspective of each of the stakeholders and matched with the resources and capabilities of the Centre for Sustainable Regional Communities (CSRC). Upon clearly defining the projects aims, staff and students attached to the CSRC set about designing survey instruments in consultation with event organisers and city officials. The choice of survey instruments for the purposes of data collection was based on the research of

Wood (2005), who argues that in comparison to other data collection techniques, survey instruments are the most effective means of evaluating 'local events'. The merits of survey instruments in the appraisal of 'local events' has also been advocated by Dwyer, Mellor, Mistilis and Mules (2000) and Fredline and Faulkner (2000). In line with the objectives of the constituent stakeholders, two separate questionnaires were designed for the purposes of the project – a patron questionnaire and an exhibitor questionnaire. The process adopted in the design of the survey instruments was iterative, in that, questionnaires were passed around the various stakeholders for the purposes of scrutiny and amendment.

As stated, the project involved the design of two separate questionnaires. In this respect, the patron questionnaire involved the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data and was purposefully designed for interviewer-completion. Under the supervision of academic staff, survey data was collected over the three days of the event by means of on-site intercepts by marketing and commerce students specifically trained and employed for the task. While intercept interviewing is relatively more expensive than other data collection methods, the response rate is generally much higher and the resulting data more complete (Veal, 2005). Students employed for the purposes of data collection were also responsible for entering the data into SPSS.

In order to gauge the success of the field days from the perspective of exhibitors, the stakeholders felt that the exhibitor survey needed to be conducted after the field days had concluded, thereby giving exhibitors a chance to reflect on their Elmore experience. To this end, a comprehensive mail survey accompanied by an information sheet was distributed to exhibitors two weeks after the event had concluded. Like the patron survey, the exhibitor survey involved the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. Similar to our comments above, students were utilised for the purposes of data entry.

Data obtained as a result of the exhibitor and patron surveys was subsequently analysed by academic staff using SPSS. Consistent with the brief from the City of Greater Bendigo, draft reports were prepared presenting the findings of the research. The purpose of the draft reports was to ensure that the stated objectives of both the City of Greater Bendigo and the Elmore Field Days Organising Committee had been met, and that the findings of the research were presented in a form that both parties could comprehend. Once it was determined that the objectives of both parties had been satisfied and that the findings of the research were presented in a form that suited their individual needs, final reports were prepared and distributed amongst stakeholders.

Summary of Findings - Patron Report

- In excess of 48,000 people attended the Elmore Field Days. There was an eclectic mix of patrons at the event with both sexes and all age groups well

represented in the attendee profile. Primary producers were overwhelmingly the largest attendee cohort at the event.

- Significantly, 59% of respondents travelled from outside the commuting range of Bendigo, (defined as 76km or more from Bendigo), in order to attend the field days. Extrapolating this finding to the population, this equates to 28,000+ people travelling from outside the commuting range of Bendigo in order to attend the event. Many respondents cited the atmosphere of the field days, in particular, the friendliness of the people at the field days, as to why they attended the event.
- In terms of family participation, 75% of respondents attended the field days as part of a family group. Family in this context refers to an individual attending the event with their partner and/or children.
- On the whole, respondents were curious about each of the product categories on display at the field days. Of particular note, 74% of respondents were interested in the farming, hardware, general and recreational displays.
- While the reasons for attendance at the field days were predominantly to look, learn and buy, a significant number of people attended the event in order to network, catch-up and be entertained.
- Respondents were impressed with the facilities at the field days site with 95% of respondents rating the facilities as either good or excellent. Notwithstanding this result, respondents made a number of suggestions as to how the facilities could be improved. Most prominent amongst the recommendations was the desire for more shaded areas and seating at the site.
- While 76% of respondents rated the services provided at the field days as good to excellent, 20% of respondents were unaware as to the range of services available at the event.
- Across the spectrum of respondents, 94% were either satisfied or very satisfied with the event. In this respect, a significant positive relationship exists between the quality of the facilities and services provided at the field days site and the satisfaction of respondents. Similarly, a significant positive relationship exists between the organisational capabilities of the volunteer staff at the field days and the satisfaction of respondents.
- In excess of 80% of respondents had attended the field days before. An overwhelming 91% of respondents intended to attend the event again in the future. A very strong relationship exists between the satisfaction of respondents with the field days and their loyalty to the event.
- While many respondents 'stayed over' in Bendigo, on average three nights, over the course of the event; there appears to be an awareness problem amongst respondents as to what Bendigo has to offer as a visitor/tourist destination. On the whole, respondents did not actively participate in the wider tourism and hospitality opportunities available in the Greater Bendigo region. It is estimated that visitors spent \$400,000+

on accommodation and entertainment expenditure while staying over in the City of Greater Bendigo (CGB). Many of the respondents who stayed over in the CGB stayed with family and friends.

Summary of Findings - Exhibitor Report

- Six hundred exhibitors accompanied by 1,400 auxiliary staff attended the field days. There was a diverse range of exhibitors at the event with both sexes and all ages, other than the under 20's, well represented in the exhibitor profile. Exhibitors displaying farming equipment made up the largest exhibitor cohort.
- While the majority of exhibitors travelled from towns within Victoria to attend the field days, slightly over 22% of respondents travelled from interstate or overseas. Significantly, 74% of respondents travelled from outside the commuting range of Bendigo, (defined as 76km or more from Bendigo), in order to attend the field days.
- In excess of 88% of respondents had exhibited at the field days before. An overwhelming 91% of respondents intended to exhibit at the event in the future. A very strong relationship exists between the satisfaction of respondents with the field days and their loyalty to the event.
- Respondents were incredibly impressed with the event, with 91% of respondents rating the field days overall as either good or excellent. Based upon their responses to the open ended questions, the following features of the field days were liked by respondents. The size of the event – Elmore attracts a large number of patrons who are prepared to spend their money. The administration of the event; in particular, the helpfulness and professionalism of the volunteer staff at the field days. Finally, the overall presentation and layout of the field days site impressed respondents. Notwithstanding these comments, there is scope for improvement with respect to the facilities provided at the field days site. Most prominent amongst the recommendations was the need for more seating and shaded areas at the site, and the desire that the roads at the site be improved in terms of dust suppression.
- The business operations of slightly under 20% of respondents are located in and around the Bendigo district. It is estimated that these firms, in aggregate, made in excess of \$3 million in sales at the field days. Correspondingly, it is estimated that these same firms, in aggregate, stood to make an additional \$5.6 million in sales, i.e. in the foreseeable future, as a result of their attendance at the field days.
- While many respondents 'stayed over' in Bendigo, on average four nights, over the course of the event; there appears to be an awareness problem amongst respondents as to what Bendigo has to offer as a visitor/tourist destination. On the whole, respondents did not actively participate in the wider tourism and hospitality opportunities available in the Greater

Bendigo region. It is estimated that visitors spent \$125,000+ on accommodation and entertainment expenditure while staying over in the City of Greater Bendigo (CGB). Many of the respondents who stayed over in the CGB stayed with family and friends.

Benefits of Engagement

Arguably the ultimate payoff for each of the stakeholders involved in the Elmore project was the development of what Putnam (1995) terms social capital. Social capital in this context refers to the generalized trust, the norms of cooperation and the networks of association that evolved between the parties as a result of them engaging in a collaborative research relationship. The aforesaid attributes enabled the constituent parties to coordinate their efforts with a view to achieving mutual benefit. The benefits accruing to each of the stakeholders are now examined in turn.

From the perspective of the City of Greater Bendigo (CGB), the research was undertaken in order to provide a conceptual and practical framework for identifying the economic and social impact of the Elmore Field Days on the regional Bendigo economy. In terms of the economic impact of the event, the findings of the study clearly indicate that the event injects millions of dollars into the broader Bendigo region. Yet, at the same time, the results of the study imply that the economic impact of the field days on the CGB can be enhanced. In particular, the potential exists to increase the number of visitors who stay over in the Bendigo region over the course of the event and sample what the district has to offer as a visitor/tourist destination. Likewise, of the visitors who currently stay over in the Bendigo region in order to experience the field days, very few actively participate in the wider tourism and hospitality opportunities available in and around the Bendigo district. This latter finding suggests that there is an awareness problem amongst visitors as to what Bendigo has to offer as a stay over destination.

Based upon the findings articulated above, it would seem that in order for the CGB to fully realise the economic potential the field days offer the Bendigo region, the CGB needs to raise its profile at the event. In effect, the CGB needs to go beyond merely supporting the event, it also needs to be an active participant at the event, i.e. as an exhibitor, and showcase what the Bendigo region has to offer as a visitor/tourist destination. In other words, the CGB needs to develop a 'Bendigo Brand' whereby visitors to the field days have a clear perception as to what the Bendigo district has to offer as a stay over destination. The development of a 'Bendigo Brand' was one of the key recommendations made to the City of Greater Bendigo as a result of the study.

Over and above the economic impact of the field days on the regional Bendigo economy, the findings of the study infer that the event demonstrates real social inclusiveness, in support of this contention, consider the following. The mass appeal of the field days can in large part be attributed to the

atmosphere of the event, in particular, the friendliness of the people in attendance at the event. In this regard, a key theme to emerge from the responses to the open ended questions incorporated in the patron survey was that the friendliness of the people at the field days fostered what can best be described as social belonging. Respondents described how they perceived a connection between themselves and other patrons at the field days. Likewise, respondents reported a nexus between themselves and the exhibitors at the field days. The authors surmise that the feeling of social belonging reported by respondents can be attributed to the fact that they shared common views, values, aspirations and/or interests.

The notion of social belonging postulated above may explain why so many people, many of whom were from Bendigo, attended the field days as part of a family group. That is to say, they wanted to experience social belonging with their loved ones in a convivial atmosphere. Similarly, the opportunity to mix with likeminded individuals may explain why so many people travelled from afar in order to attend the field days. In the minds of the authors, the social inclusiveness proffered by the Elmore phenomenon provides further evidence to support the view that the City of Greater Bendigo needs to adopt a more visible profile at the field days, i.e. as an exhibitor, and showcase what the Bendigo region has to offer as a visitor/tourist destination. Showcasing the district would provide the CGB a mechanism by which to foster social connectedness amongst attendees at the field days. At the same time, showcasing the region would enable the CGB to capitalise on the social inclusiveness of the event by selling Bendigo and its surrounds to people in attendance at the event. In other words, the social inclusiveness proffered by the field days has the potential to deliver the CGB future economic benefits in the form of patrons revisiting the region at a later date and experiencing what the region has to offer as a visitor/tourist destination. As a result of the research, city officials are now cognizant of the connection previously outlined and the potential it offers the CGB.

In relation to the Elmore Field Days Organising Committee, the benefits of the engagement process can be summarised thus. Foremost, the study clearly demonstrates the drawing power of the field days. The organising committee has been successful in developing an event that not only appeals to the agricultural sector, but to the community in general. Without a doubt, the Elmore phenomenon is an event that has mass appeal across a broad cross section of people. Notwithstanding this finding, the potential exists to improve the facilities and services offered at the field days site. As a result of the study, the organising committee has been provided with valuable management intelligence which it can utilise for the purposes of improving future events proposed to be held at the 'Elmore Events Centre'. In particular, the committee has been made aware that there is a need for more seating and shading at the site, and that the roads at the site need to be improved in terms of dust suppression. In a similar vein, it has been drawn to the committee's attention that there is an awareness problem amongst some people as to the range of services available at the site.

Along with the City of Greater Bendigo and the Elmore Field Days Organising Committee, staff and students attached to the Centre for Sustainable Regional Communities benefited as a result of their participation in the Elmore project. Most notably, the authors of the paper were presented with compelling evidence that student involvement in a research project is an effective way to inform students as to the nature of the research process. However, in order for students to benefit from this form of experiential learning, it is critical that the doing and thinking aspects of the project are clearly linked (Healy, 2005). Student comments in relation to the design of the Elmore project indicated that the pedagogical framework developed by the authors for the purposes of undertaking the investigation successfully integrated the doing and thinking aspects of the project. In support of this contention, consider the following.

Many of the students involved in the project stated that the nature of the investigation, in particular, being given the opportunity to contribute to the survey design and participate in data collection, encouraged them to adopt and utilise deep approaches to learning. The students attributed their adoption of deep learning strategies to the fact that the project represented the first opportunity they had been given to apply and reflect upon the skills they had acquired at university in a real world environment. The real world nature of the study also invoked a high level of emotional involvement on the part of the students. That is to say, students did not view the investigation as simply an academic exercise to be completed in an allotted time; rather, they genuinely felt a connection to the project. This emotional connection may explain why so many of the students volunteered to be involved in future research projects planned by the CSRC.

Beyond the factors identified above, students indicated that they obtained a number of other benefits as a result of taking part in the Elmore project. These included, increased self confidence, increased self esteem, enhanced communication skills, and a deeper appreciation as to what civic mindedness and community engagement can offer local communities. Likewise, students specified that they felt more comfortable in their ability to work in a team environment as a result of their participation in the research project. Finally, students perceived benefits for future employment from their involvement in the study.

In first discussing the benefits of university-community engagement, it was posited that the ultimate payoff for each of the parties involved in the Elmore project was the development of social capital; more specifically, the generalized trust, the norms of cooperation and the networks of association that evolved between the parties as a result of them engaging in a collaborative research relationship. In this regard, the evolution of social capital has had a positive effect on the Centre for Sustainable Regional Communities (CSRC), in that it has raised the profile of the CSRC within the local Bendigo community. Correspondingly, the project has demonstrated to the City of Greater Bendigo (CGB) and the Elmore Field Days Organising Committee (EFDOC) the potential for ongoing links between the CGB, the EFDOC and the CSRC. Representatives of the CGB and the EFDOC have

expressed the view that they look forward to working collaboratively with the CSRC on future research projects. It is envisaged that the projects mooted by the CGB and the EFDOC will provide quality research opportunities for staff and students aligned with the CSRC.

Lessons Learnt from Engagement

The key lesson learnt from the Elmore project is that university-community engagement is an incredibly complex process. This in large part can be attributed to the cultural differences that exist between campus and community in terms of how each approaches the issue of problem solving (Bender, 1993). Academics by virtue of their training are contemplative and cautious in the generation of knowledge, and view knowledge as residing in specialized experts (Bringle, Games & Malloy, 1999). Community leaders on the other hand are action oriented, focussed on results, and view knowledge as a pluralistic construct, that is, knowledge is to be found in many and varied sources throughout the community (Bringle et al., 1999). The pluralistic view of knowledge adopted by community leaders is to be expected when you consider that community leaders are responsible for making decisions that affect the lives of community members. The nature of community leadership necessitates that community leaders are driven by results, and that correspondingly, they have an expectation that tasks are completed quickly and efficaciously. In light of the points raised above, it is obvious that the differences that exist between campus and community in how they view knowledge and knowledge generation present a number of challenges for university-community research partnerships. What follows is a review and analysis of the challenges that emerged in relation to the Elmore project.

Relationships are at the heart of university-community engagement. Effective university-community engagement requires that each of the parties to the relationship respects and values what each of the other partners have to contribute to the relationship. In particular, academics have to acknowledge that they stand to learn as much from the community as the community stands to learn from academics. In other words, each of the parties constituting the relationship has to recognise that learning within the partnership is dyadic and underpinned by reciprocity. The key point to keep in mind; is that without mutual respect for what each partner brings to the relationship the relationship is doomed, and that any goodwill that may have existed between the parties will quickly dissipate.

A key factor underlying the success of the Elmore project was the mutual respect the stakeholders had for one another. This notwithstanding, during the initial stages of the engagement process there were differences of opinion as to what each of the stakeholders expected of the others. Likewise, the stakeholders differed in their expectations as to how long it would take to complete the project. A number of valuable lessons were learnt by the authors as a result of these differences in expectations. Foremost, it is absolutely critical during the initiation phase of the engagement process to

effectively communicate the perceived costs and potential benefits accruing to each of the community partners as a result of their participation in the engagement process. Similarly, it is essential that community partners are made aware from the outset of the project that academics fulfil a myriad of roles at university beyond that of research, namely, teaching, administration and supervision, and that the need to satisfy each of these roles inevitably slows the time taken to complete research projects.

In order for university-community engagement to be successful, academics have to work tirelessly on maintaining the relationship. Relational maintenance requires a number of key skills on the part of academics, in particular, the ability to be sensitive to what are often changing community needs, a willingness to respond to community concerns in a timely manner, and the capacity to accommodate the sometimes diverse opinions of community partners. At the same time, relational maintenance necessitates that academics obtain regular feedback from community partners in order to gauge their perceptions as to the nature and quality of the university-community partnership. In reference to this latter point, the authors maintained regular contact with city officials from the City of Greater Bendigo and representatives of the Elmore Field Days Organising Committee through email, telephone and on-site visits. As a result of being in regular contact with the constituent parties the authors learnt a valuable lesson, namely, it is not so much the frequency of the interactions that community partners are interested in; rather, it is the quality of the interactions that determines their satisfaction with the engagement process. However, it is important to qualify this finding, in that, while it applied to the Elmore project, this in no way implies that it can be generalised to other university-community projects.

In conclusion to this section, it is imperative in our role as educators to ensure that university-community partnerships are of as much benefit to our students as they are to the community. As previously stated, in order for students to gain intellectually from a university-community research project, the doing and thinking aspects of the project need to be integrated within a well designed pedagogical framework. The development of such a framework, while rewarding, is time consuming. It is important that academics are cognizant of this point before committing themselves to a university-community project; otherwise the potential exists for them to over commit themselves, which inevitably will have a detrimental effect on the learning experience of their students.

Conclusion

As a result of reforms to the higher education sector, universities are seeking ways to demonstrate their relevance to the economic, social and cultural objectives of the communities that they serve. This paper has illustrated that events research provides a mechanism by which universities can engage with communities in meaningful and mutually beneficial ways. For the purposes of the paper, the 2006 Elmore Field Days was the event under analysis. The study involved academic staff attached to the CSRC at La Trobe University Bendigo making contact and forming relationships with city officials from the

City of Greater Bendigo and senior representatives of the Elmore Field Days Organising Committee. Research objectives were identified from the perspective of each of the stakeholders and matched with the resources and capabilities of the CSRC. The benefits accruing to each of the stakeholders as a result of the research can be summarised thus. From the perspective of the City of Greater Bendigo, city officials have a greater awareness as to the economic and social impact of the Elmore Field Days on the broader Bendigo region. It is envisaged that the research will assist city officials in deciding the nature and level of support to extend to future Elmore Field Days. With respect to the Elmore Field Days Organising Committee, the committee has been provided with valuable management intelligence which it can utilise for the purposes of improving future events proposed to be held at the 'Elmore Events Centre'. Finally, in relation to the university, more specifically the CSRC, both staff and students attached to the CSRC gained intellectually as a result of their participation in the Elmore project. In particular, the authors of the paper have learnt that university-community engagement is an incredibly complex but rewarding process which requires a great deal of work on the part of academics if it is to be successful.

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Human capital, innovation and the productive ageing: Growth and senior aged health in the regional community through engaged higher education

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Abstract:

This paper examines how low relative economic growth and high service and infrastructure costs in non-metropolitan regions that are increasingly attractive to lifestyle-seeking seniors, can be offset by focussing more positively on the human capital dimension of this cohort through closer engagement with higher education learning and innovation.

At present, many senior-aged persons attracted to 'lifestyle' locations are allowed to let their knowledge, networks and skills ossify through a lack of engagement with processes of learning and innovation and institutional impediments of a structural and attitudinal nature. It represents poor return on sunk investment in human capital, has cost impacts on enabling health and community services and infrastructure and does not contribute as positively as it could to regional growth outcomes through productivity gains.

The spatial impact of this will exacerbate as the demographic profile of the nation continues to age. Higher education in these places could be a key instrument in the learning and innovation required to realise the greater productivity gains from senior-aged human capital and the consequential growth and health outcomes at the local and regional scale.

The paper reports on the literature, research undertaken and analysis to understand these potentially important issues of policy and practice. The paper has a particular focus on the Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay Burnett regions of Queensland which have some of the highest concentrations of senior aged people in Australia.

Setting the scene

According to the World Health Organisation, the global population over the age of 60 is increasing faster than any other cohort (WHO 2002). Education and learning are regarded importantly by seniors as assisting them to more fully engage in a rapidly changing society (Cameron, et al 2001). Seniors being actively engaged has positive health benefits (Butler 2002, Boulton-Laws, et al 2006). Cruikshank (2003) argues that one of the ways older people can self-reinvent themselves is through education and learning, but that institutions are not yet particularly supportive in terms of the provision of

access to technology and modes of education despite the rhetoric of life-long learning.

An Australian study identified six barriers facing older workers in obtaining and benefiting from education and training: These were: the absence of paid work; a decline with age in the capacity to learn; particular education and occupational characteristics of the current older age cohort; a policy environment that encourages early retirement; discrimination by employers, and; older persons' self perceptions about the lack of value in undertaking further training (Wooden, VandenHeuvel, Cully and Curtain, 2001). The report suggests the need to raise public awareness through legislation and at the workplace level, by promoting lifelong learning; and improving access to training for older unemployed persons.

However while education and learning are viewed importantly by many older people, a connection between their desire to take up more education and learning and the impact it can have on the stock of human capital as a determinant of economic growth is not yet made in the literature. In this paper we are interested in how active seniors, as human capital, can download their knowledge within a framework of engagement with higher education and innovation to generate increased productivity outcomes.

In particular, we are interested in the spatial aspects of an ageing population as the impacts of it are viewed most acutely in small regional locations where there is a certain 'attractiveness' for living because of 'more favourable climate', relatively lower living costs, connectivity with the community, and access to relevant services (Salt 2003, National Economics 2003). We are also interested in the spatial aspects of senior-aged human capital generation because of the increased concentration of regional growth and decline (Garlick et al 2007) and the regionalisation of higher education in certain locations that has occurred over the past two decades (Garlick 2000).

Recent studies and reports into the spatial economic implications of an ageing population in Australia have generally focussed on two areas. First, the disproportionate negative cost impact of providing enabling local community and health services and infrastructure. Second, there is an apparent correlation between high levels of senior in-migration driven population growth in some regions and their poor economic growth performance. This point is argued on the basis of the cumulative impact of reduced per capita consumption expenditure from fixed incomes, low non-housing investment expenditure and the low realised productivity of this cohort (National Economics 2006).

Thus, the spatial incidence of an ageing population in economic terms is at risk of being seen only in a negative way, or at best as unpaid volunteerism. This view sees the regional economy with a high concentration of senior aged people, only in service support terms rather than as a potential source of high value-added production and professional skills, and it sees no worth in further realising the tacit knowledge of years of sunk investment in human capital.

The only ameliorative policy suggestions for the spatial economic impact of an ageing population relate to the subsidisation of local service provision in high senior-aged migration areas (National Economics 2003), or boosting regional economic growth in these areas through initiatives that seek to offset the so-called 'negative spatial effect' of this growing cohort (National Economics 2006).

These negative views about the impact of an ageing population are not new as Lloyd-Sherlock (2004) has outlined. The World Bank (1994) has stated:

“The world is approaching an old age crisis...The proportion of the population that is old is expanding rapidly, swelling the potential economic burden on the young.” [in Lloyd-Sherlock, p.5]

In this paper we argue a different position in relation to the 'productive ageing' that sees their spatial incidence in terms of: (a) extending the human capital return on accumulated tacit knowledge in ways that enhance 'knowledge economy' outcomes in the region, and; (b) viewing the engagement of higher education as the vehicle for realising this human capital through learning and innovation. In presenting this case we focus on the Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay regions of Queensland, two of the fastest senior-aged population growth regions in Australia. We also report on research into the opinions of stakeholders that were gathered in several focus groups and structured workshops over the past two years.

Literature themes

The extent of the spatial incidence of an ageing population is identified in a number of sources including the *State of the Regions* report (National Economics, 2003) and Salt (2003). These reports highlight so-called 'lifestyle' regions that have more than 25 percent of their population aged 55 years and over, compared to a national average in this age cohort of 22 percent. Regions with the highest concentrations, averaging around 30 percent of their population aged 55 and over, include Wide Bay-Burnett Qld, Sunshine Coast Qld, Central Coast NSW, Mid-North Coast NSW, Richmond-Tweed NSW, and Central Adelaide SA.

The Commonwealth, states, many local councils and non-government organisations have now developed strategic plans that attempt to recognise issues relating to an aging population. Embedded in these plans is a recognition that apart from issues to do with health and well-being, financial and physical security and access and mobility, there are matters to do with future economic development.

The Commonwealth Government's *National Strategy for an Ageing Australia: An Older Australia Challenges and Opportunities for all* (2001) talks about opportunities for Australians to make a lifetime contribution to society and the economy, including through training and professional development, and 'lifelong learning for mature age workers and learners (p.2). The *Strategy* says, that for Australia to "...achieve sustained economic growth, there will

have to be a continuation of current productivity growth and better utilisation of the skills and experiences of mature-age workers.” (p.13). In the main however there is little discussion about how this will occur or what the role of the higher education institution might take in relation to lifelong learning.

At a state level, for example, the Queensland Department of Community Services issued a 1999 policy document *Our Shared Future: Queensland Framework for Ageing 2000-2004*, that specifies five principles and strategies that seek to improve a coordinated approach to the design and delivery of aged services. The policy paper recognises the contribution seniors can make through knowledge and learning to society, culture and the economy of their communities.

At a local government level, where there are relatively high concentrations of older ages, many councils are attempting to put strategic plans in place. For example, the Caloundra City Council on the Sunshine Coast, with 33 percent of its population aged 55 and over and estimated to be 45 percent by 2026, says in its 2007 strategy plan (*Positively Ageing in Caloundra City 2007 to 2017*) that it wants to develop a learning environment and to facilitate the sharing of knowledge of older people with younger people in the City.

In their study of ageing and the economy of the Wide Bay Burnett region, National Economics (2006) conclude that the only way the regional economy can boost its productivity levels is to balance the current ageing population growth with working-aged population growth and skilled migrant growth (p12). Such a conclusion assumes population growth as a driver for regional growth and assumes away the sunk investment in education and knowledge in endogenous senior aged human capital and the possibility that this can be realised through stronger engagement with higher education.

Regional growth

A study of the patterns and determinants of economic growth in 94 Australian regions between 1984 and 2002 by Garlick, Taylor and Plummer (2007) suggests population change is not a determinant of regional growth. It also suggests nearness to demand, business links, the power of the large corporation and access to information are not significant regional economic growth drivers. Human capital (based on education qualifications) has the most significant contribution to regional growth. Other positive determinants of regional growth are industry specialisation and technological change. Together, in their various combinations, these three positive determinants have a significant contribution to economic growth in all regions.

Regions with a relatively high proportion of population of senior ages have low economic growth due to the low level of human capital compared to the average for all regions. This low level of human capital in regions of low relative economic growth manifests in a brain drain of young graduates, underemployment of skills, sometimes a relatively high out-commuting workforce, and, importantly for this paper, the non-engagement of senior-age knowledge.

Any strategy for regional growth in high senior-aged migration regions therefore should, among other priorities, focus on the way human capital is engaged. Our argument is that given the sunk investment in the human capital of the older age cohort, those regions that naturally tend to attract a high concentration of older ages should seek to harness this knowledge within a learning and innovation framework.

Based on Garlick et al 2007 modelling, Table 1 shows the ranking, out of 94 regions Australia-wide, for local areas in the Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay-Burnett in relation to long run economic growth, and the performance of the three significant positive determinants of regional growth (human capital, industry specialisation and technological change).

The data show those regions with a high proportion of senior-aged population rank very poorly in terms of relative regional economic growth over the period 1994 to 2002, and that poor human capital is strongly related to these regional growth outcomes. The other significant determinants of regional growth (industry specialisation and technological change) are less strongly related to economic growth in these high senior-aged population regions. The pattern in other high senior-aged population regions in New South Wales (eg Lismore, Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie, Nowra, etc), and in other states, not shown in the table, in relation to economic growth and human capital is similar.

Any strategy for regional development in these places therefore should focus on the way human capital, and in particular senior-aged human capital, is engaged in the growth transmission process.

Table 1. Growth and determinants in the Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay-Burnett regions 1984 to 2002 (rank out of 94 regions)*

Local area	Percent of population 55 years and over**	Economic growth	Human capital	Industry specialisation	Technological change
Hervey Bay	36.1	93	94	70	71
Maryborough	28.5	83	80	38	42
Bundaberg	27.2	86	88	34	47
Caloundra	37.9	87	86	80	32
Maroochydore	36.6	88	90	80	38
Gympie	26.3	89	91	24	56

* Calculated from Garlick et al 2007.

** Calculated using 2001 Census data, ABS.

Enterprising human capital

Garlick, Taylor and Plummer (2007) introduce the concept of 'enterprising human capital' as those people who have the education and learning skills to create on-the-ground outcomes of practical value in the regional communities in which they are located. They:

“...understand the way markets operate; can access finance; see an opportunity; understand risk management without necessarily being risk-takers; and can mobilise resources, particularly teams, to good effect.” (p.33).

Our argument is that many in the productive ageing cohort, identified as having unrealised human capital, are seeking an outlet to be enterprising in the communities in which they are located. The absence of an enterprising human capital culture in regions is an impediment to stronger economic growth outcomes in Australia (Garlick et al, 2007)

We argue however that such human capital is being held back by a range of institutional and personal barriers of a structural and behavioural nature, the relative significance of which we are currently exploring through a study of the Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay regions in Queensland.

Ranzijn and Grbich (2001) have identified, generically, a number of practical and psychological barriers to greater productive involvement by seniors. We are particularly interested in those barriers of a structural and behavioural nature that specifically relate to senior-aged people becoming actively engaged in processes of learning and innovation in the higher education system at the regional scale.

Barriers to senior learning and innovation in the higher education environment

The last decade has seen a regionalisation of higher education in Australia (Garlick 2000) to the extent that most regional areas now have access to a higher education campus. However, HEI engagement with their regional community to enhance endogenous human capital is patchy and approaches to lifelong learning, while an objective of the regional community, is not embedded in the HEI.

Despite the general ageing of the population, HEIs still have a strong prescriptive orientation in their program design and delivery towards school leavers. In course design, there is little opportunity to encourage the downloading of tacit knowledge by senior-aged people within a framework of education that emphasises an ‘enterprising’ approach which focuses on real world application. Course marketing tends not to focus on the productive ageing cohort as potential students or contributors to regional innovation system processes. Senior-aged people are not actively encouraged and, structurally, universities can be confronting places to those with no prior university education experience. As Cruikshank (2003) has observed, the education system does not always welcome older persons.

Behavioural barriers relate to issues such as perceptions that higher education and innovation is for young people and that older people undertaking higher education take institutional places from young people. There is a perception that older people’s capability to handle learning is hampered by their mental and physical limitations (Boulton-Lewis et al,

2006). There is also a perception that older people's interest in higher education is in the area of simple 'life pursuits' for self-satisfaction, rather than in areas of significance to wider society. They are often directed to U3A as the default solution to their education desires. Older aged people feel confronted in a learning environment populated with school leaver age people. As Boulton-Lewis et al (2006) say, motivation and confidence are big factors for older people taking up learning (p.273).

Informatics, technology and senior health

Technologies offer the potential to better enable seniors to access education and innovation and better equip them to participate productively in economic activity. Many Australian and overseas universities provide much of their teaching through distance education enabled by the Internet. U3A also provides on-line educational resources for seniors. These allow students to study at their own convenience and pace.

There is a need for research to identify opportunities to better enable seniors to access education services. Issues might include access to high-speed broadband telecommunications which are usually more available in major cities than in less populous areas. There may be a need to assist seniors in feeling more comfortable with accessing goods and services through the Internet. Younger generations happily use on-line environments such as YouTube, MySpace, Second Life, online games and e-commerce solutions. Most of these innovations have largely by-passed seniors and there is a risk that they might be further disadvantaged in accessing other innovations in on-line services that could provide them with benefits. There has been a recent surge of interest in providing 'mental gymnastics' by electronic game companies with an expected demand from seniors. The marketing of these services might increase awareness and interest from seniors in other electronic services.

High-speed broadband communication links are rapidly becoming an essential infrastructure for business and it will be increasingly difficult to operate in areas without these services. This will be an issue in retirement regions as the provision of such services may be some years away if ever. Strategies of local, state and federal governments to provide better telecommunications links will need to be reviewed to ensure the roll-out to older-age communities is appropriate.

Healthcare services in most developed countries have strategies to better manage information. These usually include better access for consumers. In some areas such as Queensland there has been a significant investment in tele-health infrastructure that may have further potential benefits for seniors in regions.

Other innovations include 'smart homes' wired with sensors and intelligent systems that will care for their occupants. These include sensors linked to software that will know our care regimes, provide reminders and prompts, learn and understand our behaviours, and provide alerts of adverse events

such as falls or wandering (Soar et al, in press). A requirement for smart homes is similarly broadband communication links that would also provide access for learning and innovation.

Research

Boulton-Lewis et al (2006) say there is little research that explores what older people themselves want and need to learn, and that most of the research is based on what others believe is necessary (p.273). The research we are beginning in the Wide Bay-Burnett and Sunshine Coast regions is very much along the lines of what older people say they need.

A series of focus groups and workshops with stakeholders concerned about these issues has been conducted over the past 18 months in the Wide Bay Burnett region. Participants were drawn from Divisions of General Practice, aged services providers, tertiary education providers, municipal government, and local offices of state and federal government agencies.

The workshops identified the following issues:

- harnessing the ideas, knowledge, and enterprising capabilities of the region's seniors;
- designing a learning and innovation incubation process for seniors at the regional scale, with links to universities, that will generate economic and social outcomes of practical benefit to the region, the individual, and the universities;
- dissemination of 'good practice' in relation to regional approaches to the productive ageing; and
- models of information management and technology assistance and the development of tools and methods to enhance the independence of the aged

Proposals for specific projects included:

1. Knowledge audit of seniors
2. Community information portal
3. Dissemination of good practice for productive ageing
4. Models for information management and technology
 - a. patient data systems that can be held by the client and shared (e-health and allied matters)
 - b. RFID tags for medication for aged and mental health
5. Technology demonstration centre
6. "Homemaker centre" for technology
7. Demonstration/information sessions with hands-on, self-service access, user-friendly, multicultural, specialty groups
8. Developing sustainable model for home monitoring
9. Falls prevention/management
10. Monitoring
11. Medication monitoring/management

This research is continuing with further workshops to scope and evaluate achievable projects that have a high chance of enhancing the productive participation of the region's seniors. This research will seek to explore the structural and behavioural aspects associated with increased senior participation in university education, research and innovation, including course design and delivery methods.

Conclusions

Whilst ageing is a concern to governments around the world, including Australia's federal, state and local governments the impacts are likely to be felt much more strongly in regional communities that have much higher concentrations of this population cohort. Without innovative forward planning the economic outcomes for some regional communities will be bleak. An approach proposed in this paper is to view seniors as a potentially positive asset through providing means for enterprise. Essential infrastructure is access to education, high-speed internet access and creating a culture of innovation. Universities with campuses in regional areas have a key role to play and communities will look to them for leadership. Developing an approach in consultation with seniors and their community organisations will enhance the sustainability of the universities of the regions as a whole.

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Learning to be a 'real' teacher only takes place in a classroom. Doesn't it? A Community Engagement Program for Preservice Teachers at the University of Western Sydney.

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Abstract:

Traditionally Professional Experience for preservice teachers has been confined to classroom teaching only. It is also desirable, however, that preservice teachers have much broader in-school experiences to deepen their understanding of the educational issues confronting the wider community. By engaging future, or pre-service teachers in service opportunities with schools, other educational settings and with community based organizations, teacher education programs can prepare teachers to meet the challenge which requires them to develop the ability, knowledge, and skills to fulfil an increasing variety of roles and identities. Such placements can also provide unique teaching and learning opportunities which develop relationships distinct from those possible in just the classroom context.

The University of Western Sydney's Community Engagement Program for all preservice teachers enrolled in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) degree implemented a cycle of action and reflection as student teachers worked with school and community members through a process of applying their academic and practical knowledge to school and community needs. At the same time, the preservice teachers were required to reflect on their experiences as they sought to achieve real outcomes for the school and community as well as developing deeper understandings and skills for themselves.

This paper will explore the implementation and impact of this program on the first year students involved.

Introduction

Learning to become a teacher also means learning to engage with and understand the broader community. Schools do not operate in a vacuum but in complex contexts inhabited by people of varying ages, histories and walks of life. Teachers are connected to the schools and in turn to their communities (Groundwater-Smith, LeCornu & Ewing 2003). As McCarthy (2003) succinctly states, 'community engagement links a service to the community with classroom practice guided by reflection' (p.2)

Placement both within the classroom context and outside the classroom environment may be advantageous and desirable because of the contrast between the familiar role of classroom teacher and the notion of the school as part of a learning community. Hill, Pettit and Dawson (2005) suggest that schools can no longer be conceived as simply knowledge distribution centres but must be regarded as centres of inquiry as well as places of instruction. Senge (1990) defines a learning community as an organisation where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together. Such placements prompt preservice teachers to reconsider their familiarity with, and perceptions of schools by comparing and contrasting the practices found in classrooms with broader understandings of learning, teaching and knowledge encountered through participation in professional experience programs whose focus moves beyond the delivery of content.

One of the unspecified aims of the community engagement program was to focus on, and attempt to influence, the formation of the beliefs and belief systems of preservice teachers. Through non-traditional placements as part of a school community in their undergraduate teacher education program it was envisaged that preservice teachers would begin to become aware of the dilemmas often caused by the dissonance between their own, the university, the primary school and the communities assumption about teaching, learning, knowledge and social relations.

Prospective teachers bring to teacher education more than their desire to teach. They bring their implicit institutional biographies – the cumulative experience of school lives – which, in turn, informs their knowledge of the student's world, of school structure, and of curriculum. This contributes to well-established and commonsense images of the teachers' work and a strong sense of what it means to be a teacher, providing the frame of reference for prospective teachers' self-images. As Pajares (1992) argues, 'evaluations of teaching and teachers that individuals make as children survive nearly intact into adulthood and become stable judgements that do not change, even as teacher candidates grow into competent professionals.' (p.322). Senge (1990) identifies this process as 'mental models' which he defines as 'subconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs about how the world works'. In this case the world of the primary school. The mental models held by individuals within a school are significant because they harbour and shape a great part of that school's knowledge.

Method

Context

The Community Engagement Program was introduced as a pivotal and deeply embedded component of primary teacher education. The focus of the program, although underpinned by a service learning philosophy, is located in suburban primary schools. The program seeks to create a context where

preservice teachers can experience schools as learning communities in which the intellectual, social, and personal development of all its members are nurtured. The underlying belief being that in order to create effective learning communities, they must first be valued by those who are, or intend to be, a part of them. Although the tenor of the program is one of mentoring rather than supervision, preservice teacher participation is still a compulsory component of the primary teacher education course. A preservice teacher is assigned to a whole school not to a particular class or teacher, eliminating the expectation of direct teaching or teacher supervision. The Community Engagement Program requires voluntary participation by the school for the ten days of student teacher visits. There is no University payment for these days as they do not involve any report writing or supervision of classroom teaching practice.

Participants

Furco (2000) distinguishes Community Engagement programs from other approaches to experiential education by their intention to equally benefit the provider and the recipient of the service as well as to ensure equal focus on both the service being provided and the learning that is occurring. As part of the assessment requirements, the students completed a project (in pairs or as a small group) negotiated with the school which, ideally, involved some aspect of the wider community. Such as, researching and evaluating a range of community based recreational programs for primary children, investigating the road safety behaviour of children and adults around the school and developing and producing a power point presentation which highlighted school strengths, core values and achievements. The findings and recommendations of these projects were presented to the staff and Parents and Citizens (P & C), before being disseminated to the wider community.

The preservice teachers also kept a reflective journal as the satisfactory or unsatisfactory grade awarded for the program is based upon project completion and the reflective journal entries. Reflective models were provided to give preservice teachers a variety approaches to guide their reflections and move them beyond a superficial recount of events.

Data Collection

A total of 154 preservice teacher reflective journals were analysed. The data was collected through reflective journal entries and document analysis (Merriam, 1998). Preservice teachers wrote three reflective journal entries, one at the beginning, middle and end of the program using three different reflective approaches – a mind map after the project had been negotiated, a choice between the double-entry and the dialogue reflection models for the second entry and reflection summary questions as the final entry. The final reflection summary questions were not meant to evaluate the program but were designed to focus on the learning of the individuals involved to determine if change had been facilitated:

- 1) Describe and reflect on three things you have you learnt.
- 2) What has surprised you?
- 3) What have you learnt about yourself as a teacher?
- 4) What have you learnt about the role of a teacher?
- 5) What have you discovered about your beliefs, attitudes and values?
- 6) How will what you have learnt and discovered influence your future actions?

These documents were then collected.

Data Analysis

The data from the journals was collated by question or topic. Content analysis (Merriam, 1998) and open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) was used to determine recurring themes or events that could be used as categories to further reduce the findings and represent the content of the journals. The number of preservice teacher responses relevant to each category were counted and recorded to provide an overall picture of the reflective responses. The name of each student who made a particular point was recorded to gain a sense of the frequency with which it was mentioned. Because the final summary questions were open-ended, a diverse number of responses were possible.

If particular responses were reiterated, such as preservice teacher comments on the importance and value of the community outside the classroom and the school, they were considered to be significant.

Constant comparison analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was also used to identify divergent responses for each question or topic. Distinctions related to gender, cultural background, project focus and school context were also noted. For example, a number of students were placed in private or independent schools as well as state schools.

The reflective journal data was read in the order in which it was written in order to gain a sequential picture of individual responses to what was happening in each school context. Emergent patterns were then determined. For example, in the final summary the preservice teacher responses generally fell into seven categories: Personal, School Context, Community Context, Teacher, Teaching, Students and Program. The data was analysed for critical comments, especially when participants discussed changes in their beliefs, values and attitudes as a result of community involvement in their projects.

The preservice teacher journal entries contained information about their placements, stated key points about how their projects were devised and implemented, described the collegial (or lack of) relationship between school staff and their peers, and what they, as future teachers, learned. For example, in answer to the final summary questions, preservice teachers identified the differences between school contexts, outlined key points about how their

projects were negotiated, delivered and received, commented on the importance of working as a team and shared what they learned from the experience. Each set of reflections were read and the information contained within them was used to corroborate trends that emerged from one journal to another.

Results Table 1: Summarizes the most common preservice teacher final reflective summary responses across the seven categories.

Category of Response	Number
Personal: Self as one who	
Is able to interact/collaborate more effectively with others – personally and professionally	57
Is more confident personally and professionally	31
Has a range of identifiable personal characteristics such as patience, perseverance, determination, initiative, etc.	25
Is able to maintain a positive attitude	16
Values lifelong learning – ‘new knowledge, new skills’	15
Is able to move out of their comfort zone, take risks and try new ideas	10
Believes everyone deserves respect	7
Context: School	
Importance of working in a team environment with other teachers, parents, community and peers	50
All schools have their own culture and expectations	49
A school is more than the classroom – ‘bigger picture’	29
Surprised how schools valued and supported project	24
Some schools not welcoming to student teachers – unprofessional behaviour of some school staff	19
Importance of effective communication	13
Context: Community	
Importance and value of community outside school	41
Importance and value of community outside classroom	26
Value role of parents in school and community	9
Teacher	
Qualities of a ‘good’ teacher	20
Learnt about multiple roles of a teacher beyond classroom	19
Take risks, try new ideas	10
Teachers/school executive not always professional towards others	7
Teacher/student relationships important – not best friend	7
Make effort to support student teachers when teacher	3
Teaching	
Specific skills associated with teaching – know students, able to develop units of work etc.	73
Value of technology in classroom, school and community	27
Students (school)	
If children are interested/motivated they will learn	46
Important to accommodate student differences	32
Value and respect all students	19

Program	
Learnt about subject matter of project	24
Value of experience (mentioned specifically)	15
Although valuable, amount of time and effort project took – thought it would be easy	11
Disappointed in lack of usual university support for practicum	5
Importance of university study – ‘rich tasks’	3

Discussion

Sociocultural theory suggests that all learning is social where knowledge is jointly constructed in the company of others. In the final reflective summaries a significant number of responses (57) commented on the value and importance of working collaboratively - in pairs, in groups, as part of a school staff and as members of a wider community. A collaborative school climate made it easier for preservice teachers to systemically reflect upon and modify their own beliefs and practices.

Particular school cultures can shape, modify, facilitate or constrain individual teacher’s beliefs and practices. The Community Engagement Program continually challenged and promoted change in preservice teacher belief by taking them out of the classroom and into the community. Reflective practice enabled them to uncover their own personal theories and make them explicit as well as revealing their belief orientations. This facilitates the identification of their espoused beliefs and practices encouraging them to test these against the social context concerned and to reframe their beliefs whether privately with peers or reflectively in their journals.

The preservice teachers generally learnt about the extra curricular activities and personal time many teachers willingly gave to their students and their families. They were surprised by what actually happened outside the classroom and the level of commitment involved, not only by teachers but by the wider community. Many preservice teachers admitted that they had learnt to value the importance of the community both outside the classroom (26) and outside the school (41), even when ‘reaching out to the local school community was challenging’ and ‘took you out of your comfort zone’. Most were impressed by the school executive and the way they supported them personally and professionally as they worked to complete their negotiated school community projects.

Teachers beliefs play a major role in defining tasks and selecting appropriate strategies. Unlike other forms of knowledge the notion of belief systems can be flexibly applied to new dilemmas prompted by contexts such as those encountered through the community engagement program. The concept of beliefs has a significant and primary role in understanding the personal meaning with which teachers imbue their practice. This is particularly so when teachers are confronted with contextual and innovative situations which challenge their existing beliefs.

The Community Engagement Program was designed to take place outside the classroom context in order for the preservice teacher to focus on the school and its relationship with the wider community. The philosophy underpinning the program not only emphasises that there is more to teaching than what takes place in a classroom but also interrupts the process of enculturation which continues to promote, recycle and maintain a set of beliefs which resist change both personally and professionally. The preservice teachers were given the opportunity to challenge a set of existing teacher beliefs which often supports and reinforces the ones they already have from their own schooling, from their role as a parent or from their previous practicum experiences. Since a passing grade in the Community Engagement Program didn't depend on the assessment of actual teaching practice, the preservice teachers were able to critically observe and reflect without fear of failing the practicum. The absolute 'power' of the classroom teacher was removed.

There were, however, some unexpected insights into the notion of the school as a learning community provided by the reflective journals. Some preservice teachers (4) initially questioned the relevance of the Community Engagement Program to the 'core business' of teacher education, regarding it as 'a waste of time' because they could not see how working with the local community was connected to them. The initial devaluing of a community orientation for their professional experience stemmed from a narrow focus on what it meant to be a 'real' teacher. Other preservice teachers were surprised to discover that some practising teachers thought that the program was another example of the University 'getting it wrong' and that learning to be a 'real' teacher only took place in a classroom, deeming any other approach superfluous and time consuming. One school principal felt that the community connection for a preservice teacher was actually peripheral to good teaching and 'totally unrelated to a career in teaching'.

The Community Engagement Program seeks to confront the isolated nature of teaching and the challenge the security and pseudo-autonomy some teachers find within their own classrooms. It also seeks to encourage student teachers to critically review the institutional and hierarchical nature of some primary schools, so that their own beliefs and future practices will not go unchallenged. Calgren(1990) noted that externally generated innovations were often 'distorted' by teachers in order to comply with their own beliefs and intentions so that any change remained at a superficial level. Although preservice teachers see 'on-the-job' knowledge as an important aspect of teaching (Calderhead, 1987; Foss & Kleinsasser, 1996), they also regard lifelong learning, new knowledge and taking risks (35) as significant in their future as teachers and are critically aware of practising teachers who are unwilling to take chances and refuse to change.

Conclusion

According to Zeichner (1996) the preparation of teachers who are attuned to the communities they serve has been acknowledged in teacher education but rarely actualized. The Community Engagement Program encourages preservice teachers to move beyond the classroom and focus on the school as a community of teachers and learners, where they can begin to develop reciprocal relationships which will lead to an understanding and appreciation of diversity and take on responsibility not only for their own learning but the learning of others. One of the aims of the community engagement program is to develop in preservice teachers what Kretzmann & Mc Knight (1993) describe as an 'asset-based' or 'capacity-driven' view of communities where the focus is on the local aspirations, resources and capabilities of a community rather than on local needs, inadequacies and deficits (p.448). By encouraging them to move away from their own teaching 'comfort zones', the Community Engagement Program enabled many of the preservice teachers to overcome a sense of hesitancy which tended to characterise their view of community and ensure that as future teachers they will be able to demonstrate a professional and responsible attitude towards the wider communities in which they will teach. As one preservice teacher so aptly concludes

It is very rewarding to do these extra curricular activities for the students with members of the wider community ... Because of the opportunities the project has provided, it is awesome to see the students develop their skills further than they would have been able to just in class. As a person I have learnt the importance of working as part of a school and community 'team', because it allows you to achieve so much more.

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Promoting community capacity through university-community engagement: The Deakin University / Department of Human Services (Barwon South West) Partnership

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Abstract:

The formal Partnership between Deakin University and the Victorian Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region), based in Geelong, aims to bring together the knowledge, experience and resources of the Department and Deakin University for the benefit of the people living in that region, as well as for the mutual benefit of both organisations. A recent review process featured stakeholder interviews and focus groups. A special workshop on university-community engagement was also held for interested stakeholders in late 2006. This was facilitated by Prof. Judith Ramaley, President of Winona State University, during her visit to Deakin University as a Fulbright Visiting Senior Specialist. Visioning and strategic planning have continued throughout 2007.

This paper will describe the efforts and achievements of the Partnership through the complementary lenses of Healthy Cities, health-promoting universities and community capacity. This framework will be used to describe how the Partnership coordinators have used Prof Ramaley's insights to establish a draft Business Plan that espouses a more mature form of collaboration and embraces shared, transformative goals. The paper will describe how the notion of community capacity is being used to evaluate the Partnership's overall contribution to community engagement.

Deakin University / DHS BSWR Partnership

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is Victoria's largest government agency and funds organisations such as hospitals, aged care facilities, ambulance services and community service agencies. The department coordinates the delivery of its services across eight regions, where the majority of the department's staff is located. Regions are responsible for managing the range of human services provided in their area, including directly delivered services such as child protection, juvenile justice, disability and public housing. In the Barwon-South Western Region (BSWR), this includes the coordination of the acute health services. The regional office develops and maintains effective partnerships with local government, non-government organisations and the community. It works collaboratively with other departments, local government and community organisations to support

and develop services that best meet the needs of individuals, families and local communities.

The Deakin/DHS-BSWR Partnership was initiated in 1998. This followed the identification of regional and rural public health goals, recognition of the potential mutual benefits to each organisation, and a desire to respond by building capacity to meet identified goals. A shared geographic region and similar professional and academic interests, as well as the need to operate within a shared environment of broader reform, have stimulated and directed the development of the collaboration.

Organisational Review

The Partnership embarked on an extensive review in 2006, with a view towards establishing more sustainable funding, planning and governance structures. The process included consultation with key stakeholders within each institution and external agencies. The review findings highlighted varying levels of understanding and support of the Partnership. The Partnership was seen to have a high profile within the organisations. However, knowledge of the collaboration did not extend very far beyond Deakin and DHS. DHS staff valued the public health forums provided by the Partnership as an integral part of their professional development. Stakeholders expressed confidence in the skills and academic rigour that the partnership brought to research. However, due to resource constraints, many projects were perceived as being opportunistic rather than strategic. External stakeholders also wanted the Partnership to make a greater contribution to the intellectual debate within the region. Tensions between academic and government organisational systems were noted, such as operating within different timeframes (calendar year vs. financial year) and the demands of academic research and teaching vs. implementing government policy. Opportunities were identified for more coordinated and streamlined student placements within DHS and the need to engage faculties beyond HMNBS.

The review process became more focused following a special workshop for Deakin and DHS staff facilitated in November 2006 by Prof. Judith Ramaley. Prof Ramaley is currently a Member of the Board of Directors for the American Association for Higher Education. Professor Ramaley has served as president of the University of Vermont and president of Portland State University. Previously, she was assistant director for education and human resources at the National Science Foundation. Throughout the four decades of her academic career, Professor Ramaley has published extensively in the areas of community engagement, building academic communities, higher education reform, large scale institutional change and research engagement. We were honoured to host Prof Rameley, and used her visit and expertise to catalyse discussion and action.

During her visit, Prof Ramaley argued that community engagement is simply a different way of doing familiar things, including: learning differently; working

together differently; and making a difference. Our Business Plan represents a renewed effort to strive for a deep form of university-community engagement. We agreed that DHS and Deakin University had an opportunity to work together to bring together the resources of an entire community. To do this, we acknowledged the need to achieve several key outcomes, including: moving from an opportunistic to a strategic way of working; developing a deep sense of purpose; developing symbols for this relationship; and presenting a set of clearly articulated values.

In helping us develop the framework for our Mission, Prof Ramaley invited us to consider several key questions:

- Is the Mission clear?
- Are our institutions organised to support the Mission?
- Have resources been allocated to achieve the Mission?
- Have monitoring and evaluation systems been put in place to help us to know whether the mission is being achieved?

Prof Ramaley encouraged us to develop our three-year Business Plan for the Partnership in such a way that it would suit the respective agendas of DHS and Deakin University; build in an action-research review process; begin from the outside ('where the community is at') and work 'back' to the Partnership. Prof Ramaley also shared a best-practice model for integrating research, education, and professional practice (see Figure 1 below). At a 'Visioning Workshop' in February 2007, key participants from each organisation helped to develop a new vision, mission and a range of priorities for the Partnership that integrates education and research with professional practice, which Prof Ramaley described as the cornerstone of robust community engagement (See Figure 1).



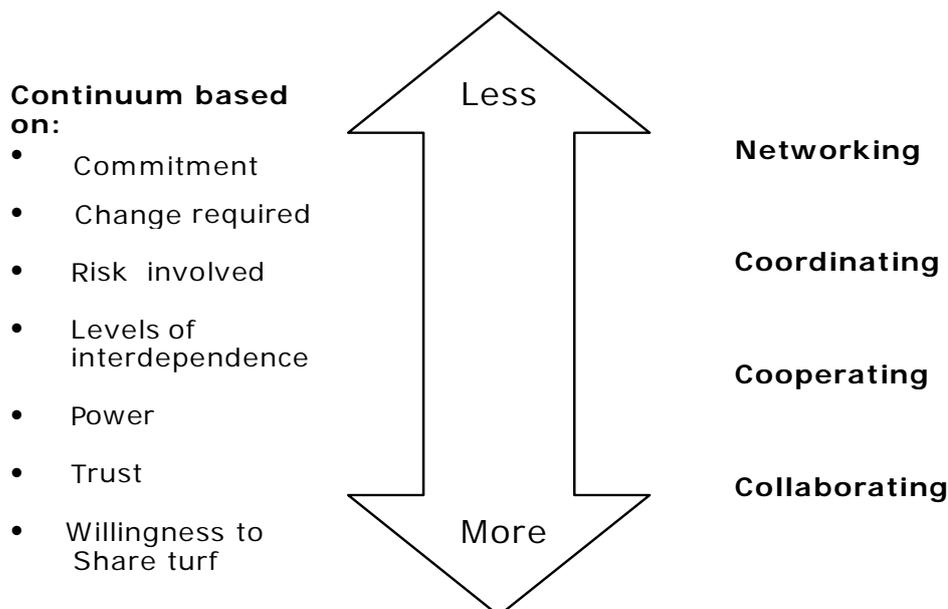
Figure 1: Integrative model of university-community engagement (Ramaley, 2006)

Developing the Business Plan

In developing our Business Plan, we were inspired by the World Health Organisation's Healthy Cities approach to community development, and its

offshoot, Health-Promoting Universities. A Healthy City has been defined as 'one that is constantly creating and improving those physical and social environments and expanding those community resources which enable people to mutually support each other in performing all the functions of life and in developing their maximum potential' (Hancock & Duhl 1988, p. 24). Healthy Cities is a collaborative approach that places health and wellbeing high on the political agenda of cities, municipalities and communities around the world, and builds a local, intersectoral constituency of support for public health (Tsouros, 1995; WHO, 1997). The WHO has also advocated the notion of 'Health-Promoting Universities' for some ten years (Tsouros, Dowding, Thompson & Dooris, 1998). By encouraging civic participation and conducting action-based research, university-community partnerships can help to develop the social and physical infrastructure needed to promote thriving communities (Tsouros, 1998; Winter, Wiseman & Muirhead, 2004). In both Healthy Cities and Health-Promoting Universities initiatives, the social positioning of the university is an essential component: 'Does it sit there like a visiting spaceship with no relationship to its community, or is it an inherent part of its community and a resource to it?' (Ashton, 1998, p. 8). Community partnerships are thus central features of both healthy cities initiatives and health-promoting universities.

Partnerships can range across a continuum of engagement, from informal networking through to formal collaboration with shared resourcing. Figure 2 below illustrates the various levels of partnership (VicHealth, 2005). The Deakin University/DHS (BSWR) Partnership is quite complex and therefore there are various elements that are at different levels of the continuum. It varies from 'associate membership' which is a general networking group through to the Partnership Executive, made up of senior personnel and coordinators from across the two institutions who collaborate, sharing resources and strategic goals.



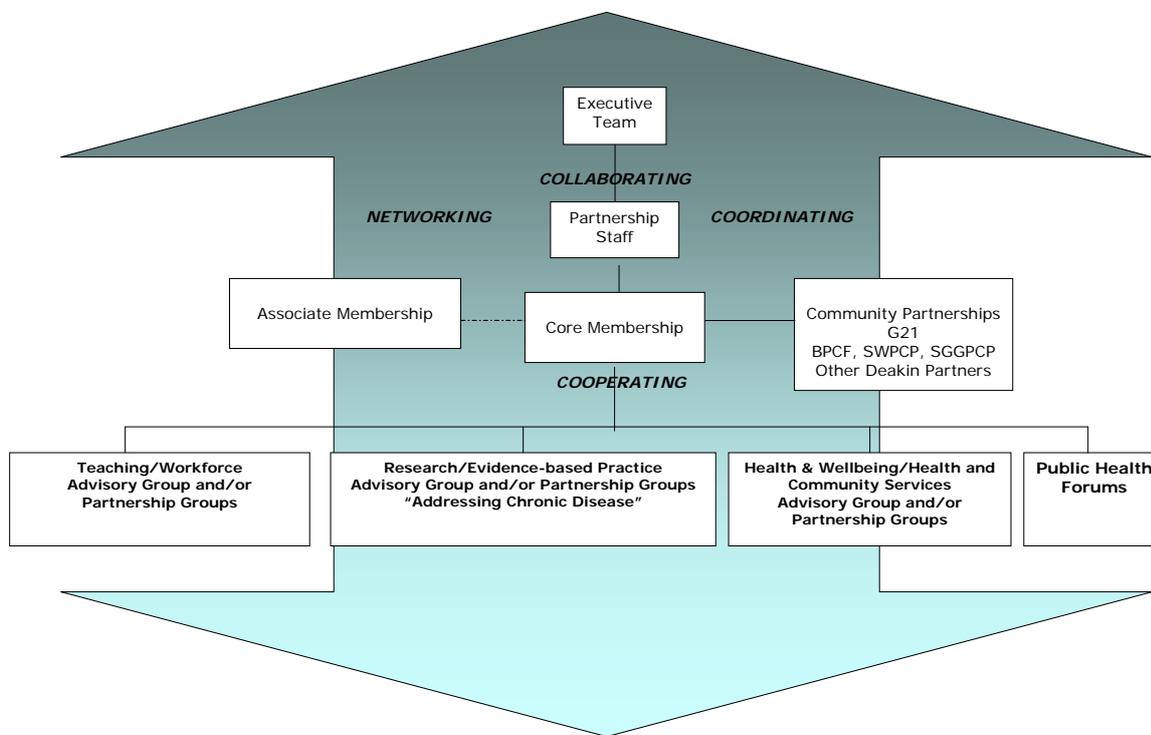


Figure 2: Partnerships Continuum (VicHealth, 2005)

The Partnership’s structure (see Figure 3 below) is adapted from Dooris’ (1998) health-promoting university initiative from Preston, England, and is integrated with the various levels of participation. Dooris included a Health Promoting University Project Steering Group that integrated his initiative with the surrounding district’s inter-sectoral ‘Healthy and Sustainable Preston’ initiative, and also with complementary or parallel initiative enacted within the university. In the Barwon-South Western region, the equivalent inter-sectoral initiative to the Healthy Cities initiative would be the G21 Alliance of five local governments. The structural organisation of the Partnership reflects the various degrees of commitment based upon the strategic objectives.

Figure 3: Deakin University/DHS BSWR Partnership Structure

Community capacity framework to assess community engagement

A university-community partnership devoted to promoting healthy and sustainable communities needs to ‘enrich and expand the learning and discovery functions of the academic institution while also enhancing community capacity’ (Ramaley, 2005, p. 2). During her visit, Prof Ramaley encouraged us to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework at the outset to generate evidence that the Partnership is meaningful, substantive, generating ‘currency’ that is useful to each organisation and the wider community, and that it has adequate leveraging resources. Accordingly, we

identified that performance measures for an engaged university would relate to attainment of community capacity.

Community capacity has been defined as ‘characteristics of a community that enable it to mobilize, identify and solve community problems’ (Goodman et al., cited in Kegler, Norton & Aronson, 2003, p.3). Community capacity has been used to assess the impact of Healthy Cities initiatives by including measures of: civic participation; mechanisms for community input and for the distribution of community power; skills and access to resources; sense of community and social capital/trust; social and inter-organizational networks; community values and history; and capacity for reflection and learning. Changes in community capacity can be assessed by mapping change across five interconnected levels of analysis. These are: changes in individuals; changes in civic participation; organizational development; inter-organizational activity; and community level changes, including changes in social policy and community norms (Kegler et al., 2003). This framework is illustrated in Figure 4 below.



Figure 4: Community Capacity Framework (Kegler et al, 2003, p. 17)

This community capacity framework maps closely with Ramaley’s (2005) synthesis of research identifying the common characteristics of engaged universities. For example, students are encouraged to learn in ways that engage them in community concerns, thereby identifying the link between individual skill development and civic participation. At the organisational level, the campus has a mission and policies that: embed community participation in planning and decision making; consider the community impact of its decisions as part of its deliberations; invest in and resources community engagement, and reward community engagement. Inter-organisational capacity is fostered through interdisciplinary research and action and is evidenced by ‘conducting business differently’ with key partners, such as through shared strategic goals. Community engagement has positive impacts at the wider community level by virtue of the high public standing given to civic participation and leadership, both within the university community and external to it. The community capacity framework allows for community engagement activities

and outcomes to be benchmarked across Kegler et al's (2003) five levels of analysis and evaluated accordingly.

Our monitoring and evaluation framework, to be developed during the remainder of 2007, integrates community capacity and community engagement frameworks. For example, if our three-year strategy were successful, outcomes at the level of the individual person could include new skills and knowledge for students, Deakin staff, DHS staff, research partners, citizens and other stakeholders, including skills to encourage civic participation. Measures of civic participation could include staff, students, key faculty and research participants increasingly participating in the governance of the Partnership, and students taking on service learning and related leadership roles in the community. An organisational-level change already underway is the development of a DHS Student Placement Protocol to streamline the process of placing and supporting Deakin students in DHS and its funded agencies. Inter-organisational changes could include new and extended linkages between the Partnership and a diverse range of public, private, non-profit and community-based organizations. Finally, community-level changes could include evidence that the Partnership has played a contributing role in the adoption of new public policies that encourage community wellbeing, such as new urban planning regulations that promote sustainability, walking and public transport.

Concurrent with the development of the Partnership's Business Plan is the formulation of Deakin University's Strategic Plan 2008-2012. Using the Partnership and two other Deakin partnerships as case studies, we are presently developing measures of community engagement that can be used across Deakin University. Our research is being funded by the Vice Chancellor's office, for incorporation into Deakin's next Strategic Plan. This research is being integrated with AUCEA's Quality Management and Development Framework for University Engagement in Australia (Scott et al., 2007). We look forward to reporting on this research in 2008.

We aspire to the Partnership having a significant positive influence on the region and wider policy environment, and the way that both DHS and Deakin University conduct their business.

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ESSAYS

Community engagement: A partnership approach to measurement, evaluation and benchmarking processes

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Abstract:

Partnerships and collaborations will inevitably evolve and change. Hence there must be a shared commitment from participants to ongoing, comprehensive evaluation and improvement and knowledge sharing. This paper does not differentiate partnerships as separate to the community engagement agenda because in both instances, partners need to jointly engage in initiatives, ensure alignment with the key messages of partners and their communities, and ultimately, stay together. At the same time, higher education institutions are progressively developing their community engagement strategies in the short to medium term cognisant of the policy context and funding allocation formulae.

Accordingly, this paper explores a number of challenges for the next couple of years, not the least being success in articulating clear directions, actions and net benefits that have partner ownership and are measurable from the outset and on a continuing basis. Measuring sustained community engagement will mean measuring salient points and practices throughout lengthy processes. As a result, there is a need for higher education institutions and their partners to develop planning, monitoring and evaluation frameworks and approaches, including benchmarks and benchmarking processes, in order to define what can be considered 'good practice' across a number of realms. As part of this, the focus of community engagement strategies around student participation will be critical. A highlight of forthcoming challenges will be establishing measurement processes that offer just as much to the learning process surrounding community engagement, as they gain from the assessment information.

Introduction

The global interest by universities and communities in building partnerships, that is, shared destinies, has become increasingly well-defined during the last decade. Holland (2005) wrote of the growing validation of engaged

scholarship and outlined that accountability systems, policy environments, and reputational factors were already changing to accommodate new, collaborative models of knowledge generation and dissemination, including engaged research and teaching.

The engagement imperative for the higher education sector in Australia is well known. However, three challenges stand out. First, there is an ongoing need to develop structured strategic approaches as the realisation of community engagement objectives have been reasonably ad hoc to date. Second, it seems little has been published in respect to how to ensure authentic student participation in the whole spectrum of community engagement. Third, while a variety of approaches have been proposed to measure progress and assure quality in terms of outputs, processes and outcomes in community engagement, these require testing (Association of Commonwealth Universities 2001; Scott & Jackson 2005; Bishop 2006). Garlick and Langworthy (n.d.a, p. 1) highlight there is a tendency for assessment methods to “sit outside the engagement process and restrict rather than encourage collaboration”. Thus this paper reinforces the need for a systematic and partnership approach built on profound connectivity at local and regional levels if university-community engagement is to serve as impetus for both the university and its communities in an ongoing way and deliver widespread impact.

1. Articulating structured strategic approaches

If community engagement is to be effective in renewing universities as social institutions, it will need to become part of the foundation of the institution’s existence, that is, more than a key term in strategic planning and more than a core value or even priority institutional theme. In this paper, community engagement refers to a major platform within a university, drawn into its governance arrangements, and in turn adequately resourced, broadly operationalised, and monitored and evaluated.

Szorenyi-Reischl (2005) highlights that this emerging ideological orientation of community engagement does require some caution. Without clear and costed directions and a thorough risk assessment, universities may find themselves unable to meet community and other stakeholder (including funder) expectations and thus be publicly exposed. On the matter of risk, a search of university community engagement strategies, both in Australia and overseas, revealed little focus on risk assessment and risk management as integral components. However, some government departments have community engagement strategies that include risk assessment components that draw a direct link to performance measurement and monitoring processes (e.g. Queensland Government 2003, 2004; South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority n.d.).

The triad of embedding community engagement into the governance arrangements of a university, measuring community engagement and assessing risk is not well documented. It is however deemed critical at this

junction of the community engagement evolution within the higher education sector.

Holland (2005) suggests that mission-based portfolios for universities should be accompanied by more specific accountability plans that align with that specific mission and scholarly agenda.

This paper proposes that community engagement frameworks, strategies or such “mission-based portfolios” should include clear directions on how risks will be jointly assessed with potential partners, before new partnerships are formally struck. As such, community engagement will be raised well beyond the celebration of partnerships, altruism and ‘marketing’ of university/community initiatives. For example, performance management of community engagement should be built into partnership agreements from the outset with ongoing and collaborative monitoring around matters such as:

- the full financial, probity and accountability implications;
- the impact on existing resources and core services;
- the extent to which partnership work is incorporated into daily work of all partners;
- the appropriateness of potential partners and level of added value; and
- the frequency with which risks should be reassessed.

In addition, to manage the risk of unmet expectations, either from partners not having a full understanding of what they can expect to receive or lack of awareness of risks or simply a partnership not achieving its objectives, a further challenge may be that of devising ‘rules of engagement’. In Scotland, a formal arrangement for community engagement has been encapsulated in the National Standards for Community Engagement (Scottish Centre for Regeneration 2007a). These standards not only offer measurable performance standards to monitor and improve the quality and process of community engagement, but also provide a set of principles that underpin the standards that aim to create a common set of ground rules that should be applied to ‘both sides’ of the engagement process (McChord 2007). The standards were developed from a process of engagement of over 500 people from communities and agencies throughout Scotland and then tested to produce further recommendations around implementation (Scottish Centre for Regeneration 2007b).

2. Authentic student-community engagement

Ramaley (2005, p. 19) states:

The goal of engaged scholarship is not to define and serve the public good directly on behalf of society, but to create conditions for the public good to be interpreted and pursued in a collaborative mode with the community.

Since 1906, institutions of learning in the United States have been implementing cooperative education or work-based learning schemes in an effort to prepare students for the world of employment (Sovilla in Langworthy 2004, p. 3). In the US, a national coalition of more than 1000 college and

university presidents - Campus Compact - represents some 5 million students and is dedicated to promoting community service, civic engagement, and service-learning (a form of experiential learning) in higher education (Campus Compact). While in the United States, student engagement appears well advanced, in Australia there is evidence of disengagement of students, hence the recommendation that universities need to more actively manage curricula design and learning experiences both in and out of the classroom (Cleary & Skaines 2005). The development and delivery of community-responsive curricula that address the theory and impact of service learning and community engagement may create the need for new competency measures, assessments and graduate attributes. Further, given student leadership, skills and attribute development will be a key component of such curricula and scholarship, there will be a parallel requirement for the development of capacities inclusive of students and partner organisations.

The dynamic relationship between university and student will also be strongly influenced by the defining identity of the university and how the student engages with those defining characteristics (Waggoner & Goldman 2005).

Many universities feature diverse populations of students and as a result, increasing challenges in terms of building linkages with their surrounding communities. If higher education institutions are to function as “organisations of leadership” (Judkins & LaHurd 1999), then thought should be given to how they select students to be involved in campus matters and community engagement. Further, how universities can maintain a focus on authentic student engagement and how student engagement is measured, and valued by partners, with criteria well beyond graduate attributes, needs to be germane to their community engagement strategies and processes. It is suggested that truly effective teaching and learning in community engagement will have gone beyond the exchange or acquisition of empirical knowledge; it will have required events along the student journey that ‘touched the heart and soul’.

Waggoner and Goldman (2005) describe universities as “communities of fate”. They describe how specific values were developed over time so that they became ingrained in the organisational rhetoric and culture. Thus a value, such as connectedness to the local environment, might be realised through student involvement if not leadership in stimulating public debate on contemporary issues. If the values have meaning to the students and the engagement of students is authentic, then such an approach has potential to reflect the institutional leadership and in turn see a major following of students and graduates subscribing to the values and perhaps related lifelong learning. “Student experiences within such communities of fate function to bind them to the institution over a lifetime ... students are not only given an education, they are given an identity” (Waggoner and Goldman 2005, p. 99).

If the key is to identify what will capture ‘hearts and minds’ so much that it becomes a sustained link for students to their university, then it is likely that the ‘value’ will already be a part of their ongoing life and the environment in which they live. Notwithstanding globalisation, it may be important to

maintain a local focus in order to effect positive change in the regions in which the university, its students and partners reside.

While the determination of the 'values' that will have meaning is critical, so too is the approach used to engage. Often the major lessons learnt from any change management or new policy implementation result from discrepancies in communication. If academic staff and students do not understand community engagement and how such efforts can be rewarded as scholarship, it may not be valued as relevant to their academic work/progression. For staff, acknowledging and measuring community engagement achievements through established and tested criteria for academic promotion, recruitment and workload points models will probably lead to broader and more genuine promotion of the agenda to students. For student uptake, developing standards of scholarly legitimacy and promotion of same will be similarly critical. Thus, a plan that includes effective communication channels, the choice of the right individuals who have a greater chance of influencing others, and maximisation of staff and student networks will be important in persuading individuals to take up new ideas (Rogers 1995; Baker 2001; Rudd 2002).

In contemporary society, the exercise of citizenship requires constant learning and the thoughtful and ethical application of knowledge. By including our students in engaged scholarship, we introduce them to these basic concepts and offer them a chance to experience them in the company of mature scholars and practitioners (Ramaley 2005).

3. Performance measurement of community engagement

Holland (2005) reported that few systematic studies have been conducted to validate the institutional effects of engagement, but suggested some positive emerging patterns for universities such as:

- clarification of institutional missions and creation of clearer rationale for different intentional mixes of attention to teaching and research;
- creation of pride in a distinctive identity and purpose;
- enhanced student learning, diversity of enrolment and retention;
- generation of community and economic development benefits;
- improved academic image and community relationships; and
- increased private financial support.

Although community engagement is gaining prominence as an important aspect of what universities do, Adams et al. (2005) suggest that little work has been done on how it can be measured and there is a need to ensure that the net benefits flowing from university partnerships to those involved can be identified, measured and monitored on a continuing basis.

Indeed, Muirhead, Graham and Brown (2002) claim that the usual measures and ranking of scholarly excellence in universities are deterrents for scholars who might commit time to the development and renewal of their communities. Thus, the need for measuring community engagement emerged and remains

a pressing matter. For example, measurement of engagement will need to encompass domains like vision, entrepreneurship, creativity, determination and passion, contextuality, technical know-how, networking, communication, acceptability, replicability, flexibility of approaches, persistence, and tenacity during adversity.

One of the specific challenges in the context of community engagement, is that generally performance indicators are developed in the context of existing strategies (or goals) in order to monitor progress. Yet many if not most universities do not yet have formalised community engagement strategies. Thus there are few strategic frameworks to direct the development of a set of indicators (Adams et al. 2005).

Adams et al. (2005) cite a lack of the following in developing performance indicators to measure community engagement:

- clear definitions of appropriate communities to survey;
- consolidated information on the range and types of partnerships;
- clarity as to how regions were defined (e.g. size, level or purpose);
- understanding of how to scope scholarship of engagement; and
- processes to capture informal work of individuals interacting with external communities as part of professional practice.

It is only relatively recently that in Australia, benchmarking work has been undertaken. Of note, is the Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance Inc. (AUCEA) Benchmarking Project (2005-07), where six universities volunteered to be part of a study to use benchmarking as a tool for improvement across six functional areas including student admission and complaint processes, community engagement relationships, teaching and learning, research, and student examination and assessments (Garlick & Langworthy n.d. a; Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance Inc. 2005a).

Thus, of interest for a structured way forward, is the recent work by Garlick and Langworthy (n.d.b) where, in a discussion paper prepared for the AUCEA Benchmarking Project, they describe three broad types of assessment that are currently undertaken by higher education institutions:

- a) guided self-evaluation assessment with expert peer review and iterative agreement;
- b) metric assessment based on an agreed schedule of measures; and
- c) a hybrid of a) and b).

Self-evaluation assessment with expert peer review and iterative agreement is described as a process where participants deliver somewhat subjective points about what they perceive to be working well and then a peer review assessment occurs where a team of exogenous experts test the claims and identify pathways for improvement (Garlick and Langworthy n.d.b, p. 2). The quality assessments required for the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) (an independent, non-profit national agency that promotes, audits and reports on quality assurance in Australian higher education), and the Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE)/Organisation for

Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) program (*Supporting the Contribution of HEIs to Regional Development*) are examples of this approach (Garlick and Langworthy n.d.b, p. 2).

While this approach enables a connection with key community objectives, comparability across institutions can be compromised as there are different assessment teams across different higher education institutions and communities who may be influenced by the system and culture in which they normally work.

On the other hand, although there are varying degrees of thoroughness of community consultation, the metric assessment based on an agreed schedule of measures approach appears to enable comparative study across institutions, regions, cultures and systems (Garlick and Langworthy n.d.b, p. 3). There are now a number of Framework Metrics being used internationally, such as the Gelmon Assessment Approach and the Manchester University Approach.

The Gelmon Assessment Approach, cited in the Kellogg Commission Report on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities Report, includes specific measurement strategies for quantitatively assessing each indicator in areas such as university-community partnerships, impact of service learning on the preparation of health professionals, faculty commitment, institutional capacity, and impact on community partners (Jacobson et al. 2004). The 1999 Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities Report generated a list of seven qualities that characterise the engaged institution. These seven qualities are considered ideally manifested in university structures, policies, and practices around issues like communication, incentives, community-based research, human resource allocation, and administrative oversight and funding.

- Responsiveness;
- Respect for partners;
- Academic neutrality;
- Accessibility;
- Integration of engagement into institutional mission;
- Coordination; and
- Adequate resources.

(Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities 1999)

There is considerable interest in Australia around the development of measurement methodologies and new metrics-based approaches. In October 2005, a group of Australian Universities (referred to as the New Generation Universities) submitted a paper to the Australian Vice Chancellors' Committee (the peak organisation representing Australian higher education nationally and internationally) to inform the debate around the introduction of a further stream of funding from the Commonwealth Government to provide incentives for all universities in respect to university-community engagement and knowledge transfer (third stream funding) (New Generation Universities 2005).

In Australia, Garlick and Langworthy (n.d.b, p. 4) have devised a new model of assessment, the Strategic Framework Structure which is based on guiding criteria of core common areas of interest for universities and their communities (it is a *hybrid* of the earlier two approaches; self-evaluation assessment and metric assessment based on agreed qualitative measures).

The Strategic Framework Structure looks at measurement of engagement in a number of broad areas of core business such as governance and policy (including leadership), communications and dialogue, teaching and learning, research and innovation, infrastructure, internationalisation and service provision (including the role of students).

In all of this, Garlick and Langworthy (n.d.a, p. 7) point out:

Unfortunately, as the auditing agenda has gained momentum in higher education benchmarking has become anything but a collaborative learning process for improvement. Rather, it has descended into a top-down 'tick-a-box' template for simply assessing performance levels for regulators, senior management, and management consultants.

3.1 Measuring salient points and practices using a partnership approach

It is widely accepted that generic performance measurement requires an ongoing collection of information to provide the basis for program monitoring and evaluation and for judging whether the implementation of effective strategies and programs is being achieved. In this type of evaluative process, indicators or measures of performance are specified to provide a foundation for the evaluative methodology and define the benchmarks for success of an initiative. But developing “ ... an evaluation process for building more purposeful connections between universities and the communities in which they do business is more than ticking off boxes on a template-based report card” (Garlick & Langworthy n.d.a, p. 19).

This section of the paper promotes that the focus of measurement should be one of shared commitment to overall quality improvement for all partners, and as such, two key points are made.

First, this paper subscribes to the need to identify a more appropriate way to measure university-community engagement beyond the template-driven approach, notwithstanding the inherent complexities of this task. Garlick and Langworthy (n.d.a, p. 8) propose that the university-community engagement relationship is a special kind of connectivity that is much more than the usual restrictive and exclusive relationships that a network or a partnership might connote. Significant in this approach then is the need to incorporate what have been suggested as the key tenets of community engagement into measurements, for example:

- Clear and shared purpose to the relationship and results-oriented approach to agreed priority areas identified in the community (Garlick & Langworthy n.d.a);

- Evidence of trust and quality relationships, including awareness of each partner's organisational structure, culture and governance, capacity and constraints (Holland 2001; Penman & Ellis 2003; Winter & Wiseman 2005; Garlick & Langworthy n.d.a);
- Collaborative leadership underpinned by common vision and demonstrated commitment of resources (Garlick & Langworthy n.d.a; Langworthy n.d.; Sunderland et al. 2004);
- Transparent and effective communication resulting in diffusion of innovations and sustainable knowledge transfer (Rogers 1995; Langworthy 2005; Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance 2005b; Bishop 2006);
- Quality of processes including enshrining the partnership in a written agreement, such as an Memorandum of Understanding (Suarez-Balcazar, Harper & Lewis 2005; Scott & Jackson 2005; Garlick & Langworthy n.d.a);
- Benefits that are considered mutual and sustainable in terms of process, impact and outcomes (Totikidis et al. 2005; Winter et al. 2005; Garlick & Langworthy n.d.a); and
- Progressive monitoring and evaluation, and performance improvement (Adams et al. 2005; Garlick & Langworthy n.d.a; Nair & Wayland 2005).

Second, this paper suggests that measuring needs to occur at pre-determined points of the engagement continuum for process, impacts and outcomes. Performance indicators should not be measures of activity, as in outputs such as the number of committees academics serve on, but more a measure of achievement or success. Performance indicators should not be confused with performance standards. Standards need to point out what should be measured to determine a quality service and benchmarks of performance may then be established according to pre-determined goals, such as the most efficient, the best quality or the most equitable provision so that cross-industry comparisons can be made. Benchmarking requires both the application of performance indicators to measure outcomes and the effectiveness and efficiency of the processes responsible for producing those outcomes, and the interpretation of the performance indicator information taking into account 'best practice' standards – thus assessing the gap between current practice and best practice (Cuttance 1994).

The concept of an overall hierarchy of progressive measures (or measurement milestones), using standards to guide management and operational processes, and strives towards the attainment of ideal practice, can be graphically presented (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Incremental Evaluation Model



↑
Incremental Indicators (Measures aligned to salient points)

For example, consider a key area of community engagement activity such as policy and governance. While measures of good process might mean there are local and regional community representatives on a university council, and outcomes of good process might mean there are increased numbers of staff promotions and appointments based on the community engagement agenda, the above approach would require detailed monitoring and evaluation of the impact of those measures. In addition, it is suggested that, at the higher level of targets or core performance indicators, even process and outcome measures need to go beyond items such as the number of x, the amount of funding gained, the proportion of y, or the presence of z. This premise is not dissimilar to the Manchester Approach where measurement is structured under a generic measurement area. However, the focus here is very much on improving performance of the university, the partnership and the partners, rather than assessment.

The incremental approach applied to a review of a community engagement strategy and the incorporation of benchmarking results into the review, is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Incremental Evaluation Model

Action Area:	
Review of University-Community Engagement (CE) Strategy	
Goal 1: Benchmarking results incorporated into improvement plan	
Core Performance Indicators	Incremental Measures
-Community leadership involvement in diffusion of messages (Process)	-Breadth of leadership involvement -CE Strategy exposure (reach to different market segments) -Extent of cross referencing with partners -Partner assessment of CE benefits
-T&L and R&D based on community priorities (Impact)	-Representation on community structures -CE integrated across curricula -CE specified in operational plans and budgets -Community perception survey data
-University is first point of contact for expert advice (Outcome)	-Extent and scope of partnerships (including multiplier effect) -Shared development of CE resources -Identifiable community access portal -External funding for CE -Shared bank of good practice models -Academic promotion profiles

Conclusion

The complexity of partnerships and community engagement leads to demands in resolving differences around power and ownership, organisational cultures, resource inequalities, time commitments, conflicts of interest, and varying budget capacities. It is critical to mutual success to invest however much time is needed to address these issues (Suarez-Balcazar et al. 2005). Increasing the resources available to the community for developing networks of mutual support and well-being and ultimately building social capital is also essential (Elliot, Sandeman and Winchester). Community partner agency education and training in terms of skills and competencies to effectively build partnerships, effective teaching and learning strategies for students in community settings, and support and resources for students to learn how to 'navigate' through their respective systems will be necessary. Both academic learning and community based service learning will need to incorporate effective 'reflection' strategies in order to regularly and progressively assess student and partner understanding of the theoretical concepts and issues around practice.

Universities undertaking genuine engagement in order to achieve true mutuality and regional solidarity will need to set high standards of excellence for engagement activities that are rigorously evaluated. As well, they need to be prepared that they are opening themselves up to possibly significant change.

Thus, in the true meaning of partnerships and community engagement, this paper highlights that the processes themselves as well as the critical points along the journey will need to focus on "reciprocal, mutually-beneficial knowledge-driven relationships" (AUCEA 2005; Garlick & Langworthy n.d.b, p. 1).

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Community engagement as a cornerstone enabling learning and teaching and research in the post modern world.

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Abstract

This paper demonstrates how community engagement can provide a cornerstone enabling research and learning and teaching to meet the challenges of relativity and uncertainty in a post modern world. In the field of education, the question of relevance is a constant criticism. If relevance is to be achieved, research and learning and teaching need to be interwoven with community and community concerns, in ways that enhance the outcomes for all stakeholders. The paper examines an academic's university community engagement practice from a reflexive and cross disciplinary perspective. It seeks to identify the characteristics and qualities that define successful university community engagement practice while identifying that there needs to be recognition and reward for universities to have more academics involved in such successful and sustainable university community engagement practice.

Introduction

Increasingly, the relevance of education and specifically university education, to life and to vocation is questioned. There is doubt about the relevance of the skills and abilities of students and thus the learning and teaching processes in the institutions of education and about the kinds of research institutions of higher education undertake. The graduate outcomes discussions in the past five years foreground these questions. (BHERT 2003). Universities are encouraged to develop linkages with businesses and the community in order that they operate beyond their traditional ivory towers (Bishop, 2006) and university policy is moving toward raising the profile of community engagement. This paper seeks to develop the notion of community engagement as a valid practice of academics and as such the need for appropriate reward and recognition systems to be structured into the way universities operate. To explore this idea the paper seeks to understand the activities of an academic who has invested many years in university community engagement. From this rich and reflective analysis bedded in an understanding of the post modern world, the paper considers the notion that without community engagement, universities in such a world, will fail to meet the needs of a range of stakeholders. Embracing community engagement as an academic practice, the traditional academic activities of learning and teaching and of research, can gain perspectives which serve to develop academic practice and augment the possibilities of linkage with the community. The paper begins by developing an understanding of the post modern world in which such activities become important for both the operation

of traditional research activities and for the facilitation of work ready graduates. Graduates who are ready and prepared to take their part in the professional activities for which their studies have prepared them become excellent ambassadors for the processes and experiences gained through their tertiary education.

A little definition

'Community engagement' is taken to mean those activities undertaken by universities which develop and nurture links with the community and which benefit both the university and the community or region in which they are located. Such a definition acknowledges that the words 'community' or 'region' are fraught with many problems. Community engagement is, however, a process requiring the investment of energy by all parties involved. In understanding both the meaning of 'community' and working with the community, any university community engagement practitioner will need to identify the specific stakeholders of initiatives to engage effectively and appropriately with the community. This process will include identification of university stakeholders as well as representatives of interest groups who are the community stakeholders of mutually beneficial initiatives. Community engagement activities can only be effectively and sustainably developed on a foundation of trust, mutual respect and understanding. This foundation provides assurance that the activities proposed are part of relevant development and ongoing changes in the community and recognition that these changes and developments are part of a shared process and mutual understanding. Community engagement is not about 'doing to' the community, but about engaging with and empowering the community. Inherent in the community engagement process is both initial and ongoing involvement of community stakeholders in the decision making processes that constitute collaborative activity.

To foreground the importance of the learner in the practice of education, this paper uses the notion of 'learning and teaching' rather than simply 'teaching' in its discussion of academic practice. This is consistent with the notion of education that engages the learner in a range of activities including those that might be undertaken in a community engagement activity.

The methodology of the paper

Much of this paper uses the community engagement, learning and teaching and research experiences of Owen Curtis, one of the writing team of the paper, to provide examples through which to examine the detail of university community engagement in action. Owen Curtis is a university community engagement practitioner in the model of academic practice described in this paper. In using his experience as a case study and because of his membership of the writing team for the paper, the paper itself models reflective practice (cf. Schon 1993). The development of quality processes through action learning – the 'plan, do, check, act' process - is an essential part of reflective practice. At the same time, by writing in a team, the authors access the skills, research background and practical experience of all team

members to develop the reflections of one university community engagement practitioner. With this approach we can gain rich detail in the narrative of the community engagement practitioner and a broad understanding of education, innovation and organisational process from the breadth of the research team. Indeed, the research we are discussing is “community based, ... collaborative, change-oriented and finds its research questions in the needs of communities” (O’Connor 2006:6). Reflection on the process, on community engagement in action, is a continuous cycle that is necessary to further innovation in the institution of higher education and its accepted social purposes related to this particular aspect of activity.

Such a methodology is also appropriate in considering the issue of where community engagement fits in the roles of the academic and in the practices of the university. Some of the challenges in researching and writing the paper come from the tension between Mode 1 and Mode 2 research (Gibbons 1994) and writing about Mode 2 practice for a Mode 1 publication. By electing to write in a team, as is appropriate and relevant in the post modern context, a range of cross disciplinary perspectives are accessed. Members of the team do not work on the same campus of the University of Wollongong and the linkage across the campuses comes from mutual interest in the scholarship of engagement and in the understanding developed through the collaboration. Fogel & Cook (2006:9) claim that community engagement literature needs “discussion of how the interpersonal aspects of partnership between key stakeholders either hinder or promote success” in engagement activities. The methodology behind this paper allows for this kind of reflective appreciation and at the same time, for team members’ understandings to be developed. This process supports a focus on the needs of community engagement practitioners in universities for recognition and reward. O’Connor (2006) suggests that community based research and the scholarship of engagement breaks into two categories; how to do it and how to be recognised for it. There seems to be less addressing the latter and indeed, it comes as no surprise that community engagement recommendations continue to identify the need for universities to define their commitment to engagement in ways that include “reward systems for faculty and academic staff that include an engagement dimension” (CIC 2005). These engagement dimensions offer as one performance measure or desired outcome, the “number of faculty tenured and promoted on engagement activity”. (CIC2005) While this example is US in origin, the aims of bodies like AUCEA, include; “promot[ing] the recognition of the scholarship of engagement as a valid pedagogy”. As well, an AUCEA position paper suggests that “engagement is ... a core activity of a university and should not be considered a separate undertaking. Community engagement should be a key component in a university's staff promotion and performance review programs and feature in the annual Institutional Assessment Framework Information Collection” (AUCEA 2006). If Australian universities aim to develop their community engagement these proposals all parallel the need for reward and recognition structures which assist academics to identify community engagement as a valid and valuable activity and one which will foster career development.

Following is the citation of Owen Curtis for a University of Wollongong Community Engagement Award. We provide this as evidence of the university's regard for Owen's work. While Owen is not the lead writer in this team, he embraced the notion of a collective reflection on community engagement activities because of his personal belief in the need to develop recognition and reward systems for such practitioners in universities. Such recognition will encourage academic involvement in community engagement as a legitimate and worthwhile career choice. His experiences demonstrate one university community engagement practitioner's work

- as a resource for developing ways of learning and teaching in a university community engagement framework,
- has served to develop research linkages of significant value for the university,
- has supported graduate outcomes, and as well,
- has informed curriculum development both within the university and nationally.

This activity has not, as yet, been recognised as part of the Faculty and University mainstream reward structures.

Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Community Engagement - 2006

The inaugural Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Community Engagement for 2006 was awarded to Owen Curtis from the School of Health Sciences in the Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences.

Citation for Owen Curtis

Owen Curtis receives this inaugural award for his significant and sustained contribution to community engagement over a 15 year period. He has developed what has been described as a "living laboratory" for staff and students of the School of Health Sciences which have brought mutual benefits for the University and the community alike.

Owen has been instrumental in establishing close ties with strategic allies within the region and beyond and through these connections has supported student involvement in a wide range of exercise intervention and rehabilitation programs. Such programs have resulted in increased health and wellbeing for indigenous populations and the elderly, in particular, and have helped to ensure that our graduates are skilled, competent and responsive to local needs and issues.

The colleagues who nominated Owen for this award listed many examples of initiatives that he has contributed to which have brought real and tangible benefits for the community. While these are too numerous to mention here, some of the highlights include:

- The introduction of an exercise intervention program at Port Kembla Hospital – which has now developed into a stand alone department within the hospital;
- Development of the Exercise Science and Rehabilitation Clinic on campus which provides the opportunity for the community to access University staff and student skills;
- Development of the Workfit Model at the Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital;
- Development of Self Management Education Camps for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people with Diabetes in conjunction with the Aboriginal Medical Service; and
- Delivery of the exercise component of the Care for the Carers Program sponsored through NSW Health (with the support of his students).

His colleagues also speak of the tireless and self-effacing manner in which he has developed and implemented the programs noted above.

Finally, as a testimony to his community engagement, Owen has been able to attract grants and scholarships from community groups and foundations to support student involvement in these programs over many years.

The respect afforded Owen as a result of his efforts is evident in the ready access he has to the medical and allied health professions, to the indigenous populations, and to those involved in aged care. It is also reflected in this award.

Universities and the post modern world

The post modern world is characterised by  Accelerating change  The growth of the knowledge economy  The increasing diffusion of Information technology  Networked Connectedness  The need for continuous

innovation ■ Globalisation and internationalisation ■ The relativity of knowledge

Each of the above elements of the post-modern world impact on the practices and policies in universities. One of the earliest academics to recognise and document this shift was Gibbons in his 1994 work 'The New Production of Knowledge' where he distinguished between Mode 1 and Mode 2 knowledge generation. Mode 1 is represented by the traditional university, disciplinary research paradigm while Mode 2 is identified as multi- and trans- disciplinary, problem focussed and targeted to meet identified needs in specific contexts. The consequences of the post modern recognition of the possibility of multiple valid explanations for a single phenomena are still filtering through university practices and policies and it could be asked whether universities would more appropriately be named 'multiversities' in recognition of this seismic shift in our understanding of knowledge and its production. In a world where knowledge is no longer fixed, institutions of higher education are defining new ways of being and doing to maintain relevance and legitimate their role in society.

One of the outcomes of this shift in our understanding of knowledge production and distribution has been the embracing of the principle of 'Community Engagement' by the university sector. In Australia, Federal Government research funding bodies have increased the emphasis on university research being conducted with external partners in applied contexts. That is, research that is 'community engaged'. Federal Minister for Education, Julie Bishop, in her keynote address to the Sydney 2006 Knowledge Transfer and Community Engagement Forum suggests that each university "needs to adapt its structures, processes and operations to the needs of its particular stakeholders".

The Recognition and Reward Problématique

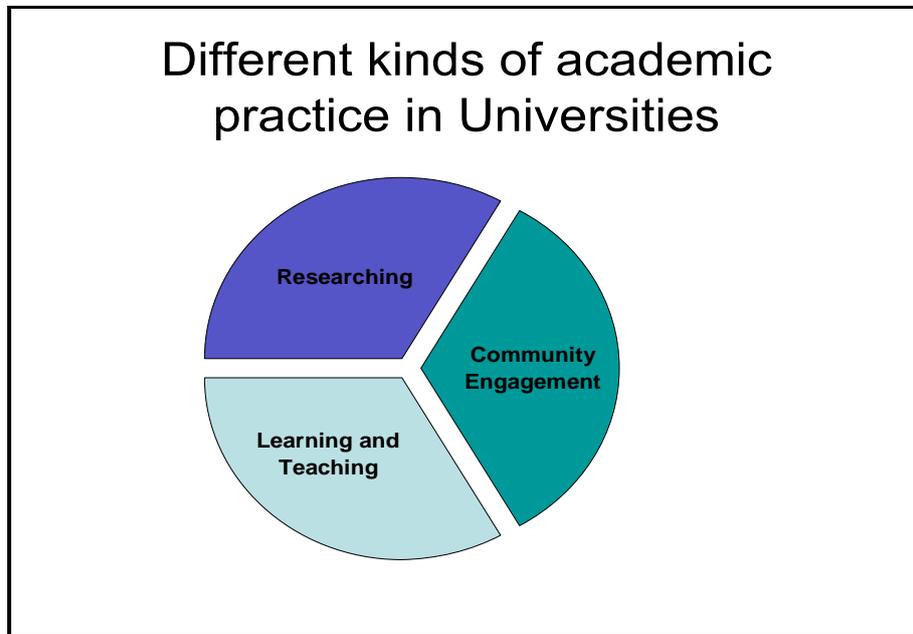
However, when one considers the reward and recognition structures of the university system which are strongly biased towards a peer-reviewed publication record, a tension becomes apparent between the Mode 1 knowledge production method, based on disciplinary peer review and a Mode 2 community engagement context, based upon multi and trans disciplinary contexts, which may not be recognised as legitimate by the 'Mode 1' peers. This situation has obvious implications in reward and recognition structures based on criteria from a 'Mode 1' paradigm. This problem is not confined to universities policies alone, it could be said to be systemic, in that the funding body DEST, only recognises certain Mode 1 publications in their funding equations. Although academics may be fulfilling the university's mission of active community engagement, appropriate 'weighting' may not be available for this activity in the context of promotion which requires extensive 'Mode 1 publications' in recognised 'Mode 1' journals. 'Mode 2' publications, in unrecognised and 'unweighted' Mode 2 media, do not earn DEST points and therefore do not earn universities funding.

The practice for which Owen Curtis received the above Community Engagement award fits the Mode 2 paradigm and is the culmination of more than fifteen years of networking in the community and developing his professional contacts for the benefit of his students, the community and the university. The motivation for this community engagement was the need for students to develop reflective practice in a relatively safe, but not simulated environment; something that was closer to an experience of the 'real world', than they would otherwise be able to achieve. The Living Laboratory and other initiatives which grew out of the drive for 'real world' experience, are the kind of initiatives that bring university learning and teaching into the post modern world. The most recent result of this lifetime commitment has been the awarding of a federally funded research grant to a team in which Owen is the principal researcher. Owen, as university community engagement practitioner, is the key link between community and university environments in this grant funding. This is both, through his ability to create linkages, and, through the respect with which he is regarded in both of these environments. Such initiatives cannot be initiated or sustained without community engagement and a long-term commitment to the needs of the local community. Owen's experience is an example demonstrating that to make community engagement flourish universities need reward structures which develop and recognise university community engagement practitioners who can work effectively in the boundary-spanning role of relationship and program development facilitators. Such professionals will be mindful of both the limitations of experiential learning venues like the Living laboratory and of the leadership styles relevant to the processes and methods under investigation

Community engagement: an academic practice

In the university, as suggested in Diagram 1, academics can be modelled as having three different kinds of academic practice. Community engagement on the part of academics is not a new practice. Researchers, like Teather & Teather (1999) for example, have pointed out the long history of academics engaging with their communities. The rise of the Australian University Community Engagement Association (www.aucea.net.au) can for example, be seen in terms of the need to develop understandings of engaged academic activity and in particular of those activities which foster understanding of the kind Boyer (1996) envisaged. Boyer advocated a new appreciation of knowledge generation and application and an "integration of student learning and discovery" which might straddle the silos of teaching, research and service as described by Wallis (2006).

Diagram 1



In such a view of academic practice the three relevant pursuits are viewed as elements of the range of activities possible and not as mutually exclusive domains. Rather they work symbiotically in the range of doings of universities. The model in Diagram 1, suggests the interwoven nature of all three activities. If we begin to reward community engagement, as we have now begun to reward learning and teaching, and have always rewarded research, we will need to identify the knowledge, skills and competencies of university community engagement practitioners, promote their successes and publicise the outcomes resulting from the projects with which they have been involved. This will provide opportunities for young academics to identify and develop similar qualities, safe in the knowledge that their investment of time and energy in community engagement will be considered as supporting their career path. Such identification has the potential to develop strategies for collaboration with others whose orientation is other segments of the model of academic practice in Diagram 1.

Toews & Yazedjian (2007) suggest that academics are ringmasters in a three ringed circus and use this analogy to explore the American orientation to research, teaching and service. Service in the US includes both community engagement and involvement in governance of the university. This analysis is useful in the possibilities for an academic profile it raises for community engagement, providing as it does strategies for meeting all three areas of academic practice. However, its analogy places community engagement as a lesser element of the three, when the post modern world practice of education

clearly foregrounds the needs of the university for community engagement. Toews & Yazedjian perspective matches that of writers such as Fogel & Cook (2006:10) when they identify the rewards of community engagement to students, community, faculty and university, but Fogel & Cook question whether “this activity will provide the professional material necessary to launch or sustain a career.” Such an awareness deals with the pragmatic reality that universities currently do not recognise or reward community engagement in ways which will encourage its take up by those who seek rewards other than the intrinsic ones which characterise its practice

For Owen, there were rewards other than the intrinsic ones. Early in his career, the living laboratory was the focus, providing as it did, the opportunity for students and members of the community to benefit from the learning/teaching environment. The laboratory was often developed on University property, utilised teaching space and equipment, and invited members of the community to attend for mutual benefit.

Within a short number of years, early in 1990’s, it became evident to Owen that the field of Human Movement Science was creating graduates who could provide a valuable service for members of the community. Much of the evidence for this in Australia arose from community service initiatives that provided on campus clinics for children with neurological disorders, people requiring cardiac rehabilitation, elite athlete assessment and programming, corporate health and wellbeing and enhancement of functional fitness. The creation of the Australian Association of Exercise and Sports Science in 1991 provided an extra stimulus for community engagement. The living laboratory scenario had provided the community with evidence of the benefits resulting from safe and effective exercise interventions (even developed and delivered by final year students). As well, more intensive engagement with individuals, organisations and government was needed to develop the framework in which employment of these graduates could be implemented. Furthermore, continued investment of time and effort was required to then convince the employers that these graduates required career opportunities for them to remain with the field of exercise science/rehabilitation. These outcomes, which benefit the community and the University, augment the intrinsic rewards associated with knowing that there are positive benefits flowing from the work but do not create a focus on the enhancement of the career of the individual. Toews & Yazedjian (2007) note that “ while service is an integral part of faculty life, it is also the least important for receiving tenure” or other rewards of university career enhancement.

This is the conundrum for a university community engagement practitioner and one towards which this paper seeks to orient its discussion. Community engagement has intrinsic rewards for those who focus on it. Universities need what community engagement can develop in linkages that lead to research and learning and teaching outcomes and as writers like Toews & Yazedjian suggest community engagement can augment and be augmented by learning and teaching and research. However, universities still do not have either the necessary or sufficient built in community engagement recognition and reward processes which encourage neophyte university community engagement practitioners to both pursue and to develop their practice. Those involved in

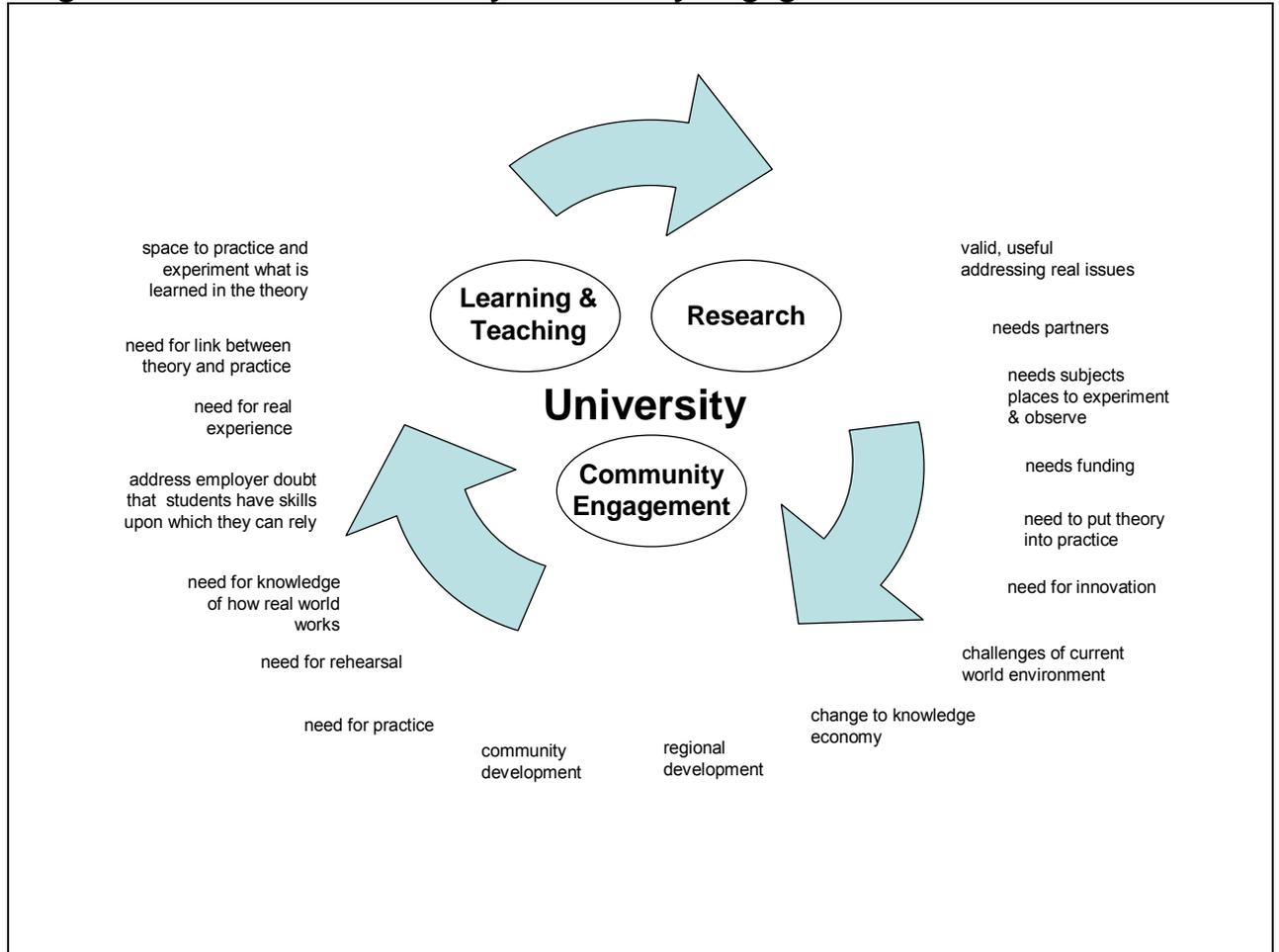
university community engagement practice are the converted; they know and have experienced the intrinsic rewards of community engagement and are well aware of the rewards for their students, the university and the community. Universities in Australia are moving to meet these issues at a leadership level with some universities appointing high level community engagement positions and creating awards like the one Owen Curtis achieved at University of Wollongong. However, until the need for legitimating university community engagement in recognition and reward systems is acknowledged in the mainstream of promotion and tenure, we are likely to limit the full potential for community engagement.

Community engagement when viewed as one element of academic practice

If we place community engagement, research, and learning and teaching together as a whole in terms of academic practice, we bring into play the possibility that they work together in a symbiotic relationship for the university and the community. This contextualisation of university academic practice places it within the post modern world, where values are no longer fixed, where learning is a lifelong activity and where the need to be creative, flexible and change oriented makes it possible to adapt to the demands of the knowledge economy. This matters both for academics in their praxis, and for the would-be professionals who are studying what academics provide in universities. And indeed, the same applies for the academic as researcher, because of the way that they, as an academic researcher, need to link with enterprises, business, industry and the community, in order for their research to link meaningfully to the real world as well as to create attendant funding opportunities. Indeed, of the central questions are: what is the university doing, how does it fit with society, what gives it meaning in the world and what is its social purpose – both in the present and in its future 'becoming'. University community engagement can provide linkages that address many of these concerns.

The following, though probably not exhaustive, Diagram 2: Benefits of University Community Engagement highlighting the three areas of academic practice, is indicative of the potential in successful community engagement. The diagram takes the perspective from the university point of view as this paper focuses on the university fostering university community engagement practitioners and practice.

Diagram 2: Benefits of University Community Engagement



Community engagement assists the learning and teaching needs of the university to address student graduate outcomes in order that students achieve discipline specific skills as well as a range of skills and attributes in preparing students for a changing world. For example The April 2003 Business Higher Education Round Table's News

“acknowledged ... growing demands of government, employers and the students, to make explicit the outcomes of learning that provided the added value to a university education.”

Langworthy & Mawson (2006 :4) note that “the lesson from the US (Holland, 2005, Harkavy 2005) is that community engagement is not third stream or somehow independent of core business, but like Industry Based Learning and collaborative research, is essential for the development of graduate attributes

and the achievement of graduate outcomes including employment.” Butcher et.al. (2003:4) highlight that the Prentice and Garcia (2000) study established the crucial importance of students engaging in critical reflection about their learning and demonstrated that the combination of service with a reflective framework enhances the benefits to students, staff and community agencies beyond the expectation of either approach offered alone.

As well, the research agenda can benefit from activities in community engagement. However, if we also consider the type of advice provided by Toews & Yazedjian (2007) where for young academics, they note the following guides for implementing a research agenda: Finding projects; Finding resources; Integrating teaching with research; Involving students; Conference activity/presentation; Developing collaborative relationships, we can envisage the potential for university community engagement. Each of these steps in creating a research agenda can benefit through community engagement processes. In other words the three elements of academic practice find a meeting of needs which, synergistically, result in each gaining potential benefit from the practice of the other.

The experience of Owen Curtis demonstrates the success for learning and teaching and for research in concert with community enhancement. The recent research grant from the Department of Health and Ageing was granted to Owen, his practitioner colleagues and their respective organisations, because his years of university community engagement practice provided the boundary-spanning linkages, relationships and mutually-beneficial partnerships required, as a naturally-occurring context of practice, for an entirely new area of research. This recognition of the value of linkages and partnership for advancing knowledge and professional practice, substantiates the claim for enhanced learning and teaching and research that become possible with synergistic potential of university community engagement. Moreover, university community engagement can provide both the stimulus for the research and the avenue through which the research is conducted. Often, the research can only be conducted in or with the community, and can only be effectively conducted if the various stakeholders have a clear vision of potential challenges and outcomes and have developed the trust necessary for successful conduct of the research.

University community engagement as praxis

The work of a community engagement practitioner like Owen Curtis has its origins in learning and teaching activities with young professionals in the field of exercise science. Exercise Science attained professional recognition in 1991 with the formation of the Australian Association for Exercise and Sports Science. Prior to 1991, graduates of Human Movement Science from the 28 universities around Australia gained employment largely in the fitness industry. Other opportunities were limited to working with elite sportspeople or with individuals with pathology in the small number of cardiac rehabilitation programs and in a few cases in musculoskeletal rehabilitation programs. While it was believed that the graduates had the knowledge, skills and competencies to support individuals with pathology in improving their quality

of life and there was research evidence, largely developed overseas, that exercise could impact positively on disease, on its progression, and on quality of life. There was very little evidence that graduates from universities in Australia could assure such outcomes locally, and indeed, there were very few employment opportunities where these skills could be applied.

University community engagement provided the vehicle for students to gain competence and confidence in delivery of their knowledge and skills through a living laboratory. On campus opportunities were developed with the testing and program design for regional athletes, with the development of the Adult Fitness Class for individuals over 55 years of age. Expansion of this concept to off campus facilities and delivery by students provided the opportunity for potential employers to witness the positive outcomes of appropriate exercise interventions for employees (Wollongong City Council, Illawarra Electricity), for patients (Exercise Physiology students within Illawarra Area Health Services for individuals living with chronic pain and receiving treatment at Port Kembla Hospital). The involvement of students in provision of safe and effective exercise interventions for 'at risk' members of the community required the development of strong relationships between the stakeholders. It also required a quality assurance model through which it could be confirmed that the students possessed the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies which would allow them to deliver their knowledge safely. The learning and teaching environment on campus required modification to ensure students were indeed safe. The process of up skilling of students IN AN EMERGING PROFESSION, required the development of assessments that considered not only the technical skills of delivery, but the process of engagement with the potential client.

As the acceptance of Exercise Science/Rehabilitation graduates has increased over time within the larger community, and as the impact of tailored physical activity programs has been validated through clinical trials both internationally and in Australia, the community engagement program has expanded into areas in which exercise has not traditionally been delivered. In these circumstances, the university community engagement practitioner has to develop a strategy that supports the increase in knowledge about the practices of exercise in allied health and medical practitioners. These professionals may resist implementing change, especially change which brings practices that impact on the 'culture of the organisation' in which the university community engagement initiative is being proposed.

Initiatives which reflect the challenges facing a community engagement practitioner in this field of endeavour include:-

- The implementation of an exercise intervention for individuals on Dialysis.
- The involvement of final year exercise rehabilitation students in the exercise component of an indigenous health program targeting individuals with complex and chronic health needs
- The involvement of students in cardiac rehabilitation programs locally
- The involvement of final year students in a collaborative project targeting individuals with complex and chronic conditions AND at

increased risk of falls. Participants include individuals with chronic kidney disease not yet on dialysis as well as people in living in supported care.

These initiatives have required the development of a process which has educated administrators, managers, medical and nursing staff about the benefits of exercise, as well as addressing the professional challenges these individuals may face in attempting to introduce practices that differ significantly from traditional treatment.

For Owen's practice as a university community engagement practitioner, the intrinsic rewards have been significant and have been influenced by: the professional rewards such as recognition by the National Body through nomination for Fellowship status, the appointment of recent University of Wollongong graduates to executive positions in the state and national committees of the professional body and the very high level of employment amongst the four year graduates of Exercise Rehabilitation. However, to meet the aims of university Community Engagement Plans which seek identification and augmentation of community engagement activities, universities need strategies that encourage and support young academics involvement. Leadership of community engagement initiatives is a skill developed over time which enhances the development of trust and the creation of networks.

The importance of leadership styles

Using appropriate leadership styles in university community engagement practice is essential and there needs to be recognition of the skills and knowledge and networks facilitated by university community engagement practitioners. Styles used by university community engagement practitioners will differ when engaging with different stakeholders and the skills associated with moving between these styles are significant. For example, in the case examined here the range of stakeholders includes:

- Community members accessing the services
- University administration – Legal and Commercial
- University and Area Health Human Research Ethics Committees
- Medical and Allied Health professionals and managers
- Non-government organisations
- Professional bodies – AAESS, Division of General Practice
- Staff and students within the University

Clearly, different groups will have different needs and the range of stakeholders demonstrates the complexities of communicating effectively across these groups. The following discussion of some different leadership styles used in the practice of Owen Curtis points to the challenges for successful university community engagement practice.

When supporting the emerging professional, the undergraduate student, a coaching leadership style (Goleman, 2,000) is required. The learning emphasis of this leadership style is essential for effective involvement of students with members of the community at increased risk due to their illness.

The importance of feedback is the hallmark of this style of leadership, and the student/community member interface is one important aspect of this feedback process. It is only through the development of a close working relationship with the various stakeholders and their communities that an understanding of the relative roles of each is made explicit and then utilised effectively for maximal professional growth in the undergraduate student.

As well, the university community engagement practitioner is often the instigator, innovator and role model for professional behaviour for the students, particularly when there are few discipline specific exercise rehabilitation professionals employed within the various organisations with which community linkages are made. Regular team meetings, discussions and committee meetings provide the opportunity for reflective practice of all involved in the processes of university community engagement. One obvious challenge is the currency of university community engagement practitioner's skills and competencies in the profession. Universities lack support infrastructure to encourage academics to return to the field and refresh protocols and interventions which maintain currency of skills as practitioners.

As well as acceptance as a professional in the practice of the profession, at the interface between the various members of the university community engagement process, the pacesetting leadership style (Goleman, 2000) may be required to develop outcomes. Working with self motivated professionals, as occurs in many organisations including NGOs and professional bodies, requires a different emphasis in the relationship and the risks inherent with this style of leadership may be ameliorated by balancing pacesetting style with the affiliative leadership style. This style is effective in gaining team support through friendship and trust. The role of trust in university community engagement cannot be overstated, and that trust extends both between the organisations involved, and within the students undertaking the various experiences. In effect, it is *trust* that forms the core element of social capital which provides the medium of exchange for community engagement (Cox, 1995).

With research opportunities multiplying as the discipline specific interest areas are supplemented through boundary spanning linkages with stakeholders in the community, the ability of the university community engagement practitioner in using an 'empowering leadership style' (Goleman, 2000) becomes critical. In Owen's experience the processes that engage Indigenous individuals in behaviour change related to chronic and complex conditions through appropriate physical activity requires strong ties between the University and relevant organisations. Introducing beneficial 'treatment modalities', such as exercise, within organisations that privilege the biophysical medical model, requires research in and with the community, not in a laboratory. To achieve this in the community requires the development and maintenance of trust, of shared vision and strategies for changing the culture within the organisation in order that the intervention is supported in the community not simply in the university research or learning and teaching. Accomplishing this requires prolonged interactions and demonstrated competence by the university community engagement practitioner, and

indeed, 'street cred' in the various contexts of practice that might present opportunities. This needs empowering leadership style where people can be engaged with and mobilised towards the vision and where self-confidence in newly-emerging professionals is nurtured and grown with leadership that functions as a catalyst for positive change.

To develop academics who can finesse the benefits of university community engagement needs a range of strategies which assist in leadership development. Without appropriate reward and legitimation systems within universities, the successes of universities in developing community engagement will be limited. As well there needs to be strategies like an effective mentoring system that, for example, introduces the young academic to the local powerbrokers/decision makers and provides them with strategies that support the development of clinical AND interpersonal skills within the students through whom the community engagement activities will be delivered is required.

Conclusion

Thus development of ways of linking academic endeavour and the world are critical for students, the university and for the community in these times of change where connectedness and experience are valued overtly alongside discipline specific skills. Finding ways to make this work are part of the current agenda in universities. But until the academic practice of community engagement is valued for its own strengths it will remain an afterthought, the clown in the three ringed circus according to Toews & Yazedjian (2007). The fruits of university community engagement ripen over time and only with constant attention: attention to detail, attention to relationships and the development and maintenance of trust.

University community engagement practice needs to be openly valued in university recognition and reward structures. The next steps are to identify the university framework of university community engagement recognition and rewards and how to measure the activities of university community engagement practitioners. While it may be the case that the most significant reward of community engagement is seeing the real personal and professional satisfaction that comes from the mutually beneficial activities, we limit the number of academics who will engage in community engagement practice if we do not provide support beyond the 'feel good factor'. University community engagement activities are characterised by lasting relationships of trust and unconditional giving and receiving which provide a humanising element to the "bottom line" focus of many initiatives. What needs to be noted is that from this kind of work comes sustainable practice for the community and the university.

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Connecting scholarship to places: human capital, learning, enterprising and an ethical approach to communities

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Abstract:

Universities have a responsibility to foster human capital, learning, and enterprising outcomes that impact positively on society and the environment within the regional communities in which they are located. In the past these were seen as essential aspects of how universities both contributed to and shaped the public good. This contribution and the ability of universities to be vehicles for critiquing and shaping the public good is currently constrained, however, by a neo-liberal paradigm that preferences rationalism, self-interest and competitiveness, and excludes processes of mutual dialogue and enterprising action by human capital that generates outcomes of meaningful worth for the community. To examine these issues, we discuss the importance of a relational ethic to underpin university engagement; an ethic that is based on Zygmunt Bauman's (1995) forms of togetherness. We propose that an ideal form of togetherness ought to underpin engagement processes and practices to move beyond the dilemmas of conditional funding. At the conclusion a proposed empirical exploration of these ethically-based engagement processes and objectives is outlined.

Introduction

Writing in the Australian Financial Review in 2006, the Vice-Chancellor of Macquarie University, Steven Schwartz, bemoaned the loss of moral purpose in the modern university saying the nature of public funding for universities caused them to scramble for private sources to remain competitive. This view, along with arguments that support a Higher Education Institution (HEI) 'third stream' funding agenda, triple-helix type Research and Development (R&D), and other 'partnership' arrangements of convenience suggests a conditional or consequential relationship between HEI funding, and the basis for an ethical approach by universities with their communities and approaches to their own viability.

This conditional and competitive view about universities and their ethical responsibilities is not the relational view of the public role of the university that Boyer (1996), Dewey (1956; 1961) and others had envisaged. In their views, education was about generating social benefits, developing ethical citizenry and ensuring communities had a moral character. Our argument is that a funding-conditional approach to ethics by universities does not see the creation of human capital, research and innovation - the core business of the university - as powerful tools that can simultaneously generate ethical

processes and community outcomes of substance, as well as enhance viability outcomes for the institution itself.

To examine the dilemma that conditional funding arrangements present for universities, we discuss the importance of a relational ethic to underpin university engagement. This is an ethic that is based on Zygmunt Bauman's (1995) forms of togetherness which he calls *being-with*, *being-aside* and *being-for*. It is the latter, *being-for*, that represents the ideal form of togetherness which ought to underpin the connection between universities, their scholarship, and place.

To move beyond the problem that funding presents for universities and how they engage with their student bodies and communities, we advocate for Bauman's *being-for* relation to take a centre place. This ideal is critically dependent on recognising the interrelationship between learning pedagogy, resulting human capital that has the skills to generate enterprising outcomes of meaningful value, and the importance of ethical values and principles which can incorporate different spatial dimensions of communities. To provide empirical support to these claims, this paper concludes with a brief outline of a proposed exploration of these ethically-based engagement processes and objectives in a number of diverse community settings.

Literature and themes

According to Boyer (1996: 15), "...the university has an obligation to broaden the scope of scholarship", by integrating discovery horizontally across disciplines and vertically by mutually engaging in wider dialogue with consequent practical application in the community. For Boyer, such engagement calls for the university to have clarity in its purpose and mission and a responsiveness that focuses on "...the issues of our day", outside of the structural need to have additional funded specific-purpose programs in place (1996: 17-20).

According to Benson and Harkavy (2002: 4), universities can best do that by "...optimally aligning all their components and resources to radically improve the democratic quality of life in their community". This extends on Dewey's ideas that as education sites, universities too must transform according to changes in social life (in Bellah et al., 1992). Encouraging citizen education meant for Dewey that participation, '[was] to make the work of the chaotic [city] metropolis intelligible to its least favoured and most disadvantaged citizens' (Addams cited in Bellah et. al., 1992: 152). This participation, according to Dewey and Addams, was essential to 'a good society' (Bellah et al., 1992). Thus, universities too were essential to developing a good society.

In this respect, one of the goals of education, indeed public education, is for it to be transformative and deliberative, to make life intelligible in this somewhat chaotic global age. In view of this, one of the primary principles that ought to underpin university and community engagement, then, is that community participation ought to be oriented toward the creation of a good society, or in other words, a public good. Such learning ought not to be exclusive and out

of reach to those at the margins of society, which the decrease in government funding of universities increases the possibility of.

Unfortunately, the relationship between universities and conditional funding sources has increased and is reflected in their transformation. It is, however, a transformation that sadly does not seem to be responding to changes in social life, but rather it is one responding to changes in economic life. Steven Schwartz's claim that 'universities are not public goods that require government subsidies...[and that] higher education can be financed privately' (2006: 3) are worrying considerations. Those at the margins, those in the middle, find it harder and harder to engage with public education.

The more that a competitive, business logic underpins university funding the more that university engagement with its student and community populace begins to take on the appearance of a utilitarian agenda which disregards spatial uniqueness. Majoritarian considerations reign and in this climate universities become tied to accountability measures and project development that reflects the needs of funding bodies over the communities of which they are a part. The connectivity of scholarship to the places within which it takes part is being lost and we ask, "do universities know what the common, public or shared goods of their regions are"? Perhaps these are being imposed in top-down approaches whereby those in positions of power express and define these matters for them?

In this neo-liberal environment where the values of competition, efficiency and productivity dominate, universities fail the Boyer test. Forms of togetherness are fragmented in terms of the connection between scholarship, place and ethical outcomes. The question raised by Schwartz (2006: 3) about benefits universities offer to society and his idea that they can foster human liberty and freedom introduces a problematic convergence of values and principles. It sees a liberal philosophy that has been co-opted by neo-liberal economics used to guide the Australian public education system. In this context we might ask if Australians see these values and principles of liberty and freedom as being central to the public good, if this is so then we might further ask "where did our public good go"?

Where did our public good go?

"Knowledge is no longer an immobile solid; it has been liquefied. It is actively moving in all the currents of society itself".

John Dewey. 1956. *The Child and Curriculum and The School and Society*.

University and regional community engagement is premised on certain values and principles that are said to foster dialogue, innovation, mutual participation and learning critical to the success of engagement. But more than this, Boyer (1996), and Benson and Harkavy's (2002) views embody an assumption that universities facilitate scholarship and learning whereby educators relate with people who are genuine seekers of knowledge. Indeed, although it seems an ironic position for him to present, Schwartz (2006: 4) too suggests that 'students learn by being a part of an ethical community'.

Universities are not simply 'drive-through mobility factories,' they shape the currents within which knowledge moves in society in Dewey's sense of the term.

In these respects, universities reflect places where social practices ensue that can foster ethical communities (Isaacs 1998; Sunderland & Graham 1998). Communities are not value-free places where social institutions such as universities can locate themselves and assume students are part of ethical communities. Ethical communities must be fostered, worked at, critically engaged with and they are certainly not places of conditionality. Palmer's (2001; 2006a; 2006b) previous use of the term ethical communities has highlighted the importance of shared values and principles developed through conversations, deliberation and participation by community members. Her work also illustrates the problematic of value convergence on maintaining a commitment to a public or common good.

Contrary to Schwartz's vision of ethical communities, Terry Cooper (1997:11) articulates that ethical communities are 'multi-logical (in that they can incorporate more than just an economic logic), dialogical (conversation and relational formed), heterogenous, they do not have an all encompassing tradition, they are reflective, analytic, involved and open'. This is contrasted for Cooper (1997: 10) with moral communities where 'norms are imposed, codes for behaviour are given based on pre-existing traditions, law and order is imposed to deal with chaos, homogeneity is favoured, they are authoritative, devolved, closed and bounded'. For us, Schwartz's vision is a moral community one where the opportunity for universities to contribute to the public good is closed off.

Universities were once considered places where the contribution to a common and public good was integral to scholarship, and so the idea of a social practice pursued over time with a goal and purpose in mind is fitting to understanding Boyer's (1996) scholarship of engagement, and Benson & Harkavy's (2002) goals of university-community engagement. Indeed, Schwartz (2006: 4) too, in spite of claiming support for private funding of universities, supports the notion that education ought to have purpose and that the purpose is to develop ethical behaviour. To provide a 'basic sense of ethics,' as Schwartz (2006: 4) contends, requires more than simply involvement and participation that generates economics. Universities need to be places that encourage enterprising learning that fosters a broad-based human capital with not only a conscience for 'being', but a purpose for 'doing'.

According to Garlick et al., (2007: 33), 'the *process* of enterprising is one of working together in groups with complementary and reinforcing skills and knowledge with the objective of achieving a better result in the community with the attributes at hand'. Being enterprising in this sense is not about a profit-driven logic guiding practices, but rather a sense of moral and ethical purpose that is related to the needs of the spatial localities within which universities are situated.

All four ideas (Boyer 1996, Issacs 1998, Benson and Harkavy 2002 and Garlick et al 2007) hold that higher education institutions are central to a

particular vision of a public good, but it is a vision that Sunderland & Graham (2006) assert has been eroded by economic rationalism. Because economic rationalism is dependent on Bauman's (1995) ideas about relations which are *aside* or *with*, universities that incorporate conditional funding arrangements into their agendas will not be able to articulate 'a vision of what they are trying to achieve for society, and to live up to it' (Schwartz 2006: 4).

Ethics beyond profits

Being ethical is not simply about ensuring that our consequences provide a good outcome, the processes by which outcomes are achieved also count and this is why we have made criticisms of conditional funding being connected to university engagement approaches. Certainly, one must advocate for any ethics that works toward benefits that develop a public good, however, a critical and ethical stance also means that universities have a role to play in evaluating and shaping how that public good comes about. Schwartz (2006) for example presents a vision of a public good shaped by human liberty and freedom, but such values appear to be more applicable to the United States more than Australia. Scholarship ought to advocate for the kinds of togetherness that can foster ethical engagements and not merely become as Schwartz (2006) rightly points out a production factory of corporate sponsored research.

Ethical communities and ethical engagement are thus premised on Bauman's (1995) form of togetherness called, *being-for*. He describes the distinction between *being-aside* and *being-with* as one where *being-aside* others merely take on the qualities of person-like entities which are mostly seen as 'just on the side'. Funding partners simply interested in products reflect this kind of relation. This might also be called simple 'involvement,' a type of togetherness that is characteristic of top-down engagement approaches where the goal of engagement is predefined, often tied to consultative purposes or funding conditional arrangements.

From this state of *being-aside*:

Certain entities are picked up by shifting attention and made into persons. From *being-aside* the selected others move into a modality of *being-with*...[however] *being-with* is still a kind of mis-meeting of incomplete beings, of deficient selves where no more of the self tends to be deployed in the encounter than the topic at hand demands; and no more of the other is highlighted than the topic-at-hand permits (Bauman 1995: 49-50).

In a neo-liberal context, universities engage in mis-meetings of people in their communities, certain entities are picked up and they are made into persons but nothing more is demanded of them than the topic at hand permits. Again, this is often shaped by the conditions of funding arrangements where accountability requirements demand people are involved, but it is as Bauman

notes, 'nothing more than the topic at hand permits'. Do we call this mutual engagement? This is contrasted by Bauman with *being-for*, which is

[a] leap from isolation to unity; yet not towards a fusion that mystics dream of shedding the burden of identity, but to an alloy whose precious qualities depend fully on the preservation of its ingredients alterity and identity (Bauman 1995: 51).

Although it is critical to acknowledge here that Bauman (1995) does not apply his ideas of togetherness to situations that he foresees as probable, he advocates rather that the leap and transcendence to this kind of beingness is coincidental, perhaps even serendipitous. Our proposition remains that certain social settings do in fact foster *being-for* relations and this social setting can be universities (Palmer 2006a).

Regional communities are a good milieu for universities to achieve ethical engagements that foster a sense of ethical communities or togetherness objectives because they readily enable the horizontal and vertical connections that Boyer spoke about. However, much of the spatial location of university campuses that has occurred in Australia over the past decade (Garlick, 2000), and their attempts at retrofitting principles of engagement have not achieved what they might because of an unwillingness to preference public objectives ahead of institutional, or entity-based, objectives. The tension is between institutional objectives which are oriented toward a commonly shared public good and funding-conditional objectives oriented toward private interest.

At this end of the engagement spectrum, institutions simply seek local support for their global aspirations and income generation from local student enrolments, local research and consultancy partnerships. They emphasise structural determinants such as 'partnerships', 'joined-up government', 'bottom-up- regionalism', and the introduction of new programs (Bishop et al., 2006). Such relationships simply emphasise 'involvement' based on institutional processes and governance that are top-down, ignore community knowledge, capacities and diversity, compromise intended outcomes, and emphasise 'paid activity' (Skara, 2003). They do not preference an enterprising human capital approach to education that shares in Dewey's original ideas and intentions about learning at the community level (Garlick et. al., 2007).

The connection between taking an ethical and an entity-free human capital approach to community engagement that emphasises enterprising outcomes of purposeful worth rather than a structural approach, and university viability has not yet been made clear. There is still a fixation with competitiveness being the only paradigm for institutional success in engagement relationships (see OECD, 2007). This leaves the 'big questions' in communities – global warming, environmental sustainability, security, health and well-being, immigration, affordable housing, poverty, cultural diversity and so on to one side in HEI engagement relations simply because they are not seen as adding to institutional viability.

Conclusions: A study of community diversity

If there is one thing that current neo-liberal free-market arrangements have fostered it is choice, and in this context universities do continue to face choices about the sort of public good that they wish to contribute to. The connection of scholarship (learning, research and innovation) to places is critical in this process and by this it means that engagement must be a *relational practice* that concentrates on the needs and aspirations of community members and their environment. Engagement must have relevance to the regions of which the university is a part and not simply become a top-down process of 'involvement' implemented by institutions to create third-streams of funding.

A relational ethic that can incorporate the knowledge needs of individuals, community social needs and provide for human capital outcomes that enable real and meaningful outcomes of worth is the foundation on which regional and community engagement programs in universities ought to develop. This does not mean simply providing a statement of values and principles that are statically represented in university policy documents, but it requires ethical evaluation of whether those values and principles are shared, in a mutual way, by the communities and regions of which universities are a part. On the question posed by Schwartz about what public good universities seek to shape, we concur. We do not, however, believe that private funding will foster the kind of public good that is premised on Bauman's ethical relation of *being-for*.

Universities are at a crossroads of opportunity whereby they can be critical incubators that facilitate ethical processes and outcomes and generate human capital that has a capacity to be enterprising in community engagement and regional development in these ethical ways. They cannot allow standard entities (business firms and institutions) to take precedence over their responsibility to build 'creative associations in special places' (Garlick 1998). They cannot allow an economic logic to dominate that holds at the centre of itself a dualism between economic and societal issues, including the environment (Sunderland & Graham 2006).

Values and principles are central to ethical communities of which students ought to indeed be a part. These are only committed to when a *being-for* ethic, rather than a utilitarian agenda is employed. This means seeing localities, and people within them, as they are and not attempt to impose certain visions and norms on them that are not likely to be sustained in the future. Some places where our research is seeing the bottom-up approach to ethical communities taking place includes:

- Community activism in response to top-down government infrastructure decisions;
- Planned residential arena such as gated communities, retirement villages and master planned suburbs;
- Indigenous community;
- Innovative business networks

- Virtual communities and activism through internet usage; and
- International communities.

In this work a research team is concerned to explore the relationship between values, ethics and learning processes in various contexts, and how intended outcomes are shaped by knowledge and the role of higher education in processes of engagement. In this way it is possible to map how a *being-for* ethical relation can underpin a vision of universities and their commitments to contributing to a public good.

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Education for the Public Good: Is Service Learning possible in the Australian Context?

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Abstract

Many Australian universities are looking for models of community engagement that are not “third stream” or somehow independent of core business but, like Work Related Learning and collaborative research, essential for the development of graduate attributes and the achievement of graduate outcomes. Ostensibly the concept of service learning provides one of these models.

In the United States, service learning has grown rapidly for a variety of purposes: as a means of engaging students with communities, promoting civic and social responsibility and enhancing student learning of academic content. Service learning is usually defined as a credit-bearing activity and is integrated into existing subject units. Students apply what they have learnt in the classroom to address priorities in the community in partnership with that community. Service learning, therefore, requires a partnership relationship between the educational institution and community partners, with the intent of mutual benefit. An emerging body of research into service learning methodology and outcomes has documented positive outcomes related to retention, learning, and development of pro-social behaviors, and identifies best practices. Professional associations, publications, and email groups support the service learning educator.

Interest in community engagement and service learning has fostered national conversations about higher education for the public good (Benson & Harkavy, 2002) and about the human drive “to create, maintain and develop the Good Society that would enable human beings to lead long, healthy, active, virtuous, happy lives” (Chambers, 2005, p. 3). However, this concept of service to others and the wider community and the importance of values education is not a given. Public higher education in the US is more likely to shy away from service learning goals related to values or citizenship and to emphasize service learning as an active learning pedagogy (the idea of learning by doing articulated by John Dewey) with benefits to academic learning and professional development.

Much of the interest in engagement (see Kellogg report of 1999: *Returning to our Roots* as an example) arose from a national policy environment that positioned higher education as merely a private benefit to the students. During the 1980s, federal and state policy changes greatly increased the proportion of educational costs borne by students and reduce public funding to universities. These policies created a more vocational view of the purposes of higher education. Some higher education leaders, beginning in the 1990s,

posited that engagement in community issues would be an effective strategy for renewing higher education's larger role in creating public good by addressing critical public issues through partnerships.

But can the American service learning be transplanted to the Australian context where a culture of education for democracy and citizenship is at odds with a culture of education for private benefit and vocational outcome that has increasingly seized the policy agenda? Are Australian universities ready to come down from their sandstone towers and work with, rather than just for communities?

This paper looks at the relevance of service learning in the Australian context, factors that may hinder its wider adoption and asks the question whether Australian universities are ready to become truly engaged in service learning.

Education for the Public Good: Is Service Learning possible in the Australian Context?

Introduction

Notable scholars from the United States including Ira Harkavay, Barbara Holland and Judith Ramaley have shared a perspective of university community engagement at the Australian University Community Engagement Alliance (AUCEA), Australian Universities Quality Forum (AUQF), Inside Out and other conferences. Their insight has added weight to the groundswell of academic interest in the scholarship and impact of community engagement in Australia.

Influences upon the national dialogue are not only from the United States but also from the United Kingdom; scholars including David Charles, John Goddard and David Watson have also added value to the national discussion over the last five years. However, the emphasis in the European context - engagement for the purpose of regional development - produces differences in approach to engaged scholarship and student learning. Engaged student learning is important in both milieus, however the development and embedding of service learning has largely taken place in the United States although it should be noted that versions of service learning can be also found in South Africa, Japan, India, Argentina, Spain, and Mexico.

The growing interest in service learning in Australia extends beyond universities. In many private schools community service is being reinvented as service learning and in July 2006 on behalf of the National Youth Careers and Transitions Advisory Group, the Australian Department of Education Science and Training (DEST) commissioned a scoping study of service learning. A paper produced to support the study sees service learning as a key methodology for connecting young people to their community and engaging them in education and training that must be externally accredited. The paper poses the key question: *To what extent is there scope for a national approach to Service Learning so that though it all Australian young people can learn, apply and contribute to the values of their society develop*

positive understandings about citizenship and be supported into fulfilling working lives? (Atelier Learning Solutions, 2006, p. 3). In addition, two national conferences (2005 and 2007) have been organized on the theme of service-learning in Australian schools.

Many Australian universities are looking for models of community engagement that are not “third stream” or somehow independent of core business but, like Work Related Learning and collaborative research, essential for the development of graduate attributes and the achievement of graduate outcomes. Ostensibly the concept of service learning provides one of these models.

Service Learning in the United States

In the United States, service learning has grown rapidly for a variety of purposes: as a means of engaging students with communities, promoting civic and social responsibility and enhancing student learning of academic content. Service learning is usually defined as a credit-bearing activity and is integrated into existing subject units. Students apply what they have learnt in the classroom to address priorities in the community in partnership with that community. Service learning, therefore, requires a partnership relationship between the educational institution and community partners, with the intent of mutual benefit. An emerging body of research into service learning methodology and outcomes has documented positive outcomes related to retention, learning, and development of pro-social behaviors, and identifies best practices. Professional associations, publications, and email groups support the service learning educator (for example, listserv, HE-SL¹; Campus Compact²; Community-Campus Partnerships for Health³).

Interest in community engagement and service learning has fostered national conversations about higher education for the public good (Benson & Harkavy, 2002) and about the human drive “to create, maintain and develop the Good Society that would enable human beings to lead long, healthy, active, virtuous, happy lives” (Chambers, 2005, p. 3). The concept of service to others and the wider community and the importance of values education is a given.

It could be hypothesised that service learning has its cultural roots in one of the key historical drivers of higher education in the United States, the nation building mission of the land grant universities. Further, the influence of the philosophers John Dewey, Benjamin Franklin and Frances Bacon could be seen to have been have been strongly influential in a higher education agenda that is focused on the improvement of the human condition (Harkavay, 2005).

There are others however, who would identify more recent influences on the development of service learning. Private good, or benefit to the individual, still drives aspirations to attend the most prestigious Higher Education Institutions

¹ http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/service-learning/pages/resource_e-mail.htm

² <http://www.compact.org/>

³ <http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/index.html>

in the United States. The 1980s were perceived as a decade of greed and faculty and administrators in the United States searched for ways of encouraging their students towards public service.

Perhaps motivated by desire to get into the best schools, a little over 90 percent of college bound high school students report doing volunteer work (Lenkowsky & Waislitz, 2007). When it is noticed that the most educated (and it could be presumed most informed) members of the community do not vote in a system where voting is not compulsory, there is also a democratic driver for engaging higher education students in some form of service learning. The link between personal values, commitment and employment outcomes is also apparent; employers will look for evidence of commitment and contribution to community, "I don't care how much you know until I know how much you care" (Holland, 2001).

Institutional drivers in the United States highlight the importance of local relevance and connection; public funding for higher education comes primarily from the State so accountability resides at the State, rather than Federal level. The tertiary sector is large and diverse and includes both private and public universities and liberal arts colleges which have been the type of institution that has embraced service learning in particular. A long history of philanthropic funding for higher education is also conducive to support for service learning.

Although current trends see students in the United States increasingly working, commuting to university and studying part-time, Service Learning has been enhanced because of the historic nature of campus life in the United States. Sporting teams tend to be university rather than township based. Many students live on campus and allegiance is built by the experience of life on campus.

It is not surprising then that alumni contribution to universities is significant or that over 50 percent report students participate in one kind of civic activity, although this is sometimes in return for financial assistance to meet tuition costs. In the United States philanthropy is growing; donations from individuals, foundations and business corporations (excluding corporate sponsorship and volunteering) increased 6.1% in 2005 to \$260 billion, doubling over the decade (Lenkowsky & Waislitz, 2007).

Thus in this context Service Learning is a credible and legitimate scholarly activity, although not without controversy; many academics worry it lacks intellectual rigor and see it as an attempt to give credit for volunteering. The individual institutional approach to Service Learning can vary significantly but will be characteristic of those institutions who choose to embrace engagement with their community. The Carnegie Foundation in 2006 adopted an elective classification system for universities who choose to develop community engaged mission as a component of their university's strategy. That framework evaluates how the institution categorises community engagement scholarship and includes a set of self assessment questions on curricular engagement or service learning (how many formal, for credit courses; in how many departments, how many students participating, learning outcomes etc).

The university experience in Australia

The traditional underpinnings of Australian culture are significantly different from those of the United States. Although the United States also began colonially, an independent republic was established relatively early. Historically the tradition of education for the public good and advancement of learning for the progress of mankind have been integral to the development of the American nation. This has been strongly influenced by the politics and writings of 'founding father' Benjamin Franklin who believed that attention to civic duty and virtue were essential for the survival of the newly established republic. Australia has no such tradition and, as a relatively young country, may owe more to its convict beginnings. The European influence can be seen in the Platonic notion of scholarship where logic and dialectic could be seen to dominate the scholarly agenda.

The Platonic influence contributes to a perception of universities as aloof and independent, committed to the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. However, Smith argues that vocational outcomes have always been a driver of universities; at Bologna (the first European university) rhetoric and grammar were preparation for the profession of law and philosophy was preparation for the profession of medicine because of the Aristotelian link to physiology (Smith, 1991, p. 70).

The rise of the Australian university in the second half of the 19th Century can be seen to be part of larger educational campaign to reform and govern the colonies. The argument in 1849 for establishing Australia's first university was that the university would remove the convict "taint" from the colony and combat crime and ignorance (Smith, 1991, pp. 77-78). The rhetoric in the University of Sydney Act (as amended in 1989) does include a "*commitment to the development and provision of cultural, professional technical and vocational services to the community*" and indeed provisions like this are included in the Acts of Parliament that have established the State of Victoria's twelve universities include some sort of commitment to community.

However it can be argued that vocational and financial drivers are far more influential than any sense of nation building or community responsibility.

The last half of the 20th Century saw Australian Universities reshaped. The Murray Report on Australian Universities (1957) had successfully argued for increased Commonwealth funding for universities. The Martin Enquiry into the future of Tertiary Education in Australia in 1961, recognised that non-University courses were a major source of supply of large part of Australia's professional and para professional workforce. Technical Colleges and professional bodies would accept nothing less than degree granting status in engineering (Rasmussen, 1989, pp.140-159).

A number of reports and enquires led to the promotion of Colleges of Advanced Education and Technical Institutes. The Dawkins Report in 1987 heralded an era of amalgamations and establishment of new institutions which would see the number of Australian Universities grow from eight to thirty-nine. However unlike the United States where there are both private and public universities with a significant proportion of funding of the sector coming

from endowments and the individual bearing the cost of his or her own education, the university sector in Australia is largely government funded (although students are increasingly contributing to the meeting the costs of their university education through the Higher Education Contribution Scheme).

The federal approach to policy and funding in Australia works somewhat against that sense of accountability at the local level because all the rewards are at the federal level. With the exception of two, Australian Universities are publicly funded. Financial imperatives and emphasis on accountability mean that funding attaches to performance. Rankings in the form of league tables have become the “ultimate performance indicator” for universities (Marginson, 2007). Australian universities compete for international fee paying students and research universities compete for a place on the Shanghai Jiao Tong or Times Higher Education Supplement ranking. Community engagement or democracy and citizenship outcomes are not measured on these scales nor are they measured by DEST who focus on student satisfaction, graduate employment and research performance. Although the developing Research Quality Framework (RQF) aspires to measuring impact, the traditional measure of competitive research grants and peer reviewed publications remain paramount. In this environment, status and prestige is imperative as universities compete for students and for dollars.

The student experience

Campus life in Australia also differs markedly from the United States. Students rarely live on campus and indeed time spent on campus has decreased over the last decade. In the context of a deregulated educational industry, students are increasingly considered to be consumers within a marketplace that tailors educational services to fit the needs of its client base. Students increasingly expect the University to fit with their lives rather than vice-versa (McInnis, 2001, p. 3). Yet a number of concerning trends have emerged with regard to the nature of student engagement with the educational/learning process.

Students are less involved with their Universities, and are performing poorly compared with previous generations. Students are spending less time on campus and more time in paid employment. Overall, an increasing number of activities and priorities are competing with the demands of University. Students have indicated that they find it difficult to find the motivation to study, are less likely to study on weekends, find the study workload difficult to manage, miss classes and increasingly rely on friends or on-line facilities for course materials (McInnis, 2001, p. 4).

McInnes, James, and Hartley (2000, p. xii) found a trend of decreasing attachment and commitment to a range of aspects of university life and academic work on the part of those who work long hours in paid employment. McInnis and Hartley (2002, p. 15) found that paid work is the only or main source of income for 75% of respondents and a minor source for a further 23% of respondents; 26% rely on Youth Allowance or Austudy as their only or main source of income; and roughly 24% of students rely heavily on income from parents or other family members.

This all represents a huge challenge for Australian Universities. In 2006 a study of community engagement, *Beyond Rhetoric: University- Community Engagement In Victoria*, found that Victorian Universities articulate a desire to be engaged with their community but noted the context “*where universities have had to become increasingly entrepreneurial there is a risk that the educational social and economic benefits of community engagement will be undermined by policies which emphasise competitiveness, commercialisation and cutbacks*” (Winter et al., 2006, p. 6).

Democracy and citizenship

Political landscapes will always have an influence on key community institutions. When politicians also hold the purse strings that influence is magnified. Australian universities can be seen as always having been conservative and controlled by government with the activism of the 1960s an aberration rather than the norm (Smith, 1991).

Australian universities are largely not sites of political ferment and social change although universities can be seen as laboratories of new ideas, measuring these ideas against the wisdom of the past (Lenkowsky & Waislitz, 2007). Less certain is the connection of these ideas to communities directly impacting upon progress. It is easy to see why DEST (and Melbourne University, for example) are more comfortable with the concept of knowledge transfer than community engagement. This concept is however problematic when viewed through the community engagement lens.

Community engagement theory has been evolving over recent decades. Arnstein¹ (1969) developed the “ladder of citizen participation” as a measure of the quality of community participation. Rocha’s ladder of empowerment (1997) looks again at community participation in the context of political empowerment. The International Association of Public Participation has developed the Public Participation Spectrum used internationally as a tool for increasing the level of public impact. In this spectrum participation moves from the one way process of informing and consulting to involvement, collaboration and ultimately empowerment. If the new knowledge universities develop is to have impact, if progress is to be made the community must be engaged.

Similarly students must be engaged and this purpose is one of the most powerful arguments for the development of Service Learning. As indicated earlier, there is evidence that Australians value contribution to the public good and this will engage students. Students need to be engaged as citizens in the democratic process. In the United States, voting is not compulsory and so the lack of engagement in the democratic process is immediately evident. However, compulsory voting masks the levels of participation in democracy in Australia. A survey undertaken by the Department of Victorian Communities (DVC) in 2004 revealed that only 59.6% of Victorians felt they had an opportunity to “have a real say on issues that are important” (DVC, 2005, p. 15 & 36). This result is one indication that our citizens may not be as democratically engaged as we may assume.

If this is true, then at least one of the imperatives for engaging students in democracy and citizenship is hidden and without data like the United States participation in optional voting, the issue and outcome may appear nebulous to decision makers in government and universities alike.

Service Learning in Australia

There is evidence that Australians value a contribution to the public good. The Australian population is very similar to the United States in at least two measures that evidence valuing the public good, or benefit to the nation and community in general. The organisation Giving Australia estimates that Australians donated \$11 billion in 2005 exclusive of donations to assist victims of the tsunami, an 88% increase since 1988.

In one measure of volunteering, 41% of Australia's population volunteered. This represents a larger share than the US who pride themselves on being a "nation of joiners" (Lenkowsky & Waislitz, 2007)

However, given the political drivers, competitive context and lack of history, the concept of service learning is not readily understood or embraced widely in Australia.

Engagement is best understood when it means partnerships that will enrich research and/or learning and teaching; when the outcome of the engagement will bring direct and often private benefit to the partners.

Thus the Service Learning in Australia may be interpreted as philanthropy or social obligation; an add-on or extra that is not really part of core and accountable businesses. In this scenario the benefits of service may be argued and understood but will not be part of a convincing institutional business plan.

Alternatively, the concept can be re-interpreted to match the Australian context, where a case can be made for curriculum enhancement and the development of credit bearing courses. These courses are often best placed in a multidisciplinary environment but this will depend on the capacity of the university to both identify discipline or degree specific outcomes from the curriculum and the individual skills and attributes to be developed by the graduate. This requires innovation and flexibility.

A good example of an Australian University who has embraced the challenge of developing this sort of curriculum is the University of Western Sydney where a program, "*Learning through Community Service*," where students can choose to join one of 12 cohorts undertaking a 20 credit point elective. The units involve a compulsory three day symposium, online learning and two face to face tutorials over the course of the semester. During the semester students are expected to undertake a total of 100 hours work with clients or in service agencies. The units also involve five assessment tasks⁴.

This approach sits comfortably with a University like Western Sydney which has a well established co-operative education program. These programs are

⁴ <http://www.uws.edu.au/about/adminorg/devint/ord/students/learningthroughcommunityservice>

able to demonstrate a strong relationship to student employment outcomes. It is interesting to note that cohorts focussing on student mentoring and Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) are included in the Learning Through Community Service Program. In this way students are able to achieve academic credit for a program which would be an optional extra in some other universities.

Conclusion

Despite the desirability of engendering the student outcomes associated with service learning, there are significant barriers to the transplanting United States programs. The Australian University context, competition, performance indicators and financial drivers mean that the private good dominates and initiatives working for the public good are less likely to be developed or supported.

There are signs that service learning is part of an emerging educational discussion possibly more focussed at school level, which recognises the need to engage students in issues relating to the public good. However, to be successfully adapted to the Australian university environment, programs must be strongly linked to vocational outcomes and graduate attributes and given the scope for misunderstanding and trivialisation, the terminology or nomenclature must be changed.

Strong leadership, financial support and evidence of outcome will be needed if Australia is to embrace service learning widely.

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Institutional Approaches to Strengthening Community-University Engagement

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NB Needs a link to a report from UMass Lowell

Abstract

In the face of many challenges, how do universities build their support and capacity for community engagement? Many universities around the globe are struggling with this very question. As universities have begun to recognize the benefits of community engagement—benefits for their students, communities, and regions—they have encountered a daunting array of obstacles. This paper will describe a model emerging from one university's decade long strategy for overcoming some of the obstacles to comprehensive and sustained engagement. The University of Massachusetts Lowell is located in a highly urbanized and industrialized region of the U.S. that, as a consequence of changes in the global economy over the last decade, has undergone demographic and economic shifts. Lowell is now home to a large and growing immigrant population and these demographic shifts have taken place at the very time that the region has experienced significant job loss and economic restructuring as a consequence of manufacturing companies moving overseas. Like many universities, UML has sought to develop an institutional response to these challenges that will be consistent with the university's core intellectual mission and will tie engagement to that mission. This paper analyzes a series of interlinked initiatives that together have strengthened community engagement. These initiatives have included (1) the creation of a university wide task force on community engagement charged with producing a report identifying gaps, resources and needs; (2) the creation of a community outreach transformation team charged with designing an implementation strategy to close the gaps identified by the task force; (3) the enhancement of institutional support for engagement such as through the creation of the office of special assistant to the Provost for community outreach and partnerships; (4) the strengthening of the community's voice in these efforts through the creation of a community-university advisory board charged with advising the UML Administration on outreach strategies; and (5) the development of a program of seed grants designed to support outreach experimentation as well as encourage faculty to pursue external funding to test innovative approaches to outreach in education, environmental justice, health, and immigrant experiences. These efforts have been tied to a prominent focus on information dissemination through the hosting of international conferences, the creation of a community information clearinghouse, and the support of publications on outreach and community-university partnerships. Throughout this work a focus has been maintained on new faculty and how to support their pretenure involvement in outreach

and engagement. Together these steps have been instrumental in shifting the culture at this research university toward one in which faculty increasingly see their academic responsibilities as including outreach and engagement.

Universities are in a period of rapid change, and one of the most important of these changes is the increased emphasis on community partnerships, engagement, and outreach (Holland 2005; Maurrasse 2001). At the same time, communities across the United States and internationally are also experiencing rapid changes that create new challenges and bring into question the viability of past practices by which universities have organized their efforts to achieve their academic missions. This period of change makes it particularly important for communities and universities to examine how they will go forward in working together (Holzner & Munro 2005; Silka 2002). This paper addresses this theme of engagement by examining in depth how one university, the University of Massachusetts Lowell, has carried a series of interlocked steps over the last decade to assess its own past efforts and create a sustainable program of community engagement linked to the university's mission and tied to the region's needs and goals (Farrant & Silka, 2006; Farrant & Silka, 1999). This university's experience is used to shed light on some of the obstacles that stand in the way of universities making community engagement central to their functioning. The paper ends with an assessment of the implications of the UML model for universities that are considering ways to enhance their community outreach and engagement.

The UML Context: Rapid Change

UML is located in the Northeastern United States, a region that has undergone rapid transformation in recent years (MassInc, 2006; Silka, 2004). Lowell is now home to the second largest Cambodian population in the United States, all countries in Africa are represented among Lowell's residents, and many Central and South Americans (for example, some 15,000 Brazilians) live in the Lowell area (Lotspeich, Fix, Perez-Lopez, & Ost, 2003). The majority of the youth now in the Lowell school system are from minority backgrounds. At the same time, this region is undergoing economic restructuring (Farrant, 2001a; Gittel & Flynn, 1995; Moscovitch, 1990). Northeastern Massachusetts was once a major locus for manufacturing but many of these jobs have gone overseas, leaving behind unemployment and environmental contamination. Because Massachusetts is a high cost region in the United States in which to do business, there is a constant need for the development of new opportunities to replace the industries that have moved their jobs elsewhere.

In many ways, then, Lowell, is like other places around the world: a shifting economic base and large-scale demographic changes. UML also face changes as a university. UML and many other universities are in the process of losing their large cohort of "baby boomer" faculty who are retiring (Clark, 2004; Hutchings, Huber, & Golde, 2006). Like many universities, UML is currently undergoing its greatest faculty turnover since the university's inception. Over 1/4 of the faculty have retired in just the last few years, and these retirees have been replaced by some 100 new faculty bringing in new interests, goals, and areas of scholarship. In some departments, the majority of the faculty have been at UML for a mere year or two. In addition, the

university administrative leadership has changed, with most new leaders having served in their administrative roles for just a few short years. With these leadership changes have come attempts to promote new emphases on research and engagement intended to align university efforts more visibly with regional needs on the environment, green chemistry, nanotechnology, work environment, and regional economic development (Farrant, 2001b). In the face of these changes in the region and at the university, how does a university develop a viable plan for community-university collaborations and one that other universities might want to consider as a model for their own efforts?

In the last few years UML has sought to create a broad-based institutional response that is deeply tied to the university's core academic mission. A series of interlinked initiatives, each described here, have been undertaken that together serve as the foundation for our activities as an engaged university. These initiatives include: (1) the creation of a university wide task force charged with assessing the status of community partnerships and their link to the university's academic mission, (2) the creation of a transformation team charged with developing an implementation plan for community engagement, (3) the enhancement of institutional structures to support community engagement, (4) the strengthening of the community's voice in guiding UML community engagement, and (5) the development of a program of community-university engaged research as a way to model the benefits of having the community and university partnerships linked to the university's academic mission. Each will be described in some depth to capture their how they have helped to build the structure for a program of community engagement.

The Creation of a University Wide Task Force on Community Engagement

UML has in common with many other universities the fact that community outreach in some form is not new. It has always taken place. Important as these efforts have been, however, they were generally carried out in an uncoordinated, unorganized, and unrewarded manner. An individual faculty member might, for example, be contacted by a community organization with an urgent need (e.g., finding more effective ways to measure the extent of homelessness in the region) and the faculty member might choose to address that need (new measures are developed as a part of a course). Such responses have tended to be sporadic, not well coordinated and not directly linked to the university's mission. Too often they rose and fell on the enthusiasms and availability of particular faculty and have been regarded as informal, individual choices rather than a formal part of the university's mission.

In 2004, the university sought to undertake a systematic look at its outreach efforts, particularly with regard to how such efforts could be linked to the university's mission. Toward that end, a 30-member Task Force on Community Outreach and Partnerships was established by the Chancellor with the mandate to investigate the status of outreach at UML. To ensure that different perspectives were represented, the Task Force included faculty from different departments and staff representing university functions. A report

was expected within a year that would include recommendations for strengthening community outreach and partnerships.

Many research-intensive universities have research as their central focus. This is true of UML. Universities have much in the way of intellectual capital tied to research, but questions remain as to how these research resources can most effectively be brought to bear on community problems. Indeed, whether community engagement within this overall research focus becomes a central challenge. The unspoken question is inevitably whether community engagement is destined to remain a kind of second class activity seen as not quite measuring up in importance to research. This question continued to confront the UML Task Force.

The Task Force looked at past and current practices at UML. Perhaps the largest early surprise was how unaware UML people were of each others' efforts. Something was clearly amiss in the way of communication. Much outreach was taking place, from music faculty developing youth orchestras to compensate for the lack of music resources in under resourced schools to writing faculty developing a "writing in the community" program in which students majoring in writing worked with community organizations to address their writing needs. While there was overlap in efforts, there were also often gaps. The Task Force also discovered that all efforts done outside the university were treated as largely equivalent regardless of whether the particular activity was linked to the academic mission. In contrast to the gradations in evaluations of various research initiatives, all outreach activities were typically regarded as comparable. And, again in contrast to what was valued in research, in engagement little emphasis was being placed on innovation and how the university might be well-served in making engagement a cornerstone of the university's pursuit of broader intellectual questions.

Detailed findings emerged from the Task Force deliberations. The official result of the Task Force's discussions was a report summarizing (See Attachment 1) the need for more engagement, more coordination, greater linkage to the university's mission of regional economic and social development, and greater faculty involvement in publishing about their innovations in community engagement. The Task Force also made repeated note of the need for engagement to be fully integrated into the teaching and research functions of the higher education mission. This Task Force report—as a document showing how one university undertook a self review—may be useful to other campuses about to embark on a critical assessment of their community engagement. A less official but perhaps even more far-reaching consequence of the Task Force's activities was what members learned by setting aside time to analyze engagement and what institutions of higher education should be doing it. Engagement, in essence, moved from the informal to the formal, from the private to the public, and from something that was just done to something that could be analyzed, evaluated and improved upon as a part of a university's pursuit of knowledge and its application. And through this process a group of faculty and staff found each other, discovered their shared interests, and identified opportunities to work together and contribute to a burgeoning field in which UML was poised to establish a national reputation for its innovation.

The Creation of a Community Outreach Transformation Team.

Engagement cannot succeed if treated as separate from all other changes typically taking place in higher education institutions. An important question is how engagement can be made a part of other changes. The UML work on community engagement was quickly confronted by this challenge. Just as the Task Force Report was being made public, UML began undertaking a larger transformation makeover tackling ten issues seen as standing in the way of university excellence. Transformation teams were set up to look at functions like undergraduate student advising and to evaluate the extent to which mission-central goals (e.g., UML becoming a leader in environmental sustainability) were fully integrated into every aspect of university functioning. Together, the work of the ten teams was expected to reshape how university resources would be allocated. Community Engagement was one of the transformation teams established. This team, made up of eight members, was charged with designing an implementation strategy to close the gaps identified by the Task Force and to do so taking into consideration the work of the other transformation teams. The context for our work had changed.

Often institutional change rises or falls on committee composition, that is, on who champions those changes. One of the lessons learned from the Task Force experience was just how crucial membership selection is: if the goal was to show integration then it was important to have on the Transformation Team members who excel at this integration in their own work. The staff representatives needed to be well recognized for the breadth of their experience, and it was essential that each of UML's five colleges be represented on the Transformation Team by faculty with stellar reputations for innovative integrations. The faculty asked by the Chancellor to serve on the Team were known for their innovations in research, teaching, and outreach. Consider three examples. Computer Science Professor Fred Martin has established a reputation for working on robotics with faculty from many of UML departments (such as education and the arts) and with many community partners (for example, community arts organizations). He has published extensively and raised significant external funding for his work that integrates teaching, research, and engagement. Nursing Professor Stephanie Chalupka has successfully obtained major external federal funding focused on bringing the latest findings on environmental health to key community partners. Her teaching is award-winning and much of her work is collaborative, drawing in faculty and staff from many different departments and office to work with community partner. Psychology Professor and Department Chair Nina Coppens not only has carried out her own community engagement with a strong research focus, but also uses her role as chair to mentor the large number of new faculty in her department about how to combine outreach with teaching and research. Professor Coppens also leads the department with one of the university's largest graduate programs—that of Community Social Psychology—that makes to study of and doing of engagement its core focus. Together these leaders bring a level of experience that added depth to the previous determinations.

The Team followed a rigorous strategy to build on the previous work. The Team studied the work of the 2005 Report of the UML Task Force on

Community Outreach and Partnerships (See Attachment 1 for Task Force Report), and the Team then focused on identifying gaps in the UML infrastructure that continued to make it difficult to achieve the university's mission through teaching- and research-linked community engagement. Using this information as background, the Team carried out extensive fact finding as a part of the deliberations about implementation. The Team (1) gathered information about community engagement models used at different institutions of higher education, (2) collected examples of engagement indicators and completed the testing of a prototype to assess how well UML stacks up against these indicators, (3) identified ways in which UML policies and practices (such as contracts and the like) include language and provisions that guide and support innovative community engagement, (4) identified structures that exist at UML to support other aspects of the university's mission and ways in which similar structures might be developed to support community engagement, (5) analyzed the ways in which the various departments encourage or discourage community engagement that is linked to disciplinary focus and university mission, (6) obtained feedback on our model at the UML International Conference *Community-University Partnerships: How Do We Achieve the Promise?* and incorporated the feedback into our model.

The earlier findings were reinforced: The Transformation Team's review made clear that UML continued to lack sufficient infrastructure to support innovative, cutting edge community engagement linked to the university's mission. Yet the Transformation Team found that, even in the face of limited resources, UML is becoming known for its community engagement. UML faculty were successfully obtaining highly competitive external funding to support the development of new engagement practices and had begun to publish national and internationally on community engagement. With specific, clearly focused changes in the UML infrastructure, the community engagement and partnership component of the mission is well positioned to be nationally recognized.

The Transformation made a number of recommendations for implementation of changes, many of which were designed to be consistent with the recommendations of the other transformation teams. Some of the Transformation Team's recommendations called for minor changes that, once made, could have great impacts on the visibility of the work. For example:

- *It is recommended that the UML web homepage include a portal "button" on community engagement that takes readers to information about the many forms of community engagement taking place on campus.*

Other recommendations noted the need to compare against emerging standards:

- *It is recommended that indicators of UML community engagement be tracked that are consistent with the newly established Carnegie Classification on Community Engagement and that these indicators be used to identify areas of strength and areas where improvement is needed.*

Still other recommendations focused on how to build the next generation of faculty involved in engagement:

- *It is recommended that new and untenured faculty be provided with regular opportunities for mentoring on how to carry out community engagement so as to tie with research and teaching.*

And several recommendations focused on the important issue of dissemination:

- *It is recommended that UML senior administrators, senior faculty, and staff encourage all involved in community engagement to find multiple ways disseminate information about innovations in community engagement at UML. Written documentation through journal articles, books, and other outlets should be encouraged and rewarded.*
- *It is recommended that UML investigate the possibility of developing a peer review journal on community engagement and partnership. Such a journal should have the broad charter to cover community engagement at research universities in the United States and overseas that emphasize the interdisciplinary approaches to partnerships in science, technology, and regional economic and social development.*

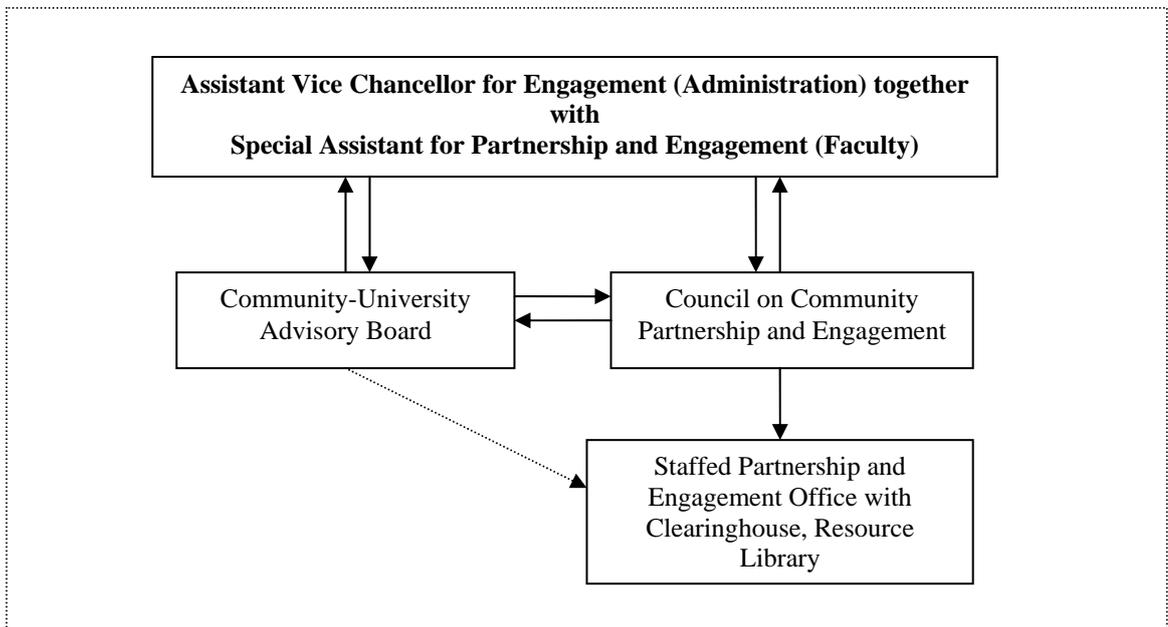
Other recommended transformations focused directly on the important issues of institutional support and community voice. Because of their importance, these are described next in their own sections.

The Enhancement of Institutional Support

Institutional support will be important if community engagement is to prosper and to play more than a “bit role” within a university. But what might that support look like? This question is one with which many universities struggle and with which UML has struggled as well. At UML we have confronted directly the assumption that administration responsibility is the crucial element and have begun to recognize the important leadership role faculty must play if engagement is to move beyond the publicity functions and actively link to the university’s academic mission.

Below is a chart that shows the enabling structure that UML is in the process of implementing. The approach at UML involves faculty support for engagement through the creation of the Office of Special Assistant for Community Outreach and Partnerships (filled by a senior faculty member) and administrative support through the Office of Assistant Vice Chancellor for Community Outreach (filled by an administrator).

Enabling Structure for UML Community Engagement and Partnership



Note that this structure includes shared faculty and administration leadership. The administrative leadership is not unexpected: most academics are familiar with the approach whereby administrators are in charge (e.g., the administrators oversee a budget and allocate resources). At UML, what we have discovered is that a faculty leader of community outreach is equally important, with this faculty leader ideally a member of the research faculty and not a former faculty member who has moved into administration. The importance of such an approach is that it allows for all of the roles of the faculty to be connected: outreach can be linked to teaching and research. The activities would be done by a senior faculty member, ideally one who has no evaluation responsibilities for junior faculty and to whom junior faculty do not report (that is to say, not the chair of their department or their dean). This arrangement is important if junior faculty are to willingly share their concerns with a senior faculty leader. And it is important that the faculty member be senior because such stature allows the person to assert some “moral” leadership about the value of engagement among the faculty. Nontenured faculty favorably respond to advice and recommendations when it comes from someone who also had to make it through the difficult tenure process. Because this tenure process is so heavily weighted toward publication at our university, as at most, it is important to have a senior faculty member showing how community engagement can contribute to one’s tenure portfolio.

Thus, UML has settled on an enabling structure that places engagement in the academic as opposed to service realm. The next question was how the community’s voice would be integrated into this structure

The Strengthening of the Community's Voice

If community outreach is to succeed, then regular input about community perspectives is crucial and must be institutionalized. Many universities struggle with the question of how to strengthen the community's voice. Finding ways to give community voice is made all the more challenging by the fact that universities are typically not organized to take advice from outsiders. When efforts to gather community input do exist, they are often piecemeal. For example, some U.S. funders mandate community input for specific grant-funded projects. The resulting boards often have a narrow focus and are rarely equipped to deal with broad, overarching issues. Sometimes, too, individual departments or colleges create advisory boards to provide input about particular university programs. But, again, such arrangements typically are short term and ad hoc. How then can a university create a board to provide advice on many different elements of community engagement and partnership?

To meet the need for community input, UML created a community-university advisory board that over the last four years has provided advice on UML's efforts to strengthen its community engagement. While the impetus for the start of the Advisory Board came from a multi-year grant to UML from US Housing and Urban Development, the Board now has a broad mandate to advise the university on all elements of community engagement. The Board meets monthly, with meetings facilitated by the Special Assistant, and has been charged with advising the UML Administration on engagement strategies. Administrator leaders are invited each month (e.g., college deans and vice chancellors).

The UML approach to board composition differs from that of other universities. What is distinctive is that UML's Board is a *community-university* advisory board as opposed to just a community advisory board. The Board members includes representation of key community constituencies (the schools are represented as are various community agencies, for example), but board members also include university members such as faculty from various departments and staff that have some link with the community. The location of the Board in the institutional chart is shown in the Enabling Structure described above. One of the key factors contributing to the Board's success is that the board reports to the top academic officers rather than to an outreach office. This access to top leadership has created unparalleled opportunities to impact what is going on at the university.

The Board has had many successes, and these speak directly to the kind of role a board can play in ensuring effective community engagement. Consider just a few of the Board's successes in helping to shape UML's engagement. In developing an infrastructure, for example, the Board has been instrumental in creating the UML Community Clearinghouse, a website of community and university engagement opportunities. With the help of the Board, this site has become a major way that partnership opportunities are disseminated. The Board has also become a presence in university searches. The most important search in recent years—that for a new head of UML—included board input on community engagement and its importance to the university's future. Or, consider how the university responds to rapid change in the region. Change is always difficult for universities to respond to and universities struggle to keep track of changes taking place in their region

and here too the Board has demonstrated its importance. The Board has been important not only in keeping track of the changes, but in analyzing the partnership opportunities made possible by these changes. The Board has also been important to UML's national and international leadership. For example, as UML looked for ways to strengthen the theory underlying engagement work, the Board's involvement in UML international conference: *'Community-University Partnerships: How Do We Achieve the Promise?'* helped to produce a conference program that incorporated the perspectives of community leaders. In short, this Board—which meets regularly, is broad-based in its membership, and has access to top university leadership—has become an important building block in UML structures to support community engagement.

All of the infrastructure developments—the creation of a community-university advisory board, for example—are intended to serve one purpose: to strengthen the ways that communities and universities together address the challenges that face their region. As has been said throughout this paper, much of this engagement at research universities comes down to using research capacities in new ways that draw on the strengths and needs of the various partners. In the next and final section of this paper we consider a detailed example of how community engagement comes together in programs of community-based research, particularly when the topics urgently in need of research rapidly change. This section considers obstacles and opportunities.

The Development of Community-University Research Partnerships

Greatly needed is community-university research engagement that will bring the resources of universities together with the most pressing issues communities now face, yet past experience has pointed to the difficulties that can arise when researchers and communities attempt to work together (Nyden and Wiewel 1992; Silka 1999). Community-university research engagement, for example, often bring powerful university scholars (e.g., researchers with international reputations, sizable grants, and extensive publications) into involvement with those in the community who are the most disempowered (for example, newly arrived immigrants). How can these differences be overcome? UML addressed this issue directly in its community-university research engagement described below.

As noted previously, for example, many communities are finding themselves increasingly diverse as immigration and other changes alter the demographics of their neighborhoods (Migration Policy Institute, 2004). Many of these changes emerge rapidly and go to the very heart of community life (Migration Policy Institute, 2004). Such was the case with immigrant businesses beginning to emerge in Lowell. As noted earlier, Lowell over the previous decade had undergone dramatic demographic shifts. The number of Asian families had increased rapidly, and the size and prominence of other immigrant groups was rapidly increasing as well. One of the most visible signs of these changes is the large number of small immigrant businesses—restaurants, retail stores, insurance agencies, beauty parlors, auto body shops, and the like—that suddenly emerged throughout the city's many neighborhoods (Turcotte & Silka, 2007). These new businesses were all the more important in light of the changing economy and the region's loss of major manufacturers and other large employers. Small immigrant businesses

were seen as perhaps becoming the core of the region's new economy. So, what were these businesses? In what ways were they contributing to the local economy? What kinds of assistance did they need from the university, from the city, and from other organizations?

These questions were on the minds of many in Lowell in the late 1990s as UML was looking to become more community-involved in its research (Silka, Farrant, Bond, Coffey, Toof, Toomey, Turcotte, & West, in press). At that time, no inventory existed of the new businesses, of their number of employees, of the nature of their customer base, or of the kinds of businesses practices and acumen they brought to their new businesses. Yet a growing body of literature on immigrant businesses pointed to the possibility that these businesses might be important anchors in their communities: immigrant businesses generally had higher "multiplier effects" than other businesses, which is to say that the dollars they generated tended to recycle through the community more times than dollars generated by nonimmigrant businesses (Jennings, 2007; Turcotte & Silka, 2007; Wilson & Martin, 1982). And the literature suggested that these businesses might differ from nonimmigrant businesses in other respects as well: there was talk about import substitution, of how these businesses seemed to be helping their compatriots learn about the new society, and in general, of these small businesses acting as key institutions within their neighborhoods.

The research partnership implicitly analogized to the concept of a "multiplier effect." The focus was on information that had high potential to be used, reused, and recirculated throughout the community and where each use would have the potential to establish new links between groups that had previously been unconnected. A team of graduate students and high school youth was brought together that represented many of the different immigrant groups now living in Lowell. To learn about these businesses would not be simple. No central registry existed and some of the businesses were owned by new residents who were undocumented or had yet to achieve compliance with American tax laws and environmental regulations. Many of the business owners spoke a primary language other than English and had little time to devote to answering esoteric questions about their businesses. Under the direction of faculty well-versed in economic development, and with the support of members of the community-university advisory board who were themselves immigrant business owners, the team developed an interview protocol, a neighborhood sampling strategy, and a method for "mining" fragmentary data from existing sources. Throughout the data collection period, students were thrust into situations that showed them the importance of, yet difficulties with, real-life data collection. Students saw firsthand the challenges that arise in attempting to gather information from small business owners. Barbershop owners, for example, continued to cut hair even while being interviewed because they could not stop or leave their barbershop to attend a focus group. Despite these difficulties, the team was able to create a detailed report about these new businesses, the niches they were filling, and the needs they foresaw for assistance and support (report at <http://www.uml.edu/centers/cfwc/programs/copc/boss/BOSSWebPage.htm>).

The potential for spinoffs of the community-university research partnership was considerable. Once information about the businesses was gathered, then UML could begin to assess (a) ways that the university might

need to change technical assistance practices in order to meet the needs of these businesses, (b) new cooperative organizations such as Asian chambers of commerce could be developed, (c) faculty in programs in business and regional economic development could better understand how their students might collaborate with these immigrant businesses, and (d) the anchoring effects of these businesses on neighborhoods, such as in creating opportunities and reducing crime, could be supported.

The intent of the community-university research partnership was to create numerous outgrowths. The report that was created (about the new businesses, how they went about their work, the kinds of contributions they were making to the local economy, and the needs they had for assistance if they were to further develop their businesses) was widely circulated and placed online so that it would be available to different groups and organizations. Various community forums were held at which the information became the focus of discussion and planning. The findings contributed to planning for cooperative ventures such as Asian American Business Association and a partnership bringing together immigrant restaurants with organizations focused on increasing the recycling and use of food wastes.

Yet one additional aim of these community-university research partnerships was to draw new UML faculty into engagement. It is challenging to involve new faculty in engaged research largely because new PhDs, in our experience, are especially anxious about getting their own research underway and, often such research does not lend itself to the multidisciplinary thrust of community-university research partnerships. The research of new faculty is typically narrow in scope, reflecting as it does the specificity typically called for in the dissertation. To address this issue of involving new faculty and to do so in ways that do not place their scholarly advancement at risk, UML has tried to shape projects in ways that signal to new faculty how the projects can link to their research programs but at the same time indicate how the project might enable them to expand their research in new directions. These efforts have been tied to a prominent focus on information dissemination through the hosting of international conferences and the support of publications on outreach and community-university partnerships. Throughout this work a focus has been maintained on new faculty and how to support their pretenure involvement in outreach and engagement. Together these steps have been instrumental in shifting the culture at this research university toward one in which faculty members increasingly see their academic responsibilities as including outreach and engagement.

Conclusion: Broadening University Engagement in the Community

The overarching question that has guided this paper's analysis—and the scrutiny of the steps UML has taken to institutionalize its practices—is whether community engagement can move beyond a single “prototype” to engagement that is fully integrated into the institution's central functioning. Victor Rubin, one time academic leader of the Office of University Partnerships at U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, has offered astute observations about the vagaries of how engagement begins at universities and how these peculiarities end up creating challenges for institutionalization. Having observed partnerships across the country, Rubin

mused that several types of models seem to underlie university efforts to jumpstart community engagement (Rubin, personal communication). Community engagement, he notes, is often built around the efforts of a lone advocate.

In such an approach, most efforts emanate from one faculty member's single-minded devotion to engagement. This bottom up approach generally involves one person making a personal decision that her/his time, students, or classes need to become involved in engagement. These efforts frequently take place outside the university's reward systems and too frequently receive scant notice from the university administration. Often this 'lone champion' approach is the only way any efforts at community engagement are begun, but the lone champion approach faces obstacles to 'scaling up' from single prototype. Overcoming this challenge calls for looking beyond the engagement field to examples from other areas that have long faced similar problems and found ways to address them. We might be able to draw insights, for example, from the study of commercial product development. Students of this process have identified pitfalls in the 'scaling up' process that are surprisingly similar to the problem that plague community engagement moving from single example to full university involvement; they describe the 'the valley of death' for new products in which good ideas never get beyond the prototype. Products die between the completion of a prototype (underwritten by venture capitalists) and the stage of commercially viable large scale production. Researchers have come to recognize that the in between stage will not take care of itself and must be directly addressed. Ideas for addressing the problem of institutionalizing community engagement might also be gleaned from the mature studies of the company founder syndrome in which a company's success cannot be sustained once the charismatic founder moves on or retires. These analogous cases may suggest strategies that universities could put into place to move beyond the energy and passion of a single person and make community engagement regularized and institutionalized.

The model of the lone creator is by no means the only one that has proved problematic for universities that have set their sights on creating widespread engagement in which faculty involvement is central. Victor Rubin also observed that at some universities it was a common practice for the university's upper administration to act the primary driver of community engagement. This model, although different from that in which a lone advocate champions engagement, has also proved problematic to the successful establishment of widespread faculty involvement. Such a beginning often leads to initiatives that do not move beyond staff advocacy and are not embedded in a university's mission and intellectual resources. Within this model, faculty members in their research, teaching, and outreach have at best a limited role to play in engagement. One problem is that the primary university human capital available at universities—that of the faculty—does not become involved or take ownership. Not only is the human resource to succeed missing, but the status of engagement is reduced. Second, the absence of faculty leadership for such initiatives means that such activities often remain unlinked to the core research and teaching activities of the university. Faculty might be asked to become involved in engagement, but not as a part of their research or teaching. The three legs of faculty

responsibility—teaching research, and outreach—become uncoupled and not integrated. Full scale community engagement does not result.

The UML model differs from both the lone advocate and the administration driven models. This UML model, bringing together bottom up and top down approaches, has the goal of integrating the leadership of faculty and administration. It might be likened to community organizing, to an approach in which senior faculty and senior administrators look for opportunities to promote engagement. Is a faculty member interested in engagement: how can this be encouraged? Is a community member interested: can partners be found within the university? The focus is on creating enabling strategies that unleash opportunities but do not mandate participation. Engagement is not channeled through a single office, but instead resources are made available to ensure that individual faculty members are not left without opportunities to carry out engagement. Ultimately, our goal is to create multiple opportunities for shared learning and engagement that emphasize the integration of research, teaching, and outreach and the creation of enabling structures.

Next Steps: Carnegie Indicators of Community Engagement? If community engagement at universities is to be recognized as a legitimate core function in higher education institutions, then there will need to be a basis for evaluation. We have seen this in the case of research. Research universities are compared on such bases as the external grant dollars generated, the number of yearly publications per faculty, and faculty reputation. How then can the community engagement work at one's university be compared to that at other higher education institutions? Can community engagement work be evaluated in ways that are appropriate to this field of endeavors? Here too interesting steps are being taken that point to growth and maturity of the field. The Carnegie Foundation that brought higher education the designations that research universities now rely upon to locate their place among their peers is currently developing indicators by which universities will be able to classify themselves in terms their community engagement. These indicators, still in their preliminary form, are expected to provide universities with metrics to evaluate their community engagement. Rather than attempting its own haphazard comparisons, a university would be able to use these metrics to evaluate its practices against agreed-upon indicators.

UML started its process of institutionalizing engagement prior to the establishment of the indicators and their new availability has provided an opportunity for us to see what they capture in terms of our work. The UML Community Engagement Transformation Team carried out an exercise of using the preliminary Carnegie indicators to compare UML's community engagement web presence against that of our peer institutions (Toof, 2007). This effort brought additional depth to the discussion at UML of engagement. Based on our experience, we recommend the use of these indicators, not as a 'be all end all', but as an additional way for a university and its community partners to analyze their efforts and goals for community engagement.

Next Steps: Is it Time for a Best Practices Statement? Ultimately universities need to be able to learn from each other, but we would caution

that they need to do so with great care. At UML, we are often asked by other universities about what they can do to establish community engagement and partnerships. Our recent conference '*Community-University Partnerships: How Do We Achieve the Promise?*' was intended to create opportunities for faculty from different universities to talk together and learn from each other's experiences. We also consult to other universities about approaches they might use given their particular community context and university characteristics (useful websites are included at the end of this paper). We have come to believe that the crucial question is how universities can learn from each other's experience without learning the *wrong* lessons. Important as it to avoid starting from scratch or attempting to reinvent community engagement anew at each campus, it is also important also not to accept that what one university is doing is exactly what another should do. Assertions about best practices often assume that a single set of practices can be said to be best for all cases. For all of its potential, the best practice approach too often fails to take into account variations in context or in the need for ownership and motivation that comes from some indigenous creation of a strategy appropriate for one's own university or community (Silka, 2003). The field of community engagement may be at an early enough point that we should be trying out many different strategies rather than taking the current practices and treating them as the best we can do.

Next Steps: How can these Ideas be Used in Australia? As noted above, what is needed now are ways for universities to learn from each other. Conferences of this sort are needed which serve as places where people can share ideas about community engagement and partnership not only in their own countries but internationally. Journals are needed not only because they disseminate ideas but because they provide opportunities for faculty to publish. But at this point the field is especially in need of contextual analyses that look at the rich variety of situations in which universities become involved in community engagement and consider what works and what does not. And, such analyses should not focus just on the university context. It is important that we begin to understand the similarities and differences among the communities in which our universities are located and where universities seek to create partnerships. As noted above, it may be premature for "best practices" that are set in stone. The community engagement movement is not yet at point where it makes sense to be prescriptive; indeed prescriptions that suggest that there is a right way to do community engagement could do more harm than good because they likely fail to take into account the deep differences among communities and among universities. Instead, this is likely a time for experimentation with different approaches to community engagement to see the range of approaches that are possible and their viability in different settings. Australian universities are well-positioned to play a leadership role in this discovery process.

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Interpreting the role of ‘social partner’: The experiences of an allied health program at a regional university

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Abstract:

The speech pathology program at Charles Sturt University has a history of developing innovative fieldwork opportunities in collaboration with a range of organizations and agencies. Using the word ‘collaboration’ is, however, a little problematic, so the first part of this paper describes how our program has problematized, and then interpreted, its role as a collaborative entity. The importance of engaging in this description is because we have discovered several problems in unreflective engagement in collaborative social partnerships. Using a number of our community engagement projects as exemplars of these problems, we highlight the influence of organizational interests in determining how, and with whom, we engage in collaboration. We then discuss how we have come to a view of partnership that is linked to our program’s educational philosophy, and explain how the use of this philosophy helps significantly in balancing the agenda of our employers with the agendas of community members and organizations. The paper concludes with a critical appraisal of our efforts in collaborative community partnerships, highlighting their piecemeal nature, and also their fragility, operating as they do within a context of health and educational service provision dominated by an ever-narrowing social, political and economic agenda.

The notion of social partnership:

In the speech pathology program at Charles Sturt University, we remain confused as to whether our many innovations in the clinical fieldwork program represent social partnerships or strategic collaborations between our organization and other agencies. We would like to think that what we are about in trying to use our student workforce to address the local lack of speech therapy services is altruistic and beneficial – yet the insistent pressures of our socio-political context promote grave doubts about this. I hope in this paper to speak about these doubts not only in relation to the inter/national agenda that promotes social partnerships, but also how we have used these doubts to subvert the traditional training of Australian speech therapists.

Our understanding of why the push for partnership has reached epidemic proportions is because it is a strategy for shifting responsibility (and costs) for solving complex social problems to networks formed at local levels (Robertson and Dale, 2002; Cain and Hewitt, 2004; Marginson, 1997). In our case, we are a small and largely unimportant profession whose

undergraduate training program sits in a university School with a range of other small programs that constitute a range of allied health disciplines. We are financially unviable because of the funding arrangements of the Federal government. At the same time, we have inherited an observation-intensive (and thus cost-intensive) tradition of educational preparation for practice. Although the nature, direction, and outcomes of this education have been critiqued (for example Beecham 2000, and Mpumlwana & Beecham, 2000), there is no tradition of self-reflective critique in the profession. So while the epistemological beliefs of the profession can be argued to favour certain racial and linguistic groups (Beecham, 2002), the Australian speech-language therapy profession, and like its international colleagues, understands itself by what it *does*, and how it applies this 'doing' to helping people communicate more effectively. Because of this, the fieldwork experiences students' gain during their education are crucial for forming a graduate therapist's understanding of what is *legitimate* practice, and what is not. In our Albury program, our aim is to embed a social justice agenda within undergraduate training. In addition to changing theoretical teaching, therefore, a central focus is upon changing the epistemological traditions of the practical fieldwork program. This is because of the power of the 'ritual initiation experiences' (Berger, 1993) of fieldwork practical: experiential learning that engages multiple intelligences (Klopp, Toole & Toole, 2001), and that has historically helped frame what, where and how therapists define their professional role in society.

Yet in Australia there is a well-reported and ever deepening crisis in the finding of clinical fieldwork practical for students of many disciplines. Some high status professions with powerful and successful lobbying groups (such as medicine and nursing) have compelled the government to assign a cash bounty to students in order to provide an incentive for sites to offer fieldwork placements for them. But disciplines such as ours, unprofitable to both government and university, need to consider different strategies. It is here that the idea of social partnerships becomes so important. Because not only do we have a problem with gaining placements, but our local health and welfare agencies are subject to the same erosion of resources as the university sector. This means there is a pressing economic necessity to use our student workforce to support failing services. In addition to this common economic imperative to work together for the addressing of local needs, the relentless influence of increasing organizational control and the dogging effects of organizational protocol, procedure and auditing in hierarchies that are ever more distanced from the needs of ordinary citizens, drives the belief that the socio-economic context of practice has changed for good. Translated to local practitioners, the influences of a global neo-liberal agenda have shaken the foundations of how they conceive of practice. For our local therapists in and around Albury, therefore, there is a general assumption that there will never be enough health professionals to serve rural and regional (let alone remote) Australia, and that this means we need to prepare students very differently from the traditional conception of practice.

In a very real and concrete way, therefore, the interests of our program to press a social justice agenda, and those of the neo-liberal agenda, curiously

intersect to motivate the formation of social partnerships that creatively attempt to provide speech therapy services aimed at increasing equity, accessibility, affordability and appropriateness. It is also important to note that all these collaborations represent extremely pleasant escapes from our respective organizational hierarchies; allowing a relative freedom from bureaucracy that allows us all to get the work *done* (Law, 1994; Levitas, 1998 Seddon, Billet & Clemans, 2005; Walton and McKersie, 1991).

So to summarise: our program at Charles Sturt University believes there are significant problems with the epistemological assumptions of traditional speech therapy education and its relevance for global practice. At the same time, the neo-liberal agenda is driving significant change in how service providers conceptualize future service delivery in the health professions. The opportunity exists; therefore, to promote new ways of preparing students for practice that actually subvert the current socio-political climate while seeming to attend most carefully to its demands. And the vehicle for engaging in this subversion is that of forging social partnerships/ collaborations.

The next part of this paper describes the difficulties our program has had in trying to stay true to our ideals of promoting a social justice agenda while being employees of a University with its own pressures and interests to pursue. After describing how we have attempted to understand and cope with these organisational influences, the third part of the paper describes a few of our partnering/collaborating projects. Finally, we offer a frank appraisal of problems in our social partnership program.

The conflicting agendas of social partnering:

The pressure to engage in social partnerships is articulated clearly by Charles Sturt University. Whether termed 'collaborative networks' or 'partnership', the values and objectives of the University 2007-2011 strategic plan entrench the idea that all sectors of the University must be responsive to community networks and to multiple agencies. Because it needs to be remembered that these aims stand unsupported by re-directed resources, it became important for us as employees of the organization to theorize as to why we were being encouraged to do this. Of course, one theory was the sub-text of financial necessity in so doing, as over the years we have seen the effect of scarce financial support and resource availability to both the university system, to the public health and welfare sector, and by extension, therefore, to the availability of fieldwork placements. But collaboration for the sake of sharing scarce resources alone seemed to offer rather a simplistic explanation. Here, the insights of Macdonald and Piekkari's (2005) study have helped us frame (largely after the event, it is true) the difficulties we had in understanding the organizational cry to 'Go forth and partner!' Over the last year or so we have groped towards understanding, and thus managing, the single most confusing aspect of attempting to strategically manage our partnership/collaboration process. This has been the University driving two seemingly contradictory positions; the first being the imperative to find partners, and the second to minimize any risk. The received message has been something rather like, 'Go forth in fear and trepidation and find partners who will not pose any danger to

the University, its policies, procedures, practices, employees or students.’ This is a tall order given not only our need to take educational risks in furthering our curriculum change process, but also the inherent riskiness of forging collaborative partnerships.

Yet interpreting the agenda of our organization in such a way has allowed us to understand how we stand in relation to the establishment of partnerships. Put simply, this is to face in two directions simultaneously (Seddon, Billett & Clemens, 2005): to serve CSU’s implicit agenda of (cost-effective) risk management, while getting on with the task of (cost-effective) educational risk-taking. In the process, we remain unsure about whether we are forging of strategic alliances, (Hamel, Doz & Prahalad, 1989), forming social partnership from a particular theoretical perspective (for example, Seddon, Clemans & Billett, 2005), or whether in fact, these distinctions actually matter. The bulk of our energy has rather been directed at trying to firstly understand, and then resist, the constant pressure of the paradoxical agenda of our organization. In order to do this, we needed to articulate our aims as a set of questions to help us mediate the pressure-cooker effects of this bi-directional space.

In being forced to provide answers to these questions as pre-cursors to any change to our theoretical and clinical fieldwork syllabi, we are able to weigh up organizational imperatives against our own educational agenda. Using this framework helps us make decisions about the advantages of engaging in particular partnerships, but it also, and by very nature of the answers it seeks, makes sure we are engaging in service to the communities and agencies that surround us:

1. In what ways does our curriculum foreground the establishment of caring relationship as the basis of the therapeutic encounter?
2. Given the current professional recruitment and retention issues, particularly in rural Australia, how can our educational program meaningfully contribute to increased recruitment and retention?
3. Given global resource limitations, how can our program explore models of therapeutic practice that aim to provide sustainable levels of service provision?
4. How can the teaching and learning environment of a university be meaningfully translated into the teaching and learning context of therapeutic practice?
5. In what ways does the clinical program provide educational experiences that emphasize community accountability and responsibility?
6. In what way do our activities as community members and educators serve an agenda of social justice and equity?

Providing answers to these questions has led to innovations in both our theoretical and fieldwork programs that also meet the University’s need for (cost-effective) community partnerships that also solve many of our program’s (costly) issues: namely, a shortage of placements. A brief description of some of these innovations follows.

Year One: Community Partnership Program

All first year students complete 40 hours of service within local agencies who offer volunteer services to the community. The aim of this program is to foster within students the importance of volunteerism in building sustainable and compassionate communities. Specific learning objectives include the development of:

- a) A sense of community spirit (human inter-connectedness)
- b) A willingness to give help without thought of monetary benefit (altruism)
- c) A desire to continue with the giving of self, and of time, to the volunteering context (integrity)
- d) An ability to look deep within the self to find untapped resources of giving to others (reflective compassion)
- e) An ability to give of self with cheerful determination (hope).
- f) The facilitation of reflective writing practice.

From 2007, this project has been extended to all students of the School of Community Health (approximately 200 students from the disciplines of physiotherapy, occupational therapy, podiatry and speech therapy). This means a net contribution of 8000 hours of service to the community.

Cost to University: virtually nil.

Year Two: The Schools Project

This is a partnership project between the Department of Education and Training (DET), (Riverina Region), Albury Community Health (part of Greater Southern Area Health Service), and the speech pathology program at CSU. Supervision of students is supplied by Albury Community Health, while the DET offers access to any of 45 schools in the local area, as well as administrative and schools-based support in the form of an Assistant Principal Learning Advisor. In the Schools Project, and by having 4th year students mentor the 2nd year cohort, up to 60 students service ten local schools per annum. The aim of the Schools Project is to work with teachers, in classrooms, to support the integration of the K-6 Talking and Listening Outcomes of the NSW schools curriculum. The Project educates speech pathology students in the basic therapeutic sequence of needs analysis, planning, implementation and evaluation of service. It does so, however, by stepping away from the traditional 1:1 context of speech pathology practice. In terms of accountability to our partners, the resources the students make for the schools are left for their use. We are, however, collating a number of these resources into workbooks for sale to teachers and therapists. Any profits from these sales will be shared amongst the partners, thus contributing to the project's long-term sustainability. This cost-neutral model of community partnership has, and similar to the first year volunteer program, replaced the traditional, and administratively cost-intensive, pediatric block placement of the second year curriculum.

Cost to University: virtually nil.

Years Two & Three: The Parent and Client Tutor Schemes

The Parent Tutors are parents of children with severe communication issues who are employed by the Speech Pathology program to tutor small groups of 2nd year students over a period of six weeks. In the 3rd year curriculum,

citizens who have a severe communication issue as a result of neurological damage (Client Tutors) are employed in a similar small group teaching context. The aim of both schemes is to provide well-educated speech therapists committed to a needs-based community-oriented approach to service delivery in regional and rural practice. A central part of a community-based approach is the educating of speech therapists to deeply understand the concept of consultation and negotiation in providing - and advocating - care as a fundamental tenet of their service delivery. The roles of the Parent and Client Tutors are to teach students:

- a) What it is like to live with/have a child with a severe speech and language disorder;
- b) What their experiences of therapy have been (and of the health service in general);
- c) What their needs and dreams are for themselves/their children, and;
- d) How the students can help in meeting these needs.

While both the Parent Tutors and Client Tutors have offered to educate our students for no salary, our program has rejected this option. This is because these two partnerships are seen as core opportunities for students to experience a reversal of power in the clinical context. Parent and Client Tutors are paid at academic tutorial rates, as existing academic staff cannot replicate the value of their educative input. By virtue of their salaried status, the tutors are expected to assume teaching and learning responsibility for their student groups. The University bears this annual staffing cost of several thousand dollars, and we are able to argue for the continuance of this arrangement on the basis of the cost savings made by other community/fieldwork partnerships.

Cost to the University: \$6,000 p.a (approximately).

Year Three: Learning Exchanges

A primary aim of the Learning Exchange placement is for students to understand the concepts underpinning the World Health Organization's 'International Classification of Function [ICF]'. Therefore, all 3rd year students exchange knowledge across a ten week, one day a week interaction with local disability service agencies, and through conversation with people who identify themselves as having a disability. Practical skills are also developed through projects undertaken with clients and significant others during the learning exchanges. In sum, students spend time in a disability service agency learning things that can't be 'taught' in class. In 'exchange' for this opportunity, the students develop some resources for one person, or for the agency as a whole.

Cost to the University: virtually nil

Year Three: The Coinda Partnership Program

All 3rd year students are teamed with families who have at least one child with an issue of communication. Over the year, students work with the family, the teachers of the child, and the child itself, to provide a full assessment and intervention service. The parents pay a small fee for this service to the Coinda Family Support Service, a local NGO. This fee pays for the clinical

supervision of the students for the duration of the project. Up to 20 families with a child/children with disabilities can receive speech therapy services per annum, and the partnership is sustainable because of the numbers of families with children with disabilities in the region.

Cost to the University: virtually nil.

Note

The community partnership projects described here do co-occur with more traditional 1:1 placements that are situated within the 3rd and 4th year fieldwork timetable. These placements exist for accreditation purposes, yet the time students spend in the fieldwork projects described above far exceed that spent in traditional placements.

Critical Appraisal of our community partnership fieldwork program:

In appraising our partnership program, we would like to raise three issues of concern. The first is connected to the University's risk-averse disposition. The second relates to the notion of community partnership as a vehicle for exclusion; and the third concerns uncomfortable questions as to who we will partner *with*.

Community Partnerships as Cost-effective and Risk-less

As I mentioned earlier, over the five years we have been introducing community partnership placement solutions, the University has steadily become more focused on minimizing any risk to its operations. Most of our early partnership projects slipped under the radar of increasingly vigilant and bureaucratic processes for managing risk and ensuring compliant behavior, yet over the past year or two there is no doubt that these tentacles now directly affect our educational activities. A current example concerns the extension of the first year Community Partnership Program to all students of the School. After eleven weeks, the University was *still* developing a 3-4-page contract that each and every student must have signed by any community organisation that they serve in this partnership. It needs to be emphasized that this is *not* an insurance issue, but a document aiming to manage any possible scenario that may pose risk to a student or the University. As a document, and even in its draft stages, it requires a legally sophisticated reader – a point I will return to in the section below. I cannot help but wonder if the University has not missed the point, and that the biggest risk to its operations is not that a student may drop a lunch container from volunteering for Meals on Wheels, but that the University itself may not being seen as useful and of value to the communities that pay for and support it. This is especially important given that CSU is currently claiming in statewide newspapers to be a 'national university for the professions' (The Border Mail, CSU Insert, 17th April, 2007). Given that fieldwork is endemic to all professional education, and that the basis of both managing and engaging in fieldwork is the development of inherently risky personal networks, how will the University balance its risk management with its core business of vocational education delivery? This is made more complicated by the phenomena of increased managerial control, because as the hierarchies become more entrenched, the control more focused, the resources more

thinly spread, the opportunities for engaging in dialogues of change within the University become increasingly scarce.

Community Partnerships as vehicles for exclusion

In our networking amongst local agencies, we have always been explicit that our twin aims are to gain fieldwork placements, but placements that will offer students very different perspectives on speech therapy practice from traditional models. Possibly through word of mouth, and possibly through local media exposure, each year many community agencies and individuals approach us wishing to engage in partnership projects. Because of our limited student capacity, and because of the organizational disposition concerning risk, each year we have requests from many more individuals and organizations than we can realistically accommodate. Each year, therefore, the partnerships themselves become the vehicles for exclusion. The fact of this exclusion raises difficult issues around our responsibility: for by releasing a student workforce to address systemic disadvantage, we appear to be revealing its presence. Core to this revelation is our failure to promote equity and access; issues which, with the increasing influence of the disposition of risklessness within the University, is introducing an additional exclusionary factor.

This concerns the capacities of partnering organization to understand and respond to contracts such as the 3-4-page document I mentioned above. Smaller community organizations do not have the sophisticated management/legal structure and skills to accommodate these managerial demands. In turn, are they going to be able to take advantage of the student service? This begs the further question of whether, and in our local, rural context, this indicates that the future of community partnerships lies in the realm of elephantine organizational alliances, with powerful organizational interests being strategically shuffled and trumpeted. Perhaps the future is almost upon us, where contractual issues *become* the partnership, and personal networks and relationships become 'other' and perhaps accidental to the process.

Who Becomes a Partner?

In our experience, partnership projects emerge and are forged through relationship; they are refined by doing, and evaluated honestly as a result of trust. While formal memorandums of understanding occur somewhere in this process, the essence of the enterprise is based on goodwill and relationship. One of the most difficult barriers to overcome in forming partnerships is geography. We have discovered that email, telephones and videoconferences are technologies of language – but not of relationship. The question of 'Who becomes a partner?' can, therefore, often be re-framed as 'How far are we away from each other?' We have made significant changes to not only the curriculum, but also our work practices in order to break through this barrier, but in reality our community partnerships are rural and essentially local.

A second determiner of who becomes a partner concerns the organizational climate of the potential partner. We have learnt that organizations enduring intense change to practices, procedures and protocols frequently become

internally fragile. By fragile we mean the degree of sensitivity employees experience as a result of constant change; a sensitivity that frequently leads to a desire for homeostasis – and a concomitant avoidance of risk. Here we meet the paradox once more, because the socio-political fetish of cost cutting, centralization, and rationalization means that many organizations are in constant change. While managers might be advocating partnership, the actual ability of employees to engage in the riskiness of the process is significantly reduced - by virtue of change itself. The point is that we cannot, at our local level, discern any end in sight to the drive for change, or predict the stability of any organization in our geographic region. This means that all the partnerships mentioned here are at risk in the medium to long term. On the one hand, knowing this is fairly unthreatening, seated, as we are in our bi-directional space, and with many agencies and individuals willing to take up the slack if existing partnerships become untenable due to change processes. On the other hand, of course, is the fact that each one of our partnerships is centrally concerned with either offering services to people, or improving the context within which existing services are offered. If we stop a partnership: we stop service. Located as we are in an already resource-poor area of the country, we have no plan of how to manage this, and we have no confidence that the University has a plan either.

Conclusion

This paper has explored how the speech pathology program at CSU has interpreted the institutional drive to create social partnerships in an organizational climate of risk-averse cost cutting and increasing managerialism. We have also described some of our partnership ventures. We frankly acknowledge that these have problems, especially their piecemeal nature, and also their fragility, operating as they do within a context of health and educational service provision dominated by an ever-narrowing social, political and economic agenda.

Yet we also acknowledge that in the absence of systematic, proactive planning and workforce strategies emanating from University, State or Federal sources, piecemeal and fragile partnership services are, perhaps, the only option. A deep discomfort derives from this, however; a discomfort that is centrally concerned with our role as educationalists. Because with our desire to strive for equity of access, and for social justice, we have become reluctantly aware that we are actually educating students in a sophisticated (and perhaps mystified?) reactivity of service response, based on the ongoing slicing, dicing and mashing of local services.

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Northern Territory Domestic and Family Violence policy and practice: engagement through evaluation

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Abstract:

Evaluations have traditionally been used by funding bodies and others to justify the acquittal of funds at the conclusion of a project or to assess the project in terms of meeting a program's objectives. An alternative view is of evaluations as participative processes. Through the participation, the direction of project activities can be influenced, good practices can be supported and promoted and the ongoing development of strategic policy can be informed. This is the approach being used by Charles Darwin University in the Northern Territory to evaluate Domestic and Family Violence policies and strategies. The paper's authors have been directly involved in the design and implementation of the evaluations, which are in various stages of progress.

This paper explores the methodological basis for this approach, drawing on relevant evaluation literature. It briefly reviews the processes used for these projects, which include an evaluation of a 'whole of government' strategies and a suite of interventions designed to address family and domestic violence in several remote Indigenous contexts across the Northern Territory. One of the primary concerns of the whole of government evaluation was to consider how government communicates across agencies and how it engages with non-government organisations providing services to clients and vice versa. The focus of the suite of projects is to trial and develop practices that contribute to good outcomes for families and children at risk of family violence. The University's involvement is both as an objective observer and an engaged participant in the processes. Traditionally the capacity to be both objective and engaged is seen as being impossible, undesirable or somehow unethical, a position this paper discusses and takes issue with.

The paper will consider how one university has engaged with community stakeholders at a variety of levels: Commonwealth and Territory government agency representatives; non-government organisations providing services; representatives from communities and clients. The paper will conclude with an assessment of how effective the University has been: a) in engaging meaningfully with these stakeholder groups; b) in influencing the course of strategy and policy according the needs of the various stakeholder groups; and c) in managing the dual role of objective observer/researcher and engaged participant. The paper will provide insights for other research practitioners who may be considering participative approaches to evaluations. It will also be of particular use to organisations and communities that want to build evaluation into their program development.

Introduction

Evaluations have traditionally been used by funding bodies and others to justify the acquittal of funds at the conclusion of a project or to assess the project in terms of meeting a program's outcomes. This might be considered to be an 'objective' evaluation. An alternative view is of evaluations as participative processes. Through the participation, the direction of project activities can be influenced, good practices can be supported and promoted and the ongoing development of strategic policy can be informed. This is the approach being used by Charles Darwin University in the Northern Territory to evaluate Domestic and Family Violence policies and strategies. The paper's authors have been directly involved in the design and implementation of the evaluations, which are in various stages of progress. Evaluations conducted on this basis are sometimes criticised for not being objective. One of the questions posed in this paper is: 'can a formative evaluation be an objective evaluation?'

This paper explores the methodological basis for these evaluator roles, drawing on relevant evaluation literature. It considers how one university has engaged with community stakeholders at a variety of levels: Commonwealth and Territory government agency representatives; non-government organisations providing services; representatives from communities and clients. The paper will conclude with an assessment of how effective the University has been: a) in engaging meaningfully with these stakeholder groups; b) in influencing the course of strategy and policy according to the needs of the various stakeholder groups; and c) in managing the dual role of objective observer/researcher and engaged participant.

Literature review

The literature reviewed here first addresses some of the many approaches to evaluation. It then goes on to more specifically consider participative approaches to evaluation and the ways that purpose drives evaluation design.

Approaches to evaluation design

At one level evaluation design methods can be viewed dichotomously. That is they are either formative or summative. The summative approach can be viewed as an exercise 'to determine the overall effectiveness or impact of a programme or project' while the formative approach is designed to 'support the processes of improvement' (Clarke, 1999, pp. 7-8). In the former, the evaluator is considered to be independent and in the latter the evaluator may have an interactive role. However this dichotomy is not the only way of considering approaches to evaluation. Evaluators can take on the role of 'scientific expert', 'independent auditor' or 'consultative facilitator'. Patton (2000) suggests that this third role can be described in terms of 'utilization-

focused evaluation' where the evaluator is the negotiator. He suggests that in this scenario 'all roles are on the table just as methods are options. Markievicz (2005) suggests that this negotiation role is important for resolving multiple and potentially conflicting stakeholder interests. Role selection follows from and is dependent on intended use by intended users' (p. 430).

Stufflebeam's CIPP (Context, Input, Process and Product) Evaluation Model offers yet another way to consider different types of evaluation. Rather than trying to distinguish between types, Stufflebeam integrates formative and summative evaluation methods with an 'improvement focus', effectively doing away with the apparent dichotomy (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007).

There are very good reasons for integrating methods and approaches in evaluation. Rao and Woolcock (2003) suggest that well-integrated evaluation methods, including qualitative and quantitative tools, enable generalisations to be made from findings, and 'that the strengths of one approach potentially complement the weaknesses of the other' (p. 168). Falk and Guenther (2007) contend that a rigorous qualitative or mixed methodological approach may produce findings that are no less generalisable than those which are based on quantitative methods.

Participative evaluation design

Central to the implications of the above examples of evaluation approaches is a question often posed: 'how can participatory evaluations remain objective and give unbiased findings when the evaluators are so actively engaged in the process?'. At what point does the outsider become an insider? Is it possible to maintain an appropriate balance of objectivity and subjectivity when formative and summative approaches are merged? Others have grappled with the same issues and have acknowledged the potential for conflict of interest and ethical compromise (Caracelli, 2006; Conley-Tyler, 2005; Yang & Shen, 2006). A further challenge when multiple approaches are blended is to maintain the integrity of each approach when they may at times be at odds with each other. For example, does a participatory method adversely impact on the results of empirically based findings (Bledsoe & Graham, 2005)? Despite the many questions and potential pitfalls, it is evident from a scan of the literature that program evaluations do use participative approaches and they are used for a variety of purposes. Rosas (2006:102) for example, suggests that it is possible to 'maintain a high level of ethical behavior but also exhibit transparency in the methodological approach' by applying 'specific strategies in support of guiding principles and standards'.

The purpose of evaluations

Given the above discussion about various approaches to evaluation the purpose of evaluations is an important consideration for the design of any evaluation. At one level evaluations are used for assessing program outcomes, typically using program logic models to determine: success of interventions (Patton, 2002; W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004); 'effectiveness and efficiency' (Stevens, 2005); what works and why, to inform the formative development of policy and practice (Dawe, 2003). While the evaluators themselves may have a role in designing the method of an evaluation, to a large degree the purpose of any evaluation is determined more by the commissioning organisation than by any single methodological approach

(Chelimsky, 2007). In the case of internal evaluations, where the purpose of evaluation may be driven by an organisation's need to improve professional practice or quality a 'community of practice' approach may be warranted (Wenger, 1998). In the case of this latter purpose, the 'community' itself determines the purpose.

Illustrative cases of participative evaluation design

Two cases serve as examples of the evaluations that have used participative processes within their designs. The cases illustrate the participatory processes and design elements of the evaluations and point to some of the considerations that may need to be taken into account for others planning evaluations of this kind.

Case 1: Whole of government evaluation

The context for the first case is an official 'Partnership Agreement' endorsed by the Cabinet of the Northern Territory Government (NTG). The partnership is between the NTG and Charles Darwin University (CDU). Under this Partnership Agreement, CDU was contracted to conduct an evaluation of a whole of government strategy to address domestic and family violence in the Northern Territory.

In the beginning stages of the Project, the full Scope of Works was developed collaboratively between the officers involved at NTG and CDU. The three key questions for the Project are:

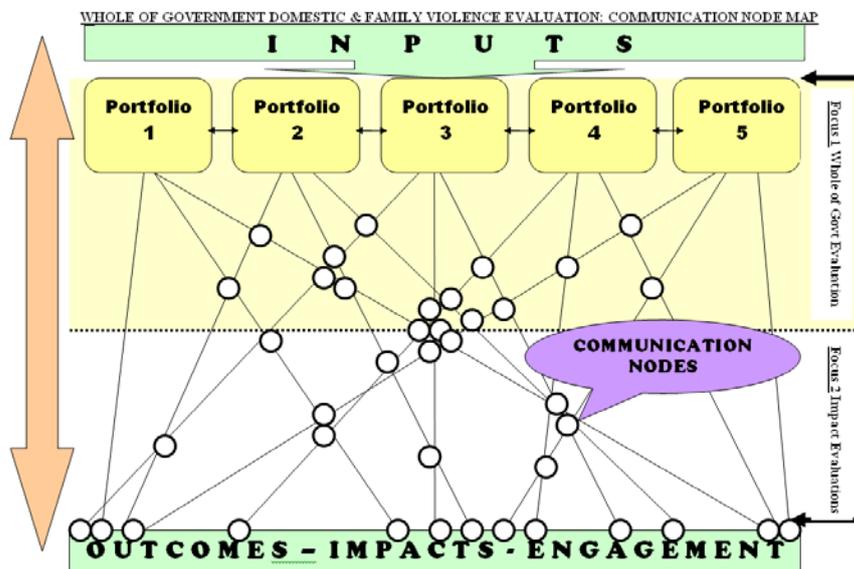
1. How well are our governance structures working to support our work in addressing violence?
2. How well are we building stakeholder capacity to address violence?
3. How well are we building our evidence base of what types of initiatives are successfully addressing violence in the NT?

The research methodology for the Project was designed as a formative action evaluation. That is, during the processes of evaluation, feedback is given at various points, input is sought and theory is built in an iterative manner designed to inform the development of policy (Patton, 2002). This allows the research to respond to immediate needs, and to provide current research outcomes to inform emerging policy initiatives and program roll-out, while at the same time ensure that the knowledge base for the evaluation is rigorous, in-depth, valid and reliable. The research team comprised of officers from Charles Darwin University (CDU), as well as two core team members from the Department of the Chief Minister.

After identifying the structures, official means of communication, existing stakeholders—individuals and groups, government and non-government agencies—and their potential capacity and the nature of the existing evidence base on the subject of domestic violence in the Northern Territory, we then collaboratively developed an interview schedule whose focus was on uncovering the dynamics and structures of the policy-connected interactivity. It is important to this story to realise that the NTG and CDU officers were included in this analysis, and that the recommendations that would result from

the research were recognised as having to be ‘practical’ in terms of NTG’s constraints and the ‘doability’ of the policy in connection with its reaching the target groups. Figure 1 attempts to capture the Project components and the conception of the data and analyses in terms of communicative interactivity.

Figure 1. Evaluation project components and conception



Perhaps the easiest way of encapsulating the figure is to read it from top to bottom. The inputs of policy and top level decision-making are represented at the top as ‘Inputs’. These are carried through to the five portfolios involved in the policy, and the officers from here meet with each other and their own departments, as well as external agencies and stakeholders. Where communication—a possible meeting or other—interaction occurs is represented by the small circles. In effect, these various interactions occur as means of getting the policy and its associated programs implemented at—shown by the bottom bar as Outcomes, Impacts and Engagement—the grassroots level.

The evaluation concluded with preparation of a report, which reported on the findings and made recommendations based on these findings drawn from interviews, a critical analysis of data collected within the strategy and a review of relevant literature. At the time of writing, the report is almost at publication stage. Recommendations are being considered by the relevant departments.

Case 2: Evaluation of Domestic and Family Violence interventions

The second case is drawn from a specific intervention designed to address domestic and family violence in a particular context. A portion of the evaluation has already been contracted to Charles Darwin University, and negotiations are underway for evaluating the remainder of the project.

The features of the project included co-location of two NT government departments; a coordinated management and leadership approach; and joint case management in cooperation with local non-government organisations providing specific client services. The project is being conducted as a trial to develop a model that could be applied more generally across the Territory, in

order to provide better services for clients and better outcomes for children in particular. The evaluation has at the time of writing, been in progress for nearly 12 months, with another 12 months remaining.

The design of the evaluation was built around program logic assumptions with an outcomes focus driving the project rationale. However, while this may suggest a predominantly summative evaluation approach, the largely experimental and emerging nature of the project demanded a flexible and formative evaluation design. The evaluation has required careful and ongoing consultation with all of the key stakeholders involving:

1. Six site visits to conduct workshops with stakeholders and gather data;
2. A series of workshops with NT Government departmental officers to develop the evaluation design and scope of the evaluation; and
3. Regular meetings with NT Government stakeholders to inform them of emerging issues.

The CDU team consists of up to five people with a range of skills needed to support a mix of quantitative and qualitative data gathering and analysis requirements. A key emphasis of each of the site visits has been to engage with the local team, supporting reflective practice in a participatory manner. The team have noted a number of factors that have limited their ability to progress the evaluation as quickly as it may have desired. First, while the makeup of the evaluation team has remained reasonably constant, the makeup and roles of the project team have been very fluid. This has meant frequent revisiting of the evaluation objectives and refocusing on the rationale for evaluation. Second, the fluidity of the project team has meant that the trust that might typically build over the course of a year's evaluation has not developed. The project team have been wary and somewhat sceptical of the evaluation team's capacity to conduct an evaluation of this kind. Third, the different cultures of the organisations involved (both government and non-government) have resulted in difficulties with communication between the stakeholders and from the evaluators to the stakeholders. Despite these constraints the evaluation is beginning to yield some results as a result of the consultations:

- A set of outcomes indicators has been agreed to and refined and are beginning to be measured;
- The reflective practice facilitated by the CDU team has enabled constructive dialogue to take place between the project stakeholders, with a recognition that organisations' cultural differences need to be bridged in order for effective collaboration to take place;
- The ongoing engagement with the NT government stakeholders has helped refine and define expectations of the intervention.; and
- For the CDU team the process has provided an evaluation model that has broader application to other similar evaluations within the suite of bilateral projects.

This evaluation can be described as one that intends to develop good practice within the context of a developing intervention. It is dependent on participative processes at a number of levels: a) in terms of the evaluation design; b) in terms of the reflective practice integrated into the process; and c) in terms of the criteria by which outcomes will be measured. An important element that is built into these three processes is the shared learning that occurs between the evaluators and the project stakeholders.

Discussion

The cases provide two examples of how participator processes can be built in to an evaluation to engage with stakeholders at a variety of levels. Both could be termed 'formative' in their approach. Both integrate a number of elements with multiple aspects along the lines of Stufflebeams CIPP (Context, Input, Process and Product) matrix of elements (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007). The examples integrate qualitative and quantitative techniques, consistent with Rao and Woolcock's (2003) evaluation model. The first is clearly aligned to developing and forming policy, while the second is more focused on building good practice.

While there can be little doubt about the efficacy of engagement in the evaluation processes, the questions in the literature about whether or not participative approaches compromise the validity of the evaluation outcomes may well be posed here. In order to answer this question we first need to consider what the purpose of these evaluations is. If the purpose was simply to assess the success or failure of the strategies and interventions being evaluated, then they would most probably be considered unreliable. However, given that the purpose of the evaluations was to develop policy and practice the methods provide an appropriate way of satisfying the NT Governments requirements. Furthermore, given also that the evaluations enhance the learnings of the stakeholders through participatory and reflective practices the resulting contributions to the development of strategies (in Case 1) and intervention practices (in Case 2) add value to the evaluation outputs.

Returning to the central question posed in the Introduction: 'can a formative evaluation be an objective evaluation?', the cases offer some insights that may help answer this question. *First*, it should be noted that in both cases the evaluators do not rely solely on the subjective responses from the project participants. They draw on a variety of internal and external sources. *Second*, the degree to which the findings are considered 'objective' is dependent to some extent on the end user of the evaluation outputs. Just because a summative evaluation draws on 'objective data', does not mean that it is perceived that way by those who use the evaluation findings. The converse can be equally true of formative evaluation findings using qualitative methods, which have been used in the two cases cited. *Thirdly* an important point to note in considering this question is that the role of the evaluators in both cases is not to report favourable outcomes to the NT Government. Rather, in both cases the dual role of the evaluators as objective and dispassionate researchers and active co-participants is to facilitate processes that support the shared learnings which emerge. In so doing, the evaluators will provide the NT government with recommendations for improving policy and practice. Taking into account this role for the given purposes of the evaluations the

potential for ethical and/or practical conflicts of interests pose few problems, provided that appropriate 'guiding principles and standards' (Rosas, 2006) are maintained. *Fourthly*, given the nature of these evaluations a counter question may be 'is it necessary to be totally objective?'. If objectivity is meant to allow great external clarity of vision on what is really going on, then why this should be the case when the evaluator cannot possibly know what is really going on. It is conceivable that a greater difference can be made using participative processes because the evaluators (a) really do know 'the good and bad of it all', and (b) have policy people engaged so they can hear and act on the emerging critiques.

Conclusion

The cases highlighted in this paper demonstrate how a participatory evaluation process can be used by researchers to effectively engage with stakeholders. An important factor that contributes to the efficacy of this approach in this context is the acceptance of the role of the evaluator as both an impartial and objective observer and an engaged participant. Supporting this role is a directed purpose that demands that the evaluator provide impartial recommendations while at the same time supporting change processes that form policy and practice. The evaluations are not designed to produce a pass/fail report card for the participants based on purely external and predetermined measures. Rather they are designed to build constructive outcomes based on shared learnings that take place in a cooperative and consultative environment. We argue that it is possible to conduct a formative evaluation that is objective based on the strength of the methodology, the standards applied to the evaluation and the demands of the intended audience.

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Process and accountability in university engagement with Indigenous communities

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Abstract:

This paper examines community engagement strategies that enable universities to meet the needs of Indigenous people within their regions. Its focus is the Northern Territory (NT). Indigenous community engagement requires specific attention as a subset of community engagement more generally. The paper draws on practical examples from the context of Indigenous community based Land Management to explore Indigenous community engagement.

Background is provided at the outset on community engagement as an area of practice for universities and the potential benefits of improved engagement in relation to the demography of the NT. The following are then explored: the benefits that genuine engagement and partnership can deliver; the factors underpinning community engagement in the Indigenous community context; and, the difficulties in reconciling institutional and community needs.

This paper highlights three key lessons. First, community engagement on the ground in Indigenous communities can lead to benefits being delivered to the university, the students, the Indigenous community and wider NT community through the implementation of successful collaborative practice. Second, community engagement practices need to occur throughout work with Indigenous people involved in community based activities. Finally, community engagement processes must be underpinned by a sound knowledge of Indigenous governance and knowledge production principles, respect, and a commitment to ongoing negotiation over the aims, purpose and practice of the work undertaken.

Introduction:

Community engagement is an emerging area of interest for universities across Australia and around the world (Nelson, 2002; Temple, Story, & Delaforce, 2005) and has been identified as being of particular importance for regional universities who are seen to “have a special responsibility to their communities” (Nelson, 2002: 23). Community engagement strategies seek to align the focus of universities’ activities to regional priorities and provide opportunities for the integration of regional communities into the global “knowledge economy” (Cuttriss & Wallace, 2006). Good community engagement enables the harnessing of the creative human resources that

exist in regional communities to generate unique local outcomes (Garlick & Pryor, 2002). Increasingly community engagement is being described as the third role of universities, in addition to the traditional roles of research and teaching (Langworthy, 2005). In Australia, however, research and implementation of community engagement is still in its infancy as Temple et al note: "University- community engagement is an emerging area of interest and endeavour" (2005: 12). This paper seeks to address this issue in the context of community engagement in relation to training in Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory (NT). The particular challenges and opportunities of community engagement in this unique context are explored.

Community engagement is generally conceived of as a process where there is: "active engagement and learning for the partners in both process and outcome; it is built on demonstrable and ongoing commitment, clear expectations, trust and has tangible quantitative or qualitative outcomes for the community and the university" (Department of Education Science and Training, 2002). In addition Community engagement in relation to universities "specifically implies collaborative relationships leading to productive partnerships that yield mutually beneficial outcomes" (Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance, 2006). Community engagement therefore should be conceptualised as a set of practices that facilitate the formation of collaborative relationships. However there are some challenges for on the part of universities for developing collaborative relationships. Universities must be aware that mismatches of power and lack of a negotiated forum for dialogue may inhibit the implementation of community engagement strategies (Newman, 2006). Another issue is if universities attempt to develop community engagement strategies without appropriate consultation as the underlying purpose of engagement should be clear to all partners. The challenge for universities is to develop processes that draw on the knowledge and networks already in place, while developing strategies for future links to be more explicit in both the form and benefits of engagement for the partners.

In 2005 Indigenous Territorians comprised over a quarter of the NT population, with 35% of this population being under the age of 15 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2005; Barnes, Condon, Cunningham, & Smith, 2004). 81% of Indigenous Territorians live in the regional and remote areas of the NT (Productivity Commission, 2005) and they continue to be one of the most disadvantaged groups in Australian society, with low levels of education, high unemployment, poor health, and high rates of incarceration (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, 2003; McMullen, 2005). Specific strategies need to be developed for university community engagement with this particularly disadvantaged group.

This paper draws on the community engagement lessons learnt through the provision of community based land management education in the Top End of the Northern Territory. It highlights: the benefits that genuine engagement can deliver; what underpins engagement in Indigenous community contexts; and, the difficulties in reconciling institutional and community needs. Some of the underlying aspects of good community engagement discussed include: knowledge of governance and Indigenous knowledge production principles;

and, the types processes required to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes in this intercultural context.

Discussion

To illuminate some of the benefits that community engagement can deliver, underpinning aspects of community engagement and the difficulty of reconciling institutional and community needs I am going to draw on the following case study:

I had prepared for a week of delivering the unit of competency in weed identification and control, along with accompanying units in Occupational Health and Safety and Workplace Communication. The first thing we were going to do was to survey the extent of a Parkinsonia infestation, before trialling a few methods of control. As we drove out to the south from our campsite there was talk in the Troop Carrier about the cleanskins (unbranded cattle) that had been seen there last week, and plans for getting one for dinner. Soon the talk moved to where the cleanskins were, as there was no evidence of them as we drove on through the land trust. A little later a possible explanation emerged: the eastern fence had been cut, allowing the potential passage of animals through onto the adjoining pastoral property. As the cattle were cleanskins, once they were on the neighbouring property it would be impossible to identify that they had been moved from the land trust.

The students engaged in the training were now spending far more time on their country with a view to developing a cattle business. The loss of cattle, though it may have occurred previously, was now an issue that threatened the viability of the emerging enterprise.

As I was there to deliver a particular set of competencies I was now facing a conundrum. It was clear that Parkinsonia was now fairly low on the agenda of things to do. Consequently I had to make a decision, work with the community on the issue at hand, or try to pursue the achievement of competencies as per my original plans. I was there to deliver training, but I was also aware that I was there to engage with the community.

It was clear that the issue of the missing cattle needed to be addressed and so we spent the next couple of days discussing the problem and developing a strategy to address it. The short term outcomes of the process were that the fence was repaired, a monitoring program was instituted and a letter was sent to the neighbour informing him of their plan to develop a cattle enterprise. The long term outcomes included a greater awareness of their rights under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, a greater understanding of how to approach and utilise officers of the Northern Land Council in assisting them to address issues in the

future, and an agreement with the neighbour to monitor and maintain the fence.

1. The benefits that community engagement can deliver

Universities have a significant role to play in regional development that is much greater than “simply providing local employment and purchases, or access to centrally designed courses (Garlick & Pryor, 2002: p11). The challenge for universities is to develop active partnerships and be “responsive to community identified needs, opportunities and goals in ways that are appropriate to the university’s mission and academic strengths” (Temple et al., 2005). Developing these partnerships to deliver to locally relevant development requires recognising the skills, knowledge and creativity of regional residents. Universities meeting the needs of their communities can lead to business growth, leadership and network development and the enhancement of support service capability that in turn contributes to the viability of the university and the region (Charles & Goddard, 1997).

Benefits delivered to the Indigenous community as a result of community engagement playing a central role include: enhanced participation in education; improved ability to mould education to be locally relevant; the development of partnerships where service deliverers are aware of and respect local protocols; and, development of local development initiatives that strengthen Indigenous knowledge while building links with external agencies.

In the Northern Territory the development of the Aboriginal Ranger movement, including the delivering of Land Management training by Charles Darwin University to Ranger groups, is an example of how good community engagement can deliver benefit to the university, the students and the communities. Ranger groups are now significant employers of Aboriginal people within their own communities. The success of these groups is due to the explicit acknowledgement of the primacy of the role of Indigenous knowledge in forming land management interventions. As the case study demonstrates, attending to the real world situation that people find themselves in means that the provision of land management training contributes to benefits being delivered over and above that planned externally. Other benefits that Aboriginal Ranger programs deliver include: increased income to individuals through employment; intergenerational knowledge production; and, land management outcomes.

2. Underpinning aspects of community engagement in the Indigenous community context

Negotiation and an awareness of and respect for Indigenous protocols are the two central aspects of Indigenous community engagement. The success of the university in developing mutually beneficial community engagement depends largely on negotiation. Negotiation is a cornerstone of Indigenous knowledge production from both political and epistemological perspectives. To negotiate in a training context means that what the university brings to each encounter must be put on the table for discussion and must occupy no more

privileged a space than the knowledge that other participants bring. This runs counter to the traditional 'conduit' view of education in a Western setting where knowledge production is dependent on the view that teachers have knowledge and teaching is a process of passing this to the student (Reddy, 1979). When teaching adults in an Indigenous context, ensuring that the lecturers "knowledge" (stories) are not privileged over students' knowledge is crucial to delivering mutually beneficial outcomes. This approach accords with Felman's observation that teaching is "not the transmission of ready made knowledge, it is rather the creation of a new condition of knowledge" (Felman, 1982). This philosophy promotes a method of teaching that can be productive for both Indigenous and Western cultures and ensures that each is preserved and respected (Christie, 2007). The case study demonstrates that it is possible to have educational outcomes that are produced as a result of the training agenda being flexible and negotiable.

An awareness and respect for Indigenous protocols is important. Understanding that everything in an Indigenous context is owned and managed is a key lesson. Languages, land, totems, animals, plants and stories all belong to people. Therefore anybody wanting to use things, including people's stories, must first ask permission. From a university perspective this means asking permission for access to land for teaching purposes, asking who is entitled to talk about particular issues, and ensuring that practices brought into the community are embedded within the frameworks of managing resources that already exist.

3. The difficulties of reconciling institutional and community needs:

In relation to the delivery of training, the principle of negotiation implies that some training plans may need to make way for other community activities. Placing community engagement in a central position, which may involve supporting non training outcomes, can lead to a situation where lecturers feel that they are not being accountable to their institution. The case study illustrates that from the point of view of a training organisation there are times when the lecturer is being unproductive in terms of delivering units of competency with allocated nominal hours. As a result timelines to achieve identified outcomes need to be extended. While this ability to negotiate activities and timelines is crucial to effective community engagement, it can be seen as problematic when the high costs of remote delivery are factored in. In this instance lecturers and their managers need to remind themselves that community engagement is not an add-on to the "real" business of teaching.

Working with Indigenous communities does mean that practices need to change in order to accommodate the cultural differences that exist, and this can place outsiders in a conflicted position as to whom they are accountable. This accords with Sanders' observations about institutional managers in Indigenous communities who must balance the distribution of resources between state funding priorities and local realities (Sanders, 2005). The challenge is to do this in ways that are transparent and accountable, creating new practices that deliver benefits to the Indigenous community and the university. These practices must be separately negotiated in each new

community and in each new context, accepting that ancestral protocols and practices pre-existed university engagement and need to be respected.

Clarity in relation to rights and responsibilities is required if community engagement is going to deliver mutual benefit. Monitoring and evaluation must be built in to the process so that both parties are able to reflect together on the process being used. As noted earlier, potential power imbalances are a critical issue, so the emphasis on creating space for people to talk both about the process and results of training is itself a community engagement exercise. Ongoing discussion and documentation about mutual benefits explicitly recognises the right of each party to articulate their interest in relation to the provision of training. Communities also need to be recognised for their contributions to the engagement. One way to do this is to collaboratively document the nature and process of the engagement as a collective statement about goals, practices and outcomes

Conclusion:

Community engagement processes that meet the needs of both Indigenous communities and the university have the potential to transform the training process. These processes must recognise the vital importance of negotiation. As such universities must develop and implement policies that involve the collective documentation of practices that underpin the delivery of training. These collective documentation processes should recognise the rights of each party to articulate their positions in relation to training, and provide a space where successful collaborations can be identified and celebrated. These processes should also require universities to commit time and funds to community engagement as an integral part of training delivery in Indigenous communities to develop more effective collaboration strategies.

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CASE STUDIES

Benchmarking leadership in university- community engagement: First steps and future directions for a new regional university campus

Peter Hudson, Robert Craig and Sue Hudson

Abstract

There are more than 160 university campuses in Australia and about one third of these are located in regional areas (Garlick & Waterman, 2005). Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Caboolture has received federal funding to develop its new campus. This federal support confirms national agenda priorities (e.g., see Cox & Seifer, 2005). University-community engagement is also a high national priority; however gauging the progress of university-community collaboration requires some form of measurement. Many educators have advocated benchmarking as a means for measuring successful practices. Although Garlick (2003) argues that benchmarking must "...begin with an extensive consultation program" (p. 5) and, indeed, university and community consultation needs to be part of the benchmarking process, and commencing without effective leadership such goals may not be realised. Effective university leaders can establish the foundations for consultation, yet, they too must be guided by university policies and guidelines. Apart from articulating visionary directions and understanding these change processes, leadership for initiating university-community engagement also involves motivating potential key stakeholders, promoting collaboration and team effort, distributing leadership, and communicating clear commitments to educational development (Hudson, Hudson, & Craig, 2006).

Benchmarking leadership in university-community engagement would require matching policies and agendas to resources and activities. The effectiveness of leadership must be considered as a key element towards initiating community engagement and may be benchmarked in terms of activity frequency and intensity. Evaluation of the extent of policy implementation, leadership activities that have initiated university-community engagement, the degree to which community and university needs have been addressed, and the extent of community participation in programs (i.e., duration and numbers of participants) may also aid the benchmarking process, and assist in determining future directions. Any evaluation for establishing and advancing university-community engagement must be conducted with key stakeholders. Other benchmarks may include involvement of disadvantaged groups, the extent of human and technological resources, community engagement with educational programs, university-community innovations, and determining levels of commitment from community members, university staff and its

students. Benchmarking needs to be ongoing for continuous improvement of university-community organisational structures and practices. Furthermore, benchmarking can be used to determine the growth of partnerships and associated activities over time.

Introduction

There are more than 160 university campuses in Australia and about one third of these are in regional areas (Garlick & Waterman 2005). Queensland University of Technology (QUT) has received federal funding to develop a new campus at Caboolture. This federal support confirms national agenda priorities (see Cox & Seifer 2005). Indeed, "Government policies over the last decade have encouraged institutions to improve the participation of students from those groups who were poorly represented in higher education" (DETYA 1998-99, 11). In regional campuses, university students may be the first in their family to attend tertiary education. Undoubtedly, there are regionally-based communities who want to learn and deserve opportunities for careers; hence regional campuses provide access for students, who may in turn contribute to capacity building within their communities (Bambrick 2002). Regional areas without universities may lose their young talented people because of the limited educational opportunities. Consequently, there is a need to provide "pathways to higher education for students of diverse backgrounds" (Reid & Hawkins, 1998, p. 1). Even though regional campuses may not be as well resourced as their metropolitan counterparts, regional institutions can provide opportunities for personal and professional development within a supportive community, especially with qualified university staff and access to information and technological resources (Bambrick 2002).

Since the early 1990s, universities accepted their responsibilities for establishing university-community partnerships (Harkavy 2000). Partnership development is about facilitating interpersonal relationships between key stakeholders with the phases and dynamics of these relationships as focal points (Bringle & Hatcher 2002). Although university-community collaboration has not been a traditional strength of higher education (Holland 2004, 11), there appears to be considerable benefits through such engagement. For example, Rai (2003) claims that collaboration between universities and communities can bring new knowledge, particularly when addressing issues collaboratively within the community. Such collaboration can link the university with the community with purpose and mutual benefit (Brukardt & Percy 2002). "University engagement is grounded in a growing body of scholarly research that demonstrates its effective impact on teaching, learning and community-based problem solving" (Brukardt Holland, Percy & Zimpher 2004, 3). Moreover, these partnerships build community capacity and have "real potential to connect higher education to critical public issues" (Brukardt et al. 2004, 16), which emphasises the importance of establishing networks, trust and shared values (Kilpatrick 2003, 2).

Institutions have found university-community engagement has strengthened and expanded the scholarship and teaching at the academic level (Brukardt et al 2004), particularly as community-based research can bridge the gap between academic university work and practical community activities (Heffner, Zandee & Schwander 2003, p. 3). Universities have long been referred to as ivory towers

with little connection to the real world (Kilpatrick 2003; Taylor 1997); however connecting university education with community-based experiences can enhance students' skills and provide enlightenment on the nature of such work. Effective partnerships align goals but require adequate time to establish their partnerships with compromise and a willingness to adopt promising ideas (Kriesky & Cote, 2003). In addition, community engagement should not be seen as distinct from academic work, but integral and motivating towards problem solving and community building (Harkavy 2004).

Determining the progress of university-community engagement necessitates some form of measurement. Many educators have advocated benchmarking as a means for measuring successful practices and as a tool to agree on outcomes and processes (Agre-Kippenhan, Davidson & Kerrigan 1999; Alstet 1996). "The process of benchmarking, if done the right way, has the benefit of bringing about changes in attitudes and behaviors in the organization and the community through interactive learning and good dialogue" (Garlick 2003, 7). Yet, outcome measurement is necessary "if resource allocation decision-makers in government, universities and the community are to be swayed to adopt regional partnership as an effective strategy" (Garlick 2003, 3). Garlick also argues that benchmarking must "...begin with an extensive consultation program" (2003, 5) and, certainly, community consultation needs to be part of the benchmarking process. This involves recognising effective leadership practices otherwise such goals may not be realised. The following literature highlights possible practices for benchmarking, including leadership activities, the extent of human and technological resources, and the identification of key stakeholders for university-community engagement.

Leadership activities

Effective university leaders establish foundations for initiating community programs (Weiss, Anderson, & Lasker 2002) but must also be guided by visionary directions presented within university strategic plans and policies (Drummond & Soto 2002). Apart from additional inclusions of community engagement within a university's strategic plans, benchmarking leadership activities for advancing such engagement can involve motivating potential key stakeholders, promoting collaboration and team effort, distributing leadership, and communicating clear commitments to educational development (Hudson, Hudson & Craig 2006). The frequency of engagement with a community can be benchmarked (Temple, Tayebjee & Pearce, 2003). To illustrate, motivating potential key stakeholders may be determined by the number of key stakeholders participating in university programs, and the extent and intensity of these programs (i.e., an hour, an afternoon, a day, intermittent, periodic, ongoing). The effectiveness of leadership activities may also be benchmarked in terms of outcomes and future directions for each activity. Distributing leadership, as another example, may be benchmarked by the number of other leaders (university and the community) positioned to initiate community-based projects that establish purposeful community engagement with explicit outcomes. These outcomes can be benchmarked with leadership organisation and involvement.

There is an impact on partnerships where the university possesses greater power and resources than the surrounding community (Pasque, Smerek, Dwyer,

Bowman & Mallory 2005). A level of funding is required to build university resources in order to establish and continue university-community partnerships. However, public accountability remains at the centre for deploying government funds to universities and communities (Moxley & Lenker 1995; Winter, Wiseman & Muirhead 2006). Requests for government funding must link with university strategic plans to justify such expenditure. The matching of university plans, policies and agendas to resource allocations and activities allows for clearer accountability and presents a way to gauge the extent of policy implementation. For example, a university strategic plan may state “developing environments that foster and reward high-quality scholarship and build a sense of community” (QUT Blueprint 2006, 5) for which community engagement is facilitated to achieve this plan. More specific agendas can be determined with funding directed in areas of need, which usually focuses on buildings, human resources, and other resources such as library books and technological equipment. Yet, universities have expressed frustration about resource levels for establishing community engagement to the point of personnel using their own resources to facilitate such collaborations (Letven, Osteimer, & Statham 2001). The types of leadership activities that aim to enhance resources need to be investigated and identified as practices that do not impinge upon personal expenses may lead other regional campuses in affirmative directions.

The extent of human and technological resources

Resources are essential for developing university-community relationships (Goodman et al. 1998; Ostrander 2004), and allocating and positioning human and technological resources are precursors for implementing practices. Although human resources are required by communities to generate viability in the global economy (Plummer & Taylor 2003), they are also needed by regional universities to create relevant knowledge at the local level and develop local human capital into an adaptable and valued workforce (Thomas 2003). Hence, the quality and magnitude of local human resources can have an impact on implementing a university’s plans and policies. Allocations of human resources can engage communities towards innovations that provide a presence of an “enterprising culture” (Plummer & Taylor 2000, 10).

Practical support requires human, financial and infrastructure resources to sustain efforts (Thompson 2005). Any human resource draws upon a range of other resources to facilitate activities. Apart from resources that are task specific, today’s globalisation necessitates the use of technological resources. The impact of information communications technology (ICT) has been identified as an enabler for achieving success (Thompson 2005). There is an intense requirement to utilise technology for communication and delivery of programs particularly for rural communities without immediate access to city resources. To illustrate, ICT is the new frontier of education and teachers need to use ICT skills to stimulate, develop and extend knowledge, including the application of knowledge. The integration of technology and pedagogy in diverse settings can allow teachers to create powerful learning environments for all students regardless of location (Solomon, Allen & Resta 2003). School-university engagement with ICT can improve academic environments, school operations, and learning outcomes (Kallick & Wilson 2001) and benchmarking ICT-based activities may lead other teachers to further ICT advancements, which can feed back to students within

rural schools. Therefore, investing in a level of ICT expertise that provides preliminary consultation and training can further augment knowledge for building community capacity. Up-skilling labour forces at both university and community levels can progress university-community engagement in projects.

Identifying key stakeholders

It is paramount that key stakeholders are identified for the purposes of building relationships with universities. Promising practices for community engagement that include forging partnerships as an overarching framework for recruiting and supporting “new champions” or supportive stakeholders (Brukardt et al 2004, iii). Universities may need to motivate potential key stakeholders in order to form partnerships. These stakeholders can include any single community person, a charity, business people, corporations, government agencies and affiliations, and the wide range of representative groups within a community. For example, catering for marginalised and disadvantaged groups is a necessary part of developing a community profile. The involvement of these groups through community-university collaborative efforts can raise the socio-economic status of a community by demonstrating the availability of resources for such ventures. In addition, institutions can use this status effectively for reconstructing a society (Butcher, Labone & Howard 2003, 2). After identifying key stakeholders who have strong interests in advancing their situation, collaboration and team effort will require clarity on roles and responsibilities, and consolidating partnerships through open communication within a positive environment can contribute to relationship building (Kriesky & Cote 2003). Benchmarking leadership practices that facilitate university-community engagement is at the centre for understanding how such engagements materialise.

Context for this study

The QUT Blueprint (2006) has provided broad strategic directions for establishing university-community engagement. QUT's Caboolture Campus is located on the outskirts of Brisbane in a lower socio-economic area and has introduced a Bachelor of Education (primary) to the community. Currently, the numbers of school leavers who make the transition to university within the Caboolture Shire is below the state and metropolitan average with only 28.4% of schools leavers making the transition to university compared with the 36.6% noted to be the state average (Department of Education and the Arts, 2005). To establish the campus and promote the Bachelor of Education program, a Reference Group of Educators was formed to further develop educational partnerships and collaboration between Education Queensland, schools, Technical and Further Education (TAFE), QUT and interested community members. QUT academics and professional staff supporting the BEd program were approached to ascertain their interest in collaborating with key stakeholders and developing partnerships in the Caboolture area. Leadership activities facilitated partnerships between the Caboolture campus and key stakeholders in the local area for establishing innovations. How can leadership activities be benchmarked for establishing university-community engagement? This paper aims to describe and benchmark leadership activities within one faculty and how these activities have produced

relevant and specific university-community outcomes that may be a reference point for future directions.

Results and discussion

Important to the development of community engagement programs at QUT was the establishment of a Reference Group of Educators, which consisted of a QUT leader, a TAFE staff member, local principals and deputy principals and interested community members. At the first meeting, the group decided the principles underpinning this educational partnership and collaboration would include: open and frequent communication, and respect for the various contexts of the group members with their teaching beliefs and philosophies. The group focused on collaborations that would have benefits for all participants (i.e., any collaborative project should demonstrate benefit for more than one group such as students, teachers, preservice teachers, TAFE, and/or community groups). The following provides a description of a variety of university-community projects (programs or innovations) established within the Faculty of Education at QUT Caboolture. Leadership activities were identified for each project. In addition, specific outcomes were presented for each significant university-community engagement that may be used as benchmarks for future directions.

Ed Start Program

The Reference Group of Educators expressed their concerns that preservice teachers graduate with little or no knowledge of what happens from week to week in teaching and may not have opportunities to observe the development of primary students over periods of time. As a result the Ed Start Program was developed, which involved placing second-year preservice teachers in their field experience schools for one-day per week leading up to their four-week field experience. The preservice teachers follow guidelines on how to observe teaching practices and offer support to students and teachers in activities such as reading, writing, physical education, group work and general duties.

Leadership activities that lead towards facilitating the Ed Start Program included:

- Providing suggestions of an Ed Start program to the Reference Group of Educators for enhancing preservice teacher involvement in schools
- Sending “Expressions of Interest” to various schools in the community for involvement in an extended field experience program
- Ensuring human resources and other resources are available to manage the Ed Start program
- Facilitating the connection of preservice teachers with schools

Outcome and future directions: In 2006, the program was deemed successful by all stakeholders, and the program will be extended into the third year of the Bachelor of Education program in 2007 with further possibilities in 2008. Benchmarking these leadership activities can provide future leaders with way set initiate or move forward on projects.

Middle-Years Workshops

At the end of 2005, the Reference Group noted that there was little or no professional development for teachers, TAFE staff and community members in the Caboolture area. In 2006, a series of Middle-Years workshops were held after school hours on-campus for all interested parties. There were over 280 participants from local schools, the university, TAFE and the community who attended these workshops.

Leadership activities that initiated the Middle-Years workshops included:

- Devising a survey for schools to identify workshop needs in the field of middle-year schooling
- Providing specific directions for university experts to deliver workshops on middle schooling
- Organising staff for securing venues, resources, and invitations for professional developing in middle schooling

Outcome and future directions: Key stakeholders decided these workshops should be an annual event. Hence, workshops are planned for 2007 but will have an Indigenous education theme with presenters from QUT, Education Queensland, local schools and community representatives. Planning is also underway for a 2008 workshop theme. The survey provided a way to benchmark the school community's needs and identify resources to use for addressing such needs.

5th Dimension Program

The Reference Group discussed the essential nature of using Information Communication Technology (ICT) in schools. It was noted that teachers and their students may not have access to the expertise to assist and develop their skills in a variety of ICT forms (e.g., Internet browsing, movie making, editing and creating musical scores). The 5th Dimension program began with primary students, preservice teachers and teachers benefiting from a six-week series of after-school classes held at the Caboolture Campus. This program has continued at the campus over three semesters with newly created ICT movies being distributed to preservice teachers, teachers, students and local schools.

Leadership activities that lead to establishing the 5th Dimension Program included:

- Instigating consultations with faculty staff involved in ICT
- Conducting meetings with nearby school principals seeking their involvement in the 5th Dimension program
- Organising a campus computer laboratory and coordinating activities between schools and university staff

Outcome and future directions: Parents, teaching staff, QUT staff, and community members attended student presentations of ICT works (e.g., claymation, movie making) at the conclusion of each six-week program. As a result of benchmarking the leadership activities in this program, the 5th Dimension program will aim to involve more schools, and initiate professional development for teachers in the area of ICT.

Science in Schools

Science is an area where many primary teachers lack confidence and relevant scientific knowledge. The Reference Group requested suggestions on how science could be promoted in schools to benefit teachers and students. As part of the partnership and collaboration between QUT and primary schools in the area, preservice teachers devised science programs consisting of eight sequential science activities on a topic (e.g., forces, rainforests, chemistry) suitable for teaching in primary classrooms. The preservice teachers implemented their prepared science activities within local schools. Although primary students were involved in the science activities, teachers were also involved and indicated they gained on-the-spot professional development. Teachers who participated in the program also received a CD with copies of the preservice teachers' science units (i.e., various eight lesson activities on particular topics).

Leadership activities that lead to establishing the Science in Schools program included:

- Initiating meetings with principals and executives for involvement in a Science in Schools program
- Connecting a university science educator with schools in the area
- Ensuring resource levels were adequate for facilitating this program

Outcome and future directions: Apart from professional development for teachers and science education for their students, the program was extended to involve other Caboolture cohorts in 2006 and 2007. As enrolment numbers increase at QUT Caboolture then community engagement in science education should also increase. For example, professional development for teachers has been scheduled for astronomy and Earth science at the campus, which also will be used as a benchmark for determining the level of community engagement with the university in the field of science education.

Health and Physical Education in Schools

QUT Caboolture currently has limited sporting facilities and equipment. The Reference Group of Educators was approached to find solutions for teaching Physical Education units to QUT preservice teachers. A principal offered his school's equipment and facilities. All Health and Physical Education units are taught at the participating primary school, which is located across the road from the QUT Caboolture Campus.

Leadership activities that facilitated the Health and Physical Education (HPE) in Schools included:

- Discussing possibilities for running a HPE program with university staff
- Initiating a meeting with a nearby school and linking university staff with the school
- Ensuring HPE resource levels were adequate for facilitating the program

Outcome: Resources were enhanced, for example, QUT students were allowed access to the participating school's large sporting fields. Importantly, preservice teachers were permitted to conduct a HPE program with primary students. In

return, QUT donated \$1000 to up-grade HPE equipment, which was stored at the school for use by both preservice teachers and school students. Furthermore, the preservice teachers now have opportunities to deliver their prepared Health and Physical Education activities to students at the school thus furthering their development and providing the opportunity to link theory with practice. This relationship has been further extended with Caboolture preservice teachers able to access the sporting fields after school hours for social sporting activities. Hence, community and university awareness of these benchmarks can lead towards enhancing these programs.

QUT Start – Indigenous Students

Indigenous education is a priority for universities and communities. As a result of university collaborations with key stakeholders, three Indigenous Year 12 students were involved in a QUT Start program in 2006 at Caboolture campus. This program allowed Indigenous high school students to commence studying in a Bachelor of Education degree by completing one unit per semester in addition to their high school subjects.

Leadership activities that facilitated the QUT Start for Indigenous Students included:

- Facilitating discussions about enhancing Indigenous education with the Reference Group of Educators
- Communicating to university staff about establishing a QUT Start for Indigenous Students program
- Sending “Expressions of interest” to high schools seeking their participation in this program

Outcome and future directions: Three Indigenous students successfully completed a university unit on visual and verbal literacy (unit code: CLB004) in semester one and Indigenous education (unit code: EDB007) in semester two. This statistical benchmark was affirmed by the high school principal who indicated that these students had demonstrated greater engagement at school as a result of being involved in this program. These Year 12 high school students have indicated they will continue their studies at QUT and, although they completed Faculty of Education units, may opt to undertake other courses in other faculties in 2007.

Further discussion and conclusion

University-community engagement has increased over the past three years at Caboolture. This increase can be benchmarked in terms of the types of programs initiated and the numbers of collaborators involved in particular programs. To illustrate, the Science in Schools program had increased from 14 preservice teachers, 4 teachers, and 51 middle-school students in 2006 to 39 preservice teachers, 9 teachers, and 189 middle-school students in 2007. As a lower socio-economic area and with many preservice teachers being the first in their family to attend this regional university, the collaboration with community enhances prospects for all key stakeholders. Yet, successful university-community collaboration requires university leaders to initiate and facilitate programs. It also

requires them to articulate the success of programs in their formative stages (Amen 2001), especially as failure can prevent universities from progressing with community engagement.

University activities associated with community engagement need to be seen as a mission rather than one-off projects with benchmarking as fundamental to the process. There is a distinct need to “develop benchmarks of excellence for campus/community partnerships and civic engagement” (Harkavy 2004, 26); however initial input and processes will probably be greater than outcomes (Garlick 2003). Nevertheless, benchmarking input and processes can provide a way to analyse outcomes as a result of university-community engagement; therefore benchmarking needs to be ongoing to record advancements in practices and for continuous improvement of university-community organisational structures and practices. Benchmarking can be used to determine the growth of partnerships and associated activities over time but must be an ongoing process (Garlick 2003; Holland 2004). Effective leadership is a fundamental ingredient for securing successful practices (Fullan 2001), and can be benchmarked in terms of the types of leadership activities that lead to specific outcomes with future directions. Positive, purposeful, and constructive leadership requires empowering community members in their leadership roles with shared agendas, as can be noted with the Reference Group of Educators.

Sustaining partnerships over time is an issue for various universities (Campus Compact 2000, 5-7 in Holland 2004, 12). Future steps for QUT Caboolture must include consideration of sustaining university-community collaborations (e.g., see Davies & Ellison 2003). These steps comprise “maintaining long-term institutional commitment, and developing meaningful roles for communities that sustain their involvement” (Booth et al. 2003, 4). Increases in university-community engagement, as noted in this paper, can also manifest unforeseen and undiscovered possibilities if fostered and cultivated through commitment and clearly defined leadership practices. Importantly, these partnerships can aid towards fulfilling social and civic responsibilities, and expand prospects for regional students and their communities.

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Books R 4 Babies 2: The ‘Lapsit’ Project

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Abstract

This paper reports on the 2006 ‘Lapsit’ project, an innovative community partnership program with library teams from the Cities of Salisbury and Playford working with staff and students of the University of South Australia (UniSA) early childhood program. Lessons learned during the ‘Lapsit’ project are addressed from the perspectives of student teachers, site staff, parents, children, library partners and university practitioners. ‘Lapsit’ was recognised by a 2006 National Investment in the Early Years award for “outstanding achievement in supporting parents and caregivers to maximise the development and wellbeing of young children”, and a 2007 UniSA Chancellor’s Award for Community Engagement.

What is ‘Lapsit’?

‘Lapsit’ involves parents/carers sitting with children (birth to 5 years) in their laps in a fun group session, interacting with literacy-based activities, including stories, rhymes, songs, finger plays and puppets, packaged in a resource kit for each adult. Parents/carers use a copy of the books and resources in the session to help maintain children’s interest and involvement.

A group leader facilitates and helps everyone to become involved. Ideally the maximum number of adults in a group is eight, but the number of children is sometimes greater with some adults responsible for more than one child. Sessions last approximately 20 – 30 minutes, comfortable for adults’ and young children’s interaction and concentration.

In 2006 ‘Lapsit’ was implemented in the northern suburbs of Adelaide as an informal outreach program in community spaces where parents already feel comfortable.

The University Context

Professional experience, a core component of pre-service teaching degrees, provides opportunities for student teachers to develop workplace skills, relate theory to practice, and form teacher identities (Taffe & Knipe 2005). Student teachers in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) program at UniSA undertake a final year course: Administration, Management, Leadership and Change in Children’s Services 0-8 with objectives using UniSA Graduate Qualities such as “communicates effectively in professional practice and as a member of the community” (UniSA, 2006).

In an earlier 2003 community-based arts project in the same course, a UniSA grant provided opportunities to improve student teachers' engagement with management, leadership and change issues. "Students reported on benefits they gained from participation in a 'real world' situation involving negotiation with key stakeholders in the project and problem solving to meet the client's requirements" (Schiller, Wood & Meiners, 2004, p.305).

Employers now require a wider skill set, including experience with cross-agency work and the ability to engage with a range of communities. An ECE degree enables graduates to work in libraries, community, education and health settings, social work and child protection organisations, the media, and the arts. Previously graduates felt that they had limited opportunities to experience working outside education settings and had limited understanding of the range of potential employment options. 'Lapsit' was seen by university staff as a positive way of supporting student teachers' interest in working in a community partnership.

The Community Context: Northern suburbs of Adelaide

The population of the Cities of Salisbury and Playford (located in northern metropolitan Adelaide) has a low average literacy level. The SEIFA (Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas) index of disadvantage based on 2001 ABS census data such as income, educational levels, unemployment, and job skill levels indicates these are two of the most disadvantaged areas in South Australia.

Playford has the lowest participation rate in University education of all metropolitan councils (City of Playford 2003). Average year three literacy scores are four points below the state average (ie. about one year behind) by age eight years (DECS, 2003 cited in City of Playford, 2005).

Partnership

In 2003 UniSA Northern Adelaide Partnerships (UNAP) was approached by UniSA Library staff to explore the possibility of a community partnership. In 2004 UNAP coordinated meetings between Salisbury, Playford and UniSA Library Services resulting in the Libraries for Learning Partnership – Northern Adelaide Committee. It developed an action plan to improve young children's literacy. Early Childhood Literacy Forums in 2005, open to all agencies and organisations in northern Adelaide, identified a need for resources and programs to support parents/carers in engaging young children with early literacy activities.

The local government libraries won an Australian Government Sustainable Regions grant in 2005 to develop resource kits and interaction strategies to assist families to better support young children's emergent literacy skills within existing community services. UNAP approached UniSA ECE program staff

with a proposal for student teachers to work with the library services to deliver 'Lapsit' to communities in the northern suburbs.

As a result, in January 2006 a partnership including ECE program and library services staff, facilitated by UNAP, was formed to plan, implement and evaluate the 'Lapsit' project. 'Lapsit' was seen by the partners as an ideal opportunity for communities to benefit from the application of final year student teachers' body of knowledge and skills, and for student teachers to undertake authentic community engagement.

'Lapsit' partners and stakeholders are the cities of Salisbury and Playford library Services staff, UniSA ECE academic staff, fourth year ECE students, UNAP staff, the staff, parents/ carers and children linked with 19 sites (eg: community centres, playgroups).across northern Adelaide

Factors associated with emergent literacy in early childhood

Literacy is essential for full participation in society (Winch, Ross Johnston, March, Ljungdahl & Holliday, 2004). Research evidence shows that emergent literacy is built on spoken language development and an accumulation of informal literacy experiences, such as interactive storybook reading (Dickenson & McCabe, 2001). Conversational dialogues between parents/ carers and toddlers are one of the best predictors of early language development, and later literacy (Hart & Risley, 1995). Dialogues about picture books are particularly effective; two- and three-year-olds who have daily reading experiences have more advanced language skills than those who do not (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Provision of children's books to parents with low incomes and levels of education, and guidance about how to support children's literacy development enhances their children's literacy activities (High, La Gasse, Becker, Algren & Gardner, 2000).

'Lapsit' 2006

The 2006 pilot project aimed to develop resources to support an emergent literacy program. 'Lapsit' provided field experience with parents and young children to enhance student teachers' understanding of emergent literacy. Through associated interdisciplinary areas (play, singing, music and movement, media literacy), student teachers also considered multiliteracies and multimodal forms of meaning-making (Kalantzis, Cope, & Fehring, 2002; Kress 2003).

ECE student teachers worked in teams to trial 'Lapsit' kits and facilitate this interactive literacy program, using books, songs, rhymes, finger-plays and puppets. One hundred and eighty families participated in 19 'Lapsit' programs, located in a range of convenient, familiar sites.

Sessions were facilitated by 83 UniSA final year ECE students working with families in groups. Drawing on their early childhood philosophy, body of knowledge and practicum experience, student teachers encouraged the development of parents' understanding of the importance of sharing books with babies and young children, and shared useful strategies to support emergent literacy. For everyone involved, this was a new teaching and learning project requiring extraordinary organisation, cooperation and communication to make this complex community initiative work smoothly.

'Lapsit' 2006 Evaluation Methods

Student teachers, site staff and parents evaluated 'Lapsit' experiences and kits in 2006. Student teachers evaluated the pilot project and resource kits, reported on parent and site staff feedback, identified issues encountered, and made recommendations to enhance 'Lapsit'. Recommendations were presented to an audience of peers and interested professionals, and included in the summative evaluation report to the funding body.

Student teachers interviewed site staff using six questions about successes and challenges of 'Lapsit', logistical issues that the pilot presented, and an indication of whether the community sites had volunteers or staff interested in receiving 'Lapsit' training in 2007.

Parents' feedback about 'Lapsit' was gathered by student teachers using informal conversations, observations and student-designed evaluation forms. Site staff also provided feedback from parents to the student teachers.

'Lapsit' kits were evaluated using a questionnaire completed by student teachers and submitted electronically or as a hard copy to the library services team. Results were used to modify 'Lapsit' kits.

Outcomes, impacts and benefits of 'Lapsit' 2006

Evaluation indicated many positive outcomes.

Student teachers' evaluative comments for the 'Lapsit' pilot included:

- "It gets students back in the real world!";
- "Students need more real life experiences to build on their knowledge"; and
- "It helps them put theory into practice".

Student teachers reported their need to work effectively in teams and build personal resources for working in community settings. Rodd (2006) commented that tertiary students need to critically reflect on what it means to be a professional in preparation for employment, and student teachers

thought the project provided opportunities to improve their engagement with ECE issues as managers of change in the community.

Revitalising university teaching, the project enhanced the roles of tertiary teachers and students as active constructors of new knowledge (Maher & Tetrault, 1999). Student teachers responded to community need (Ramsey 2000) and feedback highlighted the benefits of applying their body of knowledge in real life work contexts as participation involved negotiation with key stakeholders, and problem-solving to meet community requirements. Working with the library services, they contributed in a leadership capacity (Jensen & Kiley ,2000; Neugebauer, 2002) to the role libraries are playing in supporting the development and sustainability of healthy communities (State Library of Victoria, 2005).

Site staff supported and enjoyed 'Lapsit' and indicated it provided more structure to the playgroups, as parents became used to sitting and interacting with children. Many playgroups now have regular story-time and singing components. Staff stated that the 'Lapsit' promoted awareness of local library services and the need for literacy activities to be part of parents' everyday routine. They also supported 'Lapsit's' continuation and indicated their intention to participate in future programs with ECE student teachers.

Parents were also very positive. They liked the group activities, saw clear benefits for children and themselves, and had become more aware of how important it is for their child's development to undertake simple literacy activities such as sharing a book or singing nursery rhymes. They said 'Lapsit' helped prepare children to participate in a focussed group social environment. 'Lapsit' had increased their awareness of public libraries with an excellent range of family resources, and renewed their interest in books. As a result, the whole family was reading more books at home. Even children commented appreciatively on 'Lapsit'; a 3-year-old declared: "I want to live here every day!"

'Books R4 Babies 2' 2007

A Library staff competition for a 2007 'Lapsit' project title resulted in the title 'Books R 4 Babies 2', and a new mentoring model is being implemented.

Student teachers take a mentoring role working with volunteers (recruited by the site staff) who finally take over running 'Books R4 Babies 2' thus ensuring sustainability. Student mentors provide constructive feedback to volunteers, with an opportunity to talk about sessions.

Written mentoring guidance for student teachers undertaking the 2007 program was developed by library staff and university lecturers. Volunteers observe how the 'Lapsit' session is run and then take a role in delivering part of the program. Student teachers involve the volunteers in planning the sessions to build confidence, discuss how to involve reluctant adults and

outline information the volunteers should share with parents. Eventually they run a session with student teacher support.

Student teachers are introduced to Rodd's (2006, p.172) suggestions that "successful mentors display empathy and understanding, an interest in lifelong learning and professional development, sophisticated interpersonal skills, cultural sensitivity, understanding of the role of the mentor and considerable early childhood expertise". They are encouraged to develop empathy (Goleman, 2000/2001) and reflect on the needs of parent volunteers from the local community. Rodd (p.173) suggests that the "intended outcome of mentoring is not to control or impose ones' ideas, values and behaviours on another, but rather to encourage mentees to explore possibilities and collaborate in an array of decision-making opportunities".

Student teachers will collect feedback from parents/caregivers, volunteer facilitators and site staff, then present their evaluations to an audience of peers and interested professionals.

Conclusion

The 'Lapsit' program provides opportunities to model emergent literacy strategies supported by library services. Involvement of UniSA student teachers ensures sustainability of 'Lapsit' in many sites. Anecdotal evidence already suggests that employers are impressed with 2006 ECE finishers' community experiences.

ECE program staff value this unique experience for student teachers which has prompted thinking about further development of UniSA's ECE program in engaging families and the community. Finally, stronger links with community sites and staff across northern Adelaide will create a basis for future development of UniSA's ECE degree.

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Career development in nursing: An integrated and longitudinal community engagement program

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Abstract:

University-community engagement is critical in preparing the health workforce. Through integrated and strategic community engagement programs, the career development of nurses can be better designed and supported. This paper reports on three initiatives that integrate teaching and learning and community engagement at specific critical milestones in the continuum of career development for nurses.

First, in partnership with the State Government, an Early Career Development Program that cultivates and measures Year 10 secondary school students' interest in nursing as a career option was created. An Aboriginal Student Early Career Development Program is also being established. Second, a series of formalised longitudinal clinical partnership programs across sectors was established and nurtured to offer undergraduate nursing students the opportunity to undertake all their practical placements in one setting. Third, a linked partnership with the State Government allows students at the mid-point in their three year undergraduate course, to undertake an additional module and obtain eligibility to register as an Enrolled Nurse. All initiatives are aimed to help bridge the transition from student to work-ready graduates and nurse leaders.

Introduction

Career development is a public as well as a private good. In other words, it is of value not only to the individuals who experience it, but also to society as a whole.

(Watts 2006, p. 10)

The public policy goals for the Australian Council for Educational Research and thus the strategic parameters guiding the National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling fall into three main categories: learning goals; labour market goals; and social equity goals (Watts 2006). In practice this means aiming for improved efficiency of the education and training system so it better reflects market needs and thus supply and demand, as well as individual student capacities and interests. As well, the focus is on equal opportunities and social inclusion. All in all, the career development agenda is closely aligned to the higher education sector's community engagement vision. Lifelong learning and sustained employability as a result of a

partnership between education sectors and industry are shared aims of these two 'policy' positions/strategic directions.

This case study aims to demonstrate that effective community engagement at the earliest point, and as the integral component of a planned and structured approach to career development of nurses, is the key to ensuring reciprocal learning and a heightened understanding of social contexts and the diverse roles for nurses in the broader community.

Career development programs

Oxley (2000, n.d.) suggests globalisation has had a critical impact on the process of career development and that the concept of a career is an evolving one. Traditionally a career implied a clearly delineated pathway within a particular field or organisation, and it often inferred professional employment, such as working as a lawyer, doctor or nurse, rather than simply being employed in a work place. Now the 'boundary-less career' is considered the more contemporary version of a career and is described as the movement of an individual laterally, either within an organisation, or from organisation to organisation and/or occupation to occupation, accompanied by ongoing, lifelong learning (Kelly 2004). The concept of 'a portfolio career' is often used to encapsulate the projected employment trajectory of being employed by a number of organisations and including potential self-employment thus signalling the end of 'lifetime' employment (Bridges 1995).

Traditionally the concept of career development leaned towards how an individual's career unfolded or developed. Two recent more useful conceptualisations are preferred. Noe (2002) describes career development as a process and a progression through stages which are characterised by a different set of developmental tasks. Watts, citing Benzanson, suggests "Career development is the lifelong process of managing learning and work in order to live and work with purpose and create a quality life" (Watts 2004, p. 4).

Working with school leavers in any form of career preparation needs to take into account the many influences at play; community, parents, peers and teachers, life experiences and the media will all impact on their understanding of the world of work and their post-school options. School leavers report they need timely and accurate information to assist in their career planning (Walker 2006). In the context of school leavers considering nursing as a career, it is unclear how much influence television shows such as *ER*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *The Practice* and *House MD* have had, but on the evidence available it is suggested there is certainly some impact (Bosco, Ward & Styles 2001). This is not to diminish the influence of students' own childhood experiences with the healthcare system, what their parents do/did for a career, and their contact with nurses in the past. A 2005 study of Year 10, 11 and 12 secondary school students from New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia supports 'reality checking' in terms of career development, both in the sense of aligning workforce patterns and aspirations, as well as looking at

new strategies to better prepare young people for the world of work and its realities (Walker 2006).

In the higher education sector, careers education for students is an important function for all universities. This can take many forms, from student support, career services, online career education and mentoring programs to work based and service learning (Vickers, Harris & McCarthy 2004; Mackie and Thomas 2005). Langworthy and Turner (2003) suggest that work based learning is not only valuable in terms of preparing students for work (including obtaining employment, academic achievement, progression and retention and improved career progression), but also that such models have a broader function in terms of developing civic responsibility.

New models of university-community engagement acknowledge that the learning institution is doing more than prepare students for employment: it is also preparing them to be fully functioning members of the community.

(Langworthy & Turner 2005, p. 1)

Since 1906, institutions of learning in the United States (US) have been implementing cooperative education or work-based learning schemes in an effort to prepare students for the world of employment (Sovilla in Langworthy 2004, p. 3). In the US, there is now a national coalition of more than 1000 college and university presidents (Campus Compact) that represent some 5 million students and is dedicated to promoting community service, civic engagement, and service learning in higher education. Service learning is a particular form of experiential education that incorporates community service. According to the International Partnership for Service Learning, "service-learning responds to students' desire to be in the world, learning from experience as well as classes, and to put their education to use for the good of others." That is, service learning involves students in community activities that complement their classroom studies (Bringle & Hatcher 1995).

Service learning is not a well known term outside the United States, even though the concept and practice of establishing and developing partnerships between academic institutions and community agencies to progress a university's community service mission is not uncommon, including for nursing (Rochester et al. 2006). However, what is innovative in the Australian context is that service learning presents a structured approach to supporting community service learning as an integral element in undergraduate education.

Not surprisingly, service learning for university nursing students has been tested in the US and Nokes et al. (2005, p. 65) suggest that:

To prepare for community engagement and partnerships with diverse communities, nursing students must understand the principles of service-learning, as well as the essential skills needed to work within a democracy.

New initiatives

Partnerships between university, industry and the community are dynamic characteristics of Australian universities ... and are essential in some of the professional programs taught in them.

(Camilleri & Humphries 2005, p. 26)

This paper reports on a case study of three integrated initiatives at Edith Cowan University (see Figure 1), highlighting that effective community engagement at the earliest point, and as the integral component of a planned and structured approach to career development of nurses, are the keys to ensuring reciprocal learning and a heightened understanding of social contexts and the diverse roles for nurses in the community. Some background to the curriculum context for these initiatives is presented prior to describing the new initiatives.

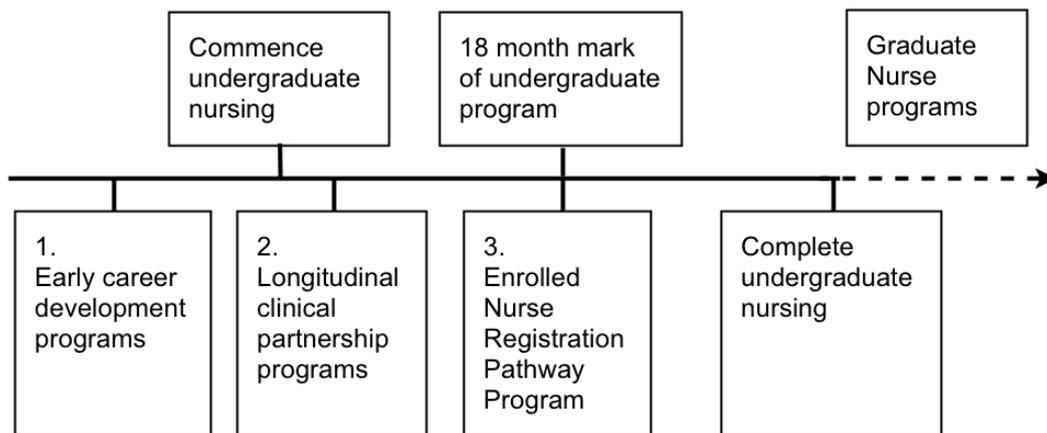


Figure 1: Continuum of integrated community engagement in nursing education

Embedding community engagement into curricula development and teaching and learning

A common thread of this integrated approach has been the review of the undergraduate nursing program during 2006-07, with strong stewardship from industry and the professional bodies. The revised course is founded on problem based learning, transformative education and solution focussed teaching approaches (Boud & Feletti 1997; McAllister 2005; McAllister et al. 2006), as well as the following ideological framework that emphasises the scholarship of engagement.

The course is underpinned by a commitment to a collaborative, multidisciplinary approach and connecting theory and evidence-based practice. The educational journey we offer our students follows a health and wellness to illness continuum across the lifespan and

prepares them for practice in a variety of settings. Teaching and learning are integrated with community engagement so there is reciprocal learning. Our graduates have a heightened understanding of social contexts and the diverse roles for professional nurses in the broader community.

(Edith Cowan University 2006)

1.0 The Early Career Development Program for Nursing – HOT (Year 10 Hands on Training for nursing)

The School of Nursing, Midwifery and Postgraduate Medicine (the School) at Edith Cowan University has been funded by the State Government to provide an educational and clinical work experience program for students wishing to take up nursing as a career. The program aims to form relationships with young people and their schools at an early point in the development of their careers to increase enthusiasm for nursing, reduce pressures on hospitals to create work experience placements, increase student satisfaction with work experience, and enable easier access for students who wish to pursue nursing as a university course and career.

In July 2007, a pilot program will see 32 Year 10 students undertake a one-week placement in the School and participate in a structured program that promotes the diversity of nursing. The students are selected for the program on the basis of a short essay on why they want to be a nurse and come from a range of schools.

The program includes healthcare simulation (using computerised full human patient simulators), scenario based training (an approach to learning where students apply their knowledge in realistic, simulated operational environments), as well as site visits (hospitals and community health promotion site visits). The participating students are encouraged to have an ongoing relationship with the School, for example as guest speakers at the annual career night and nursing career expos. It is planned to extend the program Statewide as well as adapting the program to other health careers within the Western Australia healthcare system.

1.1 Aboriginal Student Early Career Development Program

A parallel program, again supported by the State Government, that provides dedicated mentorship opportunities for Indigenous young people, is also being established. Funding and in-kind contributions have been obtained to explore the development, implementation and funding of effective strategies to recruit and retain Indigenous students in nursing as well as other health professions. Aboriginal community controlled organisations have committed to the program.

2.0 Public/private clinical partnership programs

Formalised longitudinal partnerships across the State now form a significant program offered to Edith Cowan University's undergraduate nursing students.

The partnerships span public, private and non government sectors, including: the Statewide Western Australia Country Health Services; all the major tertiary hospitals; a number of secondary hospitals; local government authorities; the largest private hospital group; and other private corporations, such as Pilbara Iron (a member of the Rio Tinto Group that operates and maintains mining, rail and export facilities in the north-west of Western Australia). Partner agencies are increasingly contributing funding for the partnership programs, as well as in kind support.

These partnerships enable students to do their practical rotations within one setting, that is, a hospital or region. Early reports from students and partners alike, reveal that these clinical partnership programs are creating continuity, personal and local identification, ownership, a sense of belonging, consistent learning environments and increased opportunities for students to have a role in identifying and responding to health issues in local or region-wide communities.

Given nursing is predominantly a practice-based profession, the importance of a clinical learning environment that offers reliability and consistency, maximum learning opportunities, varied and appropriately demanding learning situations, and effective theory-practice amalgamation has to be paramount. "Some students say that clinical placements change the way they view the world" (Levett-Jones & Bourgeois 2007, p. 3). Andrews et al. 2005 suggest that greater collaboration between higher education institutions and health care providers is important to ensure supportive clinical environments. The literature also shows that partnerships between universities and hospitals can assist to make training more rational, improve quality of education outcomes and link practice with education (O'Neill & Kraul 2004). A key finding of nursing curriculum reviews funded by the Australian University Teaching Committee in 2001 found that quality clinical education is profoundly affected by the state of the partnership between the health service and the university (Clare et al. 2003).

Preliminary anecdotal feedback from participants indicates these partnerships are delivering shared benefits for the participating partners and the students. Partners state they appreciate the opportunity to work with a university in training their current and future workforce, and students appreciate the value of a consistent learning environment. Also, in the rural programs, students report they believe they can have a key collaborative role in establishing health promotion projects that are responsive to health issues in their local communities. For the university, the partnerships provide a step in the right direction in solving one of the key problems that all universities face; that of gaining an adequate number and breadth of clinical placements in appropriate organisations.

3.0 The ECU Enrolled Nurse Registration Pathway Program

In 2007, the School is piloting the Enrolled Nurse Registration Pathway Program. This jointly funded program, a partnership between the university

and the Department of Health Western Australia and in collaboration with the Nurses Board of Western Australia, offers a pathway for select students enrolled in the undergraduate nursing course.

The purpose of this program is to enable undergraduate students to gain registration as Enrolled Nurses with the Nurses Board of Western Australia, thus providing the new opportunity of being employed in their profession for the final half of their course. Traditionally, undergraduate nursing programs have a high percentages of mature age students and very high percentages of students in paid employment. For instance over one third may work in excess of 20 hours per week. This program affords the opportunity of this paid employment being complementary to developing clinical competencies and integrating with scholarship. The program consists of two modules: one a theoretical module comprising issues relating to professional practice and the scope of enrolled nursing practice; and the other an intensive, 'face-to-face' course over a two week period. Hence students can opt to join a clinical partnership with a hospital, health care institution or health region and then obtain paid employment as a Registered Enrolled Nurse for the remainder of their course. It is predicted that some students will choose this pathway, particularly if a long term career goal is to become a Graduate Nurse in a particular setting; a longitudinal study of this continuum is now briefly described.

Evaluation

A longitudinal study will be implemented to determine what impact the mix of programs outlined in this paper have on the following:

- Recruitment of student nurses;
- The transition from secondary school to university;
- Retention of Registered Nurses;
- Factors that assist nurses to pursue graduate study programs;
- Recruitment and retention of Aboriginal nurses; and
- Transition from university-based study to practice.

As such, the study aims to examine:

- What effect (if any) the early career development programs have had on secondary school students' and Indigenous young people's commitment to study nursing;
- Whether the early career development programs have influenced the participants' decisions to study nursing in a higher education institution, and their preferred field of study/practice in the longer term;
- What effect (if any) the early career development programs have on the student's choice to study nursing through Edith Cowan University;
- Whether the grouping of the early career development programs, clinical partnership programs and the Enrolled Nurse Registration Pathway Program, as a combined offering, resulted in the realisation of career goals, for example, higher rates of success for Edith Cowan University graduates in their Graduate Nurse program of choice.

It is planned to conduct a longitudinal cohort study for each of the three initiatives, via annual self-completion questionnaires to all students agreeing to take part in the evaluation, along with course performance data for students enrolled at the university.

Secondary school students entering the early career development programs (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal; n=50 maximum in the first year and n=100+ in each year thereafter) in 2007 – 2009 will be followed until 2012 when the 2007 cohort will complete their third year of university and the 2009 cohort will complete their first year of university.

The secondary school students would provide immediate feedback on the week long program using the usual process measures evaluating satisfaction with content and delivery, as well as the extent to which their interest in nursing as a career was increased or decreased – and why. It is just as important to identify individuals who may otherwise be disillusioned soon after enrolling at a university as increasing others' interest in then profession. The cohort would then receive newsletters and invitations to maintain contact until the end of Year 12. All students' career choices would then be established (and why), including the proportion who applied to Edith Cowan University for nursing. The extent to which the year 10 intervention influenced their interest in nursing and their choice of institution would be measured.

University students entering the clinical partnership programs in 2008 – 2010 and hence the Enrolled Nurse Registration Pathway Program in 2009 – 2011 will be followed until 2012 when the 2008 cohort will have completed two years of the profession and/or post graduate studies, and the 2010 cohort will have completed the third year of their university course. The 2010 cohort will include the first cohort of secondary school students from the early career development programs. The progress of this cohort through their university course (pass rate; grades; satisfaction with courses; enrolment in the clinical partnership programs and the Enrolled Nurse Registration Pathway Program; etc) would be compared with all other students, controlling for university entrance score and other relevant covariates.

The evaluation of the clinical partnership programs and Enrolled Nurse Registration Pathway Program will be specific to participation in those programs (i.e., feedback on specific components) as well as some comparisons with students who do not participate in these programs (again controlling for confounders). For example, course satisfaction, variety of experiences, perceived relationship with partner organisations, and community attachment will be compared for participating and non-participating students. Relative entry to graduate courses and transition to the first years of nursing will also be measured and compared for program participants and non-participants (such as, but not limited to, ease of transition and types of difficulties encountered). The questionnaire data will be supplemented by focus groups and individual interviews to follow up issues identified in the questionnaires.

Partners will be asked to complete a self-completion questionnaire on an annual basis. Approximately ten individuals in each partner site will be involved. The questionnaire will measure overall satisfaction with the programs as well as probe such things as specific benefits gained by the partners, specific problems, and areas for improvement. Ten unstructured interviews will be conducted prior to development of the year one questionnaire. Such unstructured interviews will be conducted each year to ensure that any emerging issues are included in the questionnaire distributed to all partner personnel. The core questions will of course remain unchanged to allow year-by-year comparisons. The initial ten unstructured questionnaires will be used to develop measures of the key outcomes sought by partners in conjunction with the partners.

Conclusion

For the initiatives outlined in this paper, the university-community engagement is promptly delivering shared resources (including a steady emergence of ongoing funding from partners), commitments to sustained viability (through formalised agreements such as memoranda of understanding), removed organisational barriers and reduced 'red tape', and provided immediate enhanced career opportunities for the university's students. Our partnership benefits include an emphasis on their multiplier effects. That is, the partnerships in themselves have created or built on existing synergies, including stimulating additional ventures for both partners and other organisations. Burgin et al. (2005) suggests this multiplier effect is, in itself, evidence of a thriving and sustainable partnership. It is expected that further teaching and learning and research outcomes will continue to emanate from the approach.

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Community engagement enhancing creative arts education in a Primary School setting

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Abstract:

Community engagement has been used for many years to enhance and strengthen teacher education courses, preparing student teachers with real life learning experiences as they work with community groups in mutually beneficial projects. Community engagement in this context was used to give future teacher-education students **experiences** to socialise them into the culture of the primary school and also give them the opportunity to gain first-hand experience of working in a primary school. The projects also aimed at helping them gain **knowledge** about teaching strategies, pedagogy, behaviour management and subject content within the creative arts. Throughout the unit, students were asked to **reflect** on various facets of being a teacher, through observation, research, practical experiences and talking with the teachers and children. This paper seeks to answer the question, 'What changes can occur through university students being involved in community engagement within the primary school situation?' To answer this question, it examines a community engagement project that involved 13 undergraduate creative arts students who were placed in a primary school to work on a variety of arts-based projects with a range of teachers and classes. The outcomes suggest that adding the fourth component of **change** to McCarthy's (2003) three basic, interdependent components of service learning of experience, reflection and knowledge could be considered.

Introduction

Community Engagement, or academic service learning, seeks to link university students with community agencies to provide mutually beneficial experiences, knowledge and outcomes, guided by reflection, (McCarthy, 2003). As the university students are involved in community engagement service projects within the agency, they are encouraged by their lecturers to reflect on their own learning as part of their university course. McCarthy defines academic service learning, or community engagement, as 'linking academic instruction with community service, guided by reflection' (McCarthy, 2003) and it is this ongoing reflection that sets service learning outside the parameters of work experience or volunteering in the community.

As students engage in service learning or community engagement, they develop their skills in personal reflection, as well as their self-confidence, sense of civic responsibility and their interpersonal skills. Service learning can be successfully integrated into course content in a variety of curriculum areas and so enhance their understanding, practice and skills in these subjects, (Wells & Grabert, 2004). Involvement in service learning can also be used to help students planning to be teachers increase their own language and

communication skills as they interact with children from diverse cultures and develop their understanding of the different backgrounds from which these children come (Meaney, Bohler, Scott & Hernandez, 2005).

McCarthy's model (2003) is based on the thesis that students gain both positive and negative experiences through their involvement with community agencies, each other, their lecturer and the larger community. They bring their knowledge from past experiences to their community engagements, and also gain knowledge from their participation in, and the processes of, the service learning experiences. As they reflect on these, they actively engage with their thoughts, feelings and actions and through this, put their experiences into context, making connections with their knowledge and their experiences. This case study seeks to suggest a fourth aspect of community engagement, that of change. As students reflect on their experiences and knowledge, this often gives them the impetus to bring about change in their personal and professional lives, as well as within the community agency in which they are working. McCarthy (2003) sums up the pedagogical approach of community service by stating that the basic, interdependent components of service learning are experience, reflection and knowledge. This project used these three aspects as foundational tools to consolidate and enhance the students' learning.

Aims of the *MMADD about the arts* project

This paper seeks to answer the question, *What changes can occur through university students being involved in community engagement within the school situation?* To answer this question, it examines an Academic Service Learning project that involved 13 undergraduate students who were placed in a primary school to work on a variety of creative arts-based projects.

Community engagement in this context aimed to give the future teacher-education students **experiences** to socialise them into the culture of the primary school and also give them the opportunity to gain first-hand experience of working in a primary school, (Swick, 2001). The projects also aimed at helping them gain **knowledge** about teaching strategies, pedagogy, behaviour management and subject content within the creative arts (Dudderar, D. & Stover, L., 2003) and throughout the unit, students were asked to **reflect** on various facets of being a teacher, through observation, research, practical experiences and talking with the teachers and children, (McCarthy, 2003).

Context and Participants

The school

The school involved in this service learning project is located in a low socio-economic area with 87% of children coming from a non-English speaking (mainly Arabic) background. Many of the teachers lacked confidence in implementing a creative arts program.

The students

The thirteen students who undertook the creative arts community service unit had a strong creative arts background and were enrolled in undergraduate degrees, planning to enrol on the Bachelor of Teaching postgraduate course on graduation.

Methodology

As part of a case study approach the students completed surveys, reflections and assignments, in order to ascertain what learning was occurring within the *MMADD about the Arts* project (M = Music, M = Media, A = Art, D = Dance, D = Drama), and the students took the role of participant-observers. In the introductory on-campus session, students completed a qualitative survey in which they indicated their experiences in teaching and in the arts and their anticipated outcomes from the unit.

During the 14 weeks of semester, the students completed at least 80 hours in the school setting, and were involved in one or more Creative Arts projects. They regularly wrote a reflection to document their learning in relation to the context of their projects, the learning experiences in which they were involved, the classroom management strategies they were observing and practising, and their evaluation of the learning within the project for themselves, the children, the staff and the local community. A final assignment summarised and analysed these reflections and allowed them to develop a synthesis of their learning throughout the unit as they articulated their own philosophy of teaching.

MMADD about the Arts: Experiences

McCarthy (2003) states that the basic, interdependent components of service learning are experience, reflection and knowledge. Within the *MMADD about the arts* strand of the *Learning Through Community Service* unit, the students initially met with their lecturer for three days of intensive on-campus sessions that included lectures on the concept of community service and experiential workshops relating to creative arts education. A questionnaire completed by the students indicated their experience and interest in the arts and a survey completed by the teachers from the school indicated in what areas they would like the students to work throughout the school. From this information, three main projects were developed and implemented by the university students, within the school community. These projects included working with teachers in their classrooms in one or more of the art forms, organising an art exhibition in the local community, and running arts workshops in an After School Arts Program.

MMADD about the Arts: Knowledge

As part of the introductory on-campus sessions, the students learned through their set text, lectures and workshops about the underlying concepts of service learning as well as the basic elements of each of the creative art forms. They also learned about integrating the arts through being involved in the implementation of practical thematic creative arts units during the workshops and interacting with the principal and lecturer around a variety of discussion topics.

MMADD about the Arts: Reflections

Reflection is an important part of community service and therefore the students were required to reflect in various aspects of their learning experiences within the school community throughout their time there. These reflections were each focussed on a different aspect of learning to teach.

As a culminating synthesis of their learning experiences, students were required to reflect on the following, based on their previous reflections:

- *Why do you want to be a teacher?*
- *What is a good teacher?*
- *What is your understanding of the process of learning?*

Results

Throughout this *Learning Through Community Service* project, service learning was used to enhance and provide a strong foundation for the students' future involvement in teacher education courses, as well as providing authentic learning experiences for the students and enhancing the community life of the school, (Swick, 2001). It allowed students to be involved in the active engagement of the learning process and to interact with other people for authentic purposes in order to achieve definable goals as they developed skills and knowledge not necessarily developed in the normal teacher education lecture/tutorial setting, (Dudderar, D. & Stover, L., 2003). The unit emphasised the three important foundations of service learning, that of experience, reflection and knowledge (McCarthy, 2003) and these were key themes arising from the students' analysis of the outcomes of the unit. All involved with the project felt that it was a mutually valuable and significant learning experience for children, student teachers and classroom teachers alike, and brought about both personal and professional changes.

Changes in students

Service learning can be used to enhance and strengthen teacher education courses, to provide authentic learning experiences for the students, (Swick, 2001). As part of their reflections, students reflected on the changes in their personal and professional life as a result of participating in this unit. Part of this involved reflecting on their development and learning throughout the unit, which included a recognition of the personal and professional changes they had made as a result of this experience. They also indicated that they had learned much about teaching, their confidence and competence had

increased significantly, they had confirmation that they wanted to be teachers and they learned about the importance of teaching the creative arts.

Change in classroom practice for the teachers

Academic Service Learning allows students to be involved in the active engagement of the learning process and to interact with other people for authentic purposes (Dudderar, D. & Stover, L., 2003). Teachers were also asked about the benefits they received by having the university students actively engaging with them in their classes; these included that they changed their attitude and practices in relation to the arts, that they had new ideas and inspiration about teaching the creative arts, and that they appreciated having other adults in the classroom so they could work individually with children.

Changes in children's experiences and development

The arts enhance children's academic achievement, develop respect for themselves and others, give them training for life and provide them with valid ways for self-expression, (Russell-Bowie, 2006). Through observation and consultation, the students and teachers noted that many children had changed and developed academically, emotionally, socially and artistically as a result of being involved in the creative arts learning experiences provided by the program. Students noted that some of the children had changed and developed in the areas of academic achievement, respect for self and others, training for life and self-expression.

Outcomes for the school community

Community engagement can link university students with their local community, combining service and learning to meet the mutually defined needs of each of the parties involved (Schaffer, Mather & Gustafson, 2000). The students, parents and staff also commented on the benefits received by the school community from the university students being involved in the creative arts community service project.

Challenges and changes

Although there were very few negative comments about the community engagement projects, from the students, teachers or children, there were some challenges noted by the lecturer involved. Firstly there had been one instance of a personality clash between a small group of students and a teacher. Secondly, timetabling commitments meant it was impossible for the lecturer to meet with all students together apart from the initial on-campus workshops. Thirdly, it was a challenge for some students to see their commitment to the school, teachers and children as MORE than just completing a university subject, and finally, there were almost too many students for the one small school. In response to these challenges, the next time the unit was offered, changes which addressed these issues were implemented.

Conclusion

The Creative Arts Community Engagement project allowed students to be involved in the active engagement of the learning process and to interact with

other people for authentic purposes in order to achieve definable goals, (Dudderar, D. & Stover, L., 2003). As the project came to an end, the students realised how much they had changed, both personally and professionally, in that they had increased their confidence and competence as neophyte teachers, they had learned much about teaching and creative arts education and they were confirmed in their choice of career. The school community also benefited from the project as children were developing skills, knowledge, attitudes and understandings through being involved in the arts and working with the university students and teachers had extra assistance in their classrooms and learned new ideas in relation to implementing the creative arts.

These outcomes suggest that adding the fourth component of **change** to McCarthy's (2003) three basic, interdependent components of service learning of experience, reflection and knowledge should be considered. As students, teachers and children were involved in the service learning projects, clear evidence of change was perceived in each of the participant groups.

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Developing University-Community partnerships to support African refugees in Greater Western Sydney

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Abstract:

The University of Western Sydney (UWS) Regional Council has placed support for African humanitarian refugees and recent immigrants high on the University's engagement agenda. This paper discusses how UWS is responding to this imperative, how our interactions with refugee groups are being structured, and how these interactions and negotiations are shaping academic service learning programs and other activities. The paper also outlines an emerging program of research that aims to identify strategies that will be effective in a range of areas, including education and literacy development, counseling and social support, and youth transitions. Substantial numbers of African refugees have entered Australia over the past three years, many of them from the Sudan. After 21 years of civil war which has destroyed their infrastructure, most Sudanese families entering Australia have lived for extended periods in refugee camps. Their educational and social needs are extreme but they hold high hopes for a better future. A range of well-tested strategies are available to support young people and in terms of literacy development, engagement with school, counseling and stress management, and transition to work or further study. However, many of these strategies make assumptions about levels of cultural familiarity and contextual knowledge that cannot be assumed to apply to recent African immigrants. UWS is at the beginning of a three-year program of research and development aimed at identifying what is needed, developing service learning programs that will deliver effective and sustainable support, and offering strategic assistance to other agencies and groups who are active in this field.

The UWS Regional Council has placed support for African humanitarian refugees high on the University's engagement agenda. This paper outlines a program of engagement through academic service learning and research, being developed by UWS, in partnership with government agencies, community organizations, and members of the African community. The program aims to identify strategies that will be effective in a range of areas, including education and literacy development, counseling and social support, and youth transitions.

The first section of this paper outlines the nature and scope of the issues we are addressing: who the refugees are, where they are from, and what they have endured. It also discusses the nature of the resources and services are currently available to assist in the settlement and acculturation of refugees in

Australia, and outlines some of the complexities and unmet challenges that service providers and members of the African community are identifying. In the second section, we indicate how UWS is responding to these challenges, how our interactions with refugee groups are being structured, and how these interactions and negotiations are shaping academic service learning programs and other forms of engagement.

1. Refugees and recent immigrants from Africa: the scope of the challenge

Over the past decade Australia has provided full support for substantial numbers of refugees who have come from several African countries, including Eritrea, Somalia, Sierra Leone, and the Sudan. Specifically, the Australian government provides support for newly arrived humanitarian entrants through its Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS). Services under this program include case coordination, on arrival reception and assistance, accommodation services, and short term torture and trauma counselling services. Volunteer groups work with service providers contracted to the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA), to support entrants, and to assist them in settling into the local community (Fact Sheet 60, www.dimia.gov.au).

The Sudanese are currently the fastest growing immigrant group in Australia. They were Australia's priority refugee group in 2004 and 2005. It has been estimated that in 2006, there were 4000 Sudanese refugees in Sydney, mostly concentrated in Auburn and Blacktown. In 2004-2005 Australia took about 70 per cent of its Humanitarian Program migrants from Africa, and in the past 10 years has granted 14 442 humanitarian visas to Sudanese people. Almost 10 000 of these were granted in the past two years (DIMA 2005, p10). The offshore humanitarian visa granted to most of the Australian Sudanese population entitles the holder to permanent residency, onshore family reunification and eventually, citizenship.

After 21 years of civil war which has destroyed their infrastructure, many people from southern Sudan have permanently left their home country. Crossing the border to the north, they may enter refugee camps in Egypt, while those who escape to the south may live for five to ten years in large refugee camps in Kenya before being granted visas to enter Australia. While living in southern Sudan, many of the young people in refugee camps received little schooling. Some teenage refugees arriving in Australia have never been in school, have never sat in a desk, have never held a pencil or a book. Many children have lived through the death of relatives, and have experienced severe brutality.

Like all immigrant children, they face the challenge of learning English as well as acquiring an understanding of how Australian schools work as social institutions: i.e., how to behave in formal and informal settings, what the rules are, and how to relate to peers and teachers. Unlike most other immigrant groups, however, refugees from the Sudan often cannot read and write in their own language. As equatorial Africans, their language may be Dinka or Nuer, or one of a dozen

lesser known languages. However, the Khartoum government has declared that the official national language is Arabic. School texts and school instruction (in the public schools) are, therefore, in Arabic, and as a result, many refugee children from the Sudan cannot read in their mother tongue. This, combined with the lack of regular schooling provision in refugee camps, means that most refugees from Africa arrive in Australia without the literacy skills that they need in order to manage the requirements of the standard curriculum.

Some years ago, the Commonwealth government established the *New Arrivals Program* to meet the initial needs of immigrant children. Its prime purpose is to provide English as a Second Language (ESL) support to enable children to access the curriculum as quickly as possible. Newly arrived students from language backgrounds other than English who meet eligibility criteria are able to access free intensive ESL tuition for between six to twelve months, in schools that have an Intensive English Centre (IEC), or in IEC's that function as 'stand alone' units. However, as the recent report of the Community Relations Commission of NSW (2006) noted, "IEC centres are regularly full and unable to take on more students, with alternate arrangements having to be made" (2006, p. 94).

Once students have completed 6 or 12 months in an IEC, they remain eligible for additional ESL support. In its submission to the Community Relations Commission, the NSW Teachers Federation pointed out that while ESL teaching staff increased by 20 percent between 1983 and 1993, since 1993 there has been no increase in full-time ESL staff, despite an exponential increase over this time in the need for ESL programs (Community Relations Commission, 2006). A recent motion in the NSW parliament, in response to recommendations of the Vinson inquiry, to employ 100 more ESL teachers, was voted down. The Community Relations Commission has argued that the \$5039 per student granted by the Australian government for ESL support under the New Arrivals Program is grossly inadequate. It is estimated that to be effective, the financial outlays on ESL programs should be *three times* the amount provided by through federal sources (Community Relations Commission, 2006, p. 94). While the political challenge of advocating significant increases in funding should not be ignored, schools and philanthropic organizations are being asked to fill the gap, meeting the immediate needs refugee students for tutorial support, particularly during the critical months after they have been discharged from an Intensive English Centre and placed in mainstream classes.

Students with limited English language facility face significant problems in the construction of new social identities. Improved linguistic skills and increased acculturation to the school as a social setting are essential for teenagers who are attempting to understand how to negotiate their transitions from school to adult life, and who are seeking to explore the options available in terms of work or further study. Initial consultations with Sudanese community members indicated that they are most concerned about educational achievement and support for transition to work or further study. In discussions with UWS staff, they placed these concerns ahead of a focus on counseling

and other activities that aim to remedy the effects of the trauma and abuse that many of them have suffered (Fallaw, 2006).

This section has outlined some of the complexities and challenges that teenage refugees, their families, and the service providers, are currently grappling with. In the next section, we indicate how UWS staff are responding to these challenges, and outline some of the programs that we are attempting to develop together with our partners.

2. Partnerships, programs, and research: Responding to the challenge

Beginning in late in 2006, a new program of community engagement, research, and service learning is being developed at UWS in an attempt to respond to the challenges outlined above. The process began with a period of negotiation, where UWS academics invited known elders of the Sydney Sudanese community to meet with UWS academics, with the purpose of identifying the issues they considered to be of greatest importance for refugee children, families, and the broader community. In August 2006, UWS commissioned Helen Fallaw, an education and development consultant whose background includes senior positions in tertiary education in Australia, and in aid projects in Africa. Over a period of two weeks, Helen interviewed several Sudanese community leaders, school principals, and senior teachers who have responsibility for refugee students. She also interviewed staff from voluntary agencies and migrant resource centres, and researched a wide range of electronic and documentary sources (Fallaw, 2006).

Following presentation of the Fallaw report to the UWS Regional Council, the University committed \$80,000 to launch a new initiative to support the Sudanese community in Greater Western Sydney. In early December 2006, two community meetings were held where UWS academics, NSW Department of Education and Training personnel, Sudanese community members, and representatives of local high schools, discussed possible initiatives and put forward ideas that might be considered. Both meetings were attended by members of the Australian Sudanese Students' Association, and two Elders of the Sudanese community. These meetings led to the formation of the *Sudanese Learning and Literacy Alliance* (SLLA). Based on the wishes expressed by African refugees at the community meetings, SLLA has been set up in order to support the development of English literacy among refugee students, increase awareness within schools and families regarding practices that lead to school success, and provide resources to assist teenagers and their families with the transition from school to work or further study.

The first initiative to emerge from SLLA is a collaborative project involving UWS Master of Teaching (Sec) students, Western Sydney high schools, and the Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation (ALNF). Working with the support of the Department (DET), and four Western Sydney high schools, homework centres have been established to provide a program of literacy support and acculturation for students who are in their first 12 months out of an Intensive

English Language Centre. This initiative was initially proposed by the ALNF, a philanthropic organization that brings considerable experience and expertise to a range of literacy projects across Australia.

Early in 2006, ALNF contacted UWS and offered to provide intensive training to selected M. Tch students, and then place them in homework centres as tutors. Since the UWS M. Tch (Sec) degree includes a compulsory service learning unit, this was a welcome invitation. In establishing this program, ALNF also asked DET to explore the possibility of establishing homework centres that would be supervised by coordinating teachers who are being appropriately remunerated for this work. In keeping with the commitment of UWS to maximize the involvement of members of the Sudanese community, a Sudanese community liaison officer is being employed to work in these homework centres, assisting the tutors, and creating closer links with the families of refugee students. This program is now referred to as the Refugee Action Support Partnership (RASP).

The compulsory service learning unit within the M.Tch (Sec) is known as Professional Experience 3. PE3 represents a third 'practicum' alongside the two conventional classroom-based placements, but its goals are quite different from those of the conventional 'prac'. With its emphasis on prepared lesson plans, set classroom performances, and the attachment of the trainee teacher to a single supervisor, the conventional professional experience placement often fails to introduce beginning teachers to the full scope of the professional responsibilities they will face (Cochran-Smith, 1991). This is a particular problem in the Greater Western Sydney region, since many beginning teachers in this region will be appointed to high schools where a majority of the students are poorly prepared for learning, or have difficulty in remaining engaged. They may be refugees; they may be responsible for the care of younger siblings, or be homeless; or their preparedness for school may be compromised by family poverty and low levels of parental education.

Given the diminished levels of support now available for the educational and social programs, many of these schools have become exceptional places that, with great inventiveness, offer services such as youth mentoring, literacy support, homework centres, and in some cases, meals and clothing. Through PE3 we seek to ensure that our trainee teachers become aware of the broader professional responsibilities that are carried out in public schools across Western Sydney, and the ways these responsibilities link public schools with local community organizations. Over 280 secondary teacher education students complete PE3 each year. The University organizes a range of placement options and students may choose among these: every PE3 student is required to complete a total of sixty hours in their service learning program. In most placement options, staff who operate the programs hold reflection sessions with the teacher-education students, encouraging them to examine the effects of mentoring and immersion in alternative educational environments on the school students participating in the programs. All teacher-education students submit written reflections on their experiences at the end of their placements. Examination of these written records allows for a comparison of student-teacher responses to these different kinds of placements.

Each year, UWS teacher education students move into new contexts where they are invited to deliver essential services in schools and in the community. During the past four years, we have been researching the impact of the PE3 service learning experiences on beginning teachers. Interviews and written reflections from students indicate that the PE3 experience is often transformative, deeply influencing beginning teachers' ideas about what it means to 'be a teacher' (Vickers, *forthcoming*; Gannon & Roots, 2006; Vickers, Harris & McCarthy, 2004).

RASP is our most recent addition to PE3. It is also one of several service learning activities at UWS that are linked to, and supported by, the Sudanese Learning and Literacy Alliance. Through RASP, student teachers gain intensive training provided by ALNF, which prepares them to work in the homework centres described above. Over the next nine months we will be researching the impact of this program on all stakeholders, including refugee students, their teachers, and our teacher-education students.

3. Concluding comments: related SLLA initiatives, and future directions

In this short paper, it has not been possible to do justice to the range of programs being supported by the UWS Sudanese Learning and Literacy Alliance. The co-researchers on this project, Tania Ferfolja, Trinh Ha, Mo McCarthy, Loshini Naidoo, Rosemary Suliman, and Margaret Vickers, have written two research grant proposals. We have gained one grant, and have another pending. Our proposed research projects will (a) evaluate the impact of RASP, examining in particular what happens to refugee students' language practices over the weeks of participation in small-group tutoring, (b) involve experienced teachers in 'research circles' leading to the publication of protocols to guide other teachers who have less experience in teaching refugee students, and (c) examine the relationship between educational participation and the psycho-social wellbeing of refugee students, and seek to identify effective ways of monitoring resilience and providing support for teenage refugees.

In addition, there are two other service learning programs under way in the College of Arts at UWS. Both focus on asking what it will take to ensure effective transitions from school to work or further study for teenage refugees. Much has been written about the diversity of the pathways most young people now follow as they navigate their way from school, through combinations of part-time work and part-time study, often experimenting with numerous options, treating themselves and their careers as a 'work in progress' (White & Wyn, 2004; Vickers, 2007). Refugee teenagers face numerous barriers that the well-established native-born never encounter, yet at the same time their parents may be immensely hopeful and even unrealistic about their future options. Currently, in order to fulfill the requirements of the UWS subject known as *Learning through Community Service*, a group of third-year video students is creating a half-hour documentary video film that features Sudanese young people who have negotiated successful transitions from school to work or further study. Another group of students enrolled in *Learning through Community Service* are working in with small groups of refugee students to examine how they experience the

process of 'transition', looking at what they know, how they feel about possible options, what they think their parents want, and how they think they might make up their minds.

Following discussions between community members and UWS academics about each project, it was agreed that these initiatives should serve all refugee students, not just Sudanese refugees. In each of these initiatives, UWS academics will be responsible for project management. A steering committee that includes community members and staff from participating schools will meet to oversee progress. UWS believes that these activities should be negotiated and conducted in partnership with the refugee community, with relevant state government agencies, as well as through local partnerships with schools. Despite the constraints this may place on us as academics, we aim to include the African refugee community in negotiations with us at all stages, examining what we are doing, how we are conducting our research and our teaching, what we are finding out, and what we might do next.

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Engaging Indigenous Secondary School Students in the Northern Territory: Facilitating Pathways to Tertiary Education

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Abstract:

Indigenous people constitute 28% of the Territory's population and are responsible for the decision making and economic development of 50% of the Territory's land mass and 90% of its coastline. Its largest and rapidly increasing cohort is aged between 0-15 years, and its poorly-educated adult population has life expectancies that are 20 years lower than that of non-Indigenous Australians.

Charles Darwin University (CDU) recognises that Indigenous people are key stakeholders in all aspects of the Northern Territory's economic and cultural development and is committed to addressing the Vocational Training and Education (VTE) and Higher Education (HE) needs of Indigenous people. The Vice Chancellor is committed to increasing the Indigenous student cohort to 30% by the year 2010, and in cognizance of the recommendations of the Review of Secondary Schooling in the Northern Territory (2004), a concerted effort to engage with Indigenous students in secondary schools is being made to improve access and pathways from secondary to tertiary education.

In 2006, the Indigenous Academic Support Unit (IASU) implemented a strategy to improve educational opportunities and access to CDU courses by Indigenous high school age students. The strategy provided the IASU with the potential to engage with and build robust relationships with school and community contacts; provide information, guidance and assistance to Indigenous high school students; and to increase awareness of education and career opportunities available to Indigenous youth.

The importance of Indigenous people successfully participating in the institutions of higher learning has never been greater in the Northern Territory of Australia, given the current poor participation and retention rates currently experienced. Indigenous people in the Northern Territory comprise 29% of the total population (ABS, 2003) and control 53.6% of land-mass (ABS, 2003). Its largest and rapidly increasing cohort is aged between 0-15 years, and its poorly-educated adult population has life expectancies that are 20 years lower than that of non-Indigenous Australians.

Charles Darwin University (CDU) has adopted principles of Community Engagement as key to all of its activity, characterized by a 'two-way

relationships in which the University forms partnerships with its community to yield mutually beneficial outcomes (CDU nd).

The Indigenous Academic Support Unit (IASU) at Charles Darwin University exists within the Community and Access portfolio and its activities are underpinned by community and access objectives as well as the university's Indigenous Peoples Policy. It is however a discrete entity with its leadership and strategic framework.

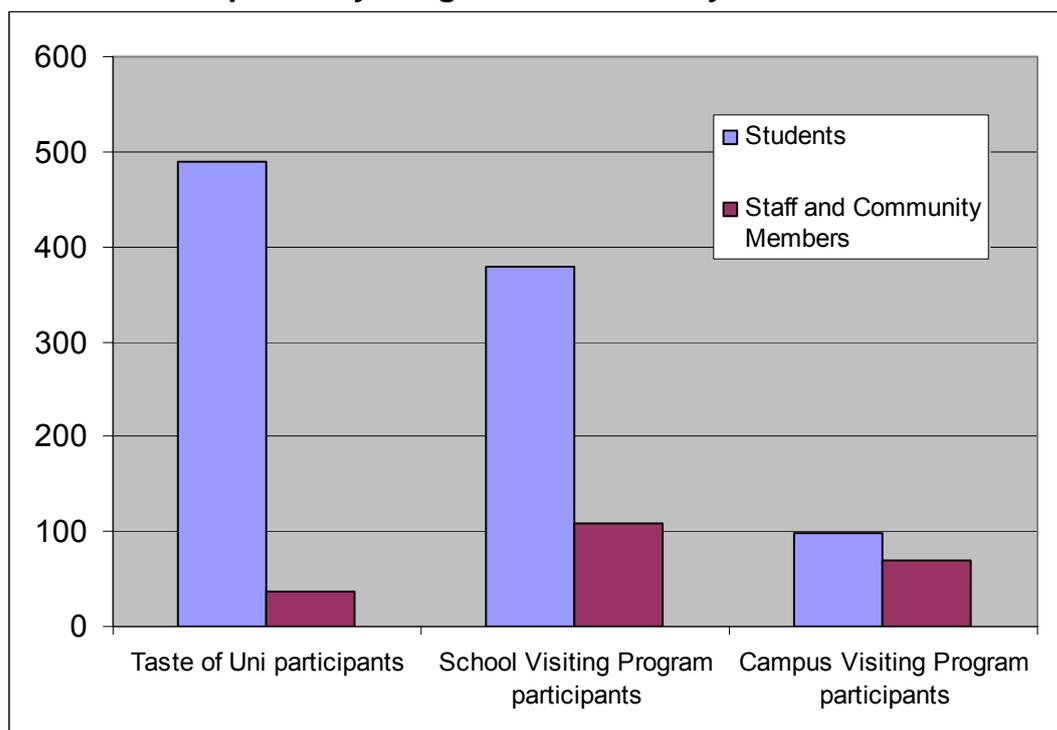
In this paper, I will articulate a particular strategy that was implemented by the IASU that was successful in 2006 in improving relationships between CDU and Indigenous secondary school age youth and their educators and how I see this as contributing to the objectives of community engagement.

The IASU major strategy to improve access and pathways by Indigenous high school age students to CDU courses has three key components. The key components of the strategy are:

- School visiting program/allocation of portfolios
- Hosting of visits by schools/community on campus
- Implementation of the Taste of Uni Programs.

These three programs provide IASU with the opportunity to network and build relationships with school and community contacts; provide information, guidance and assistance to Indigenous high school students and to increase awareness of education and career opportunities available to Indigenous high school students. As a result of the strategy, and in addition to personal enquiries from students/school support staff, 982 Indigenous high school age children and 215 school support staff and/or community representatives had meaningful contact with the IASU through these programs as indicated in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Participation by Indigenous Secondary School Students in 2006



Community Engagement

When first suggested that I present the outcomes of the strategy as an example of a successful program at a community engagement conference, it occurred to me that 'community engagement' seemed to be one of those motherhood type statements that could mean just about anything to anybody. So I thought the first place to start would be to find a useful definition of the terminology in this context. Langworthy (2005) describes community engagement as a two-way relationship between University's and the community that produces mutually beneficial outcomes. This entails a range of actions on the part of the University to broaden its activities to address and respond to issues in the context of economic, human and social development. Essentially it is challenging university's to undertake a paradigm shift that Botes (2005) sees as moving out of their 'ivory towers' and into real, responsible, socially-responsive scholarship that permeates every facet of university life.

What I find interesting is that whilst there is a concerted push on for universities to sign up to the community engagement agenda, there also seems to be a presumption that this is what the community really wants. After all, any 'relationship' by definition is a connection between two entities, and in our enlightened age, connotes that the relationship is entered into freely by both parties. A relationship that doesn't feature free will is doomed to fail.

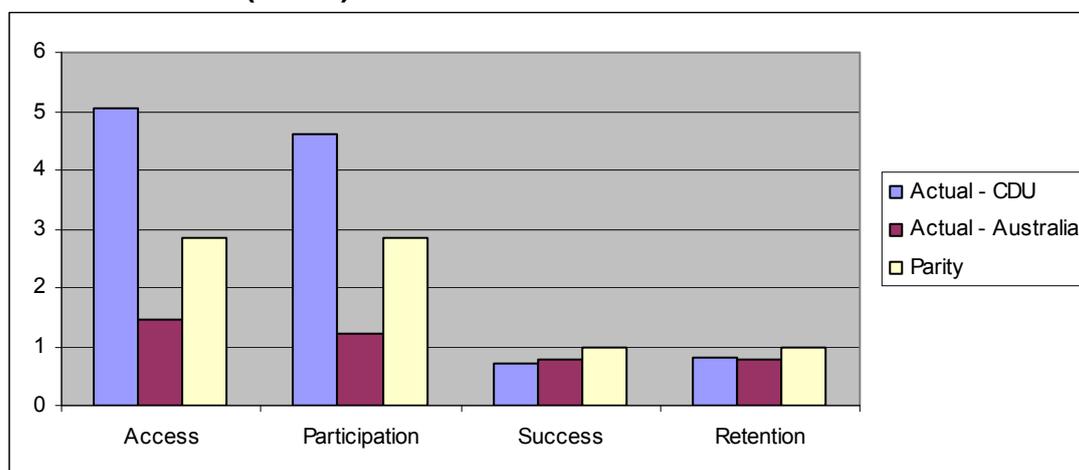
Do all aspects of our community really want to be actively engaged with universities? I do not presume to represent the views of the Indigenous community in this regard, but I think that before a relationship between any tertiary institution and any sector of the Indigenous community commences,

there must be some reflection on past relationships and how that history may impact on the relative success of a relationship between an engaged university and the Indigenous community.

Historically and globally, universities have not been the friend of Indigenous peoples. Tuhiwai-Smith (1999) identifies academic research as one of the most lethal colonizers of Indigenous people, purporting contesting views of history; objectifying Indigenous peoples as the 'other'; promoting the superiority of Western knowledge over Indigenous knowledge and providing legitimization for the colonization and destruction of Indigenous culture, knowledge and sovereignty. Bin-Sallik (1990) documented the historical role of academia in constructing racism as a science and called upon the social sciences to commence the process of deconstructing racism. Globally, leading Indigenous academics have been desperately trying to establish within the structures of academia, research and teaching methodologies and protocols that are compatible with Indigenous culture and community as well as addressing these critical issues with varying degrees of success.

Further, university's in Australia, like all other educational institutions cannot easily boast high success rates of Indigenous students. Even with some very proactive and innovative models of delivery, few institutions can claim that Indigenous students do as well as non-Indigenous students. In Table 2 statistics (DEST, 2007) show nationally that the overall success rates of Indigenous students are below parity with non-Indigenous students.

Table 2: CDU and National Provider Performance for Indigenous Higher Education 2004 (DEST)



Few institutions, if any, can claim that they have reached parity in employment figures. In a report to the Minister of Education, Science and Training, the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (James, Devlin, 2006) reports that in 2004 there were 266 Indigenous teaching and research staff representing .67% of the total, and 434 'other' Indigenous staff employed in higher education institutions representing .91% of the total.

So, from an historical point of view, universities have been perceived as destructive to Indigenous culture; have not yet appropriately valued and

recognised Indigenous knowledge; have not yet been able to offer Indigenous students education outcomes that match non-Indigenous students; and are not yet prolific employers of Indigenous people. Botes (2005) believes that the embracing of Indigenous knowledge is an essential tool in this new scholarship of engagement.

I assert that a truly good and effective relationship exists where both parties have equal power within the relationship. This has not existed traditionally and knowledge and power are inextricably linked. Freire (1973) in identifying the critical importance of institutions to enable disempowered cultural groups to be empowered to understand the nature of their oppression provides some insight into this notion of relational power. That is not to say that a relationship cannot exist with a power imbalance, - it can, and often does, it's just not a particularly effective relationship and the benefits of the relationship do not flow evenly in both directions.

Relationships can only be formed when there is trust between the two parties, and this doesn't happen quickly or without some determined effort on both sides. This is where Indigenous academic units/programs and Indigenous academics within university's can play an important role. Bin Sallik (1991) articulated many roles for these entities including operating special entry provisions into undergraduate programs; teaching and research of Indigenous knowledge, issues and history, support and tutoring programs as well as enclaves/student centres within the university environment that provided Indigenous students with the opportunity to create for themselves an environment where their cultural needs could be accommodated. In addition to lobbying internally for changes within policies and procedures of their employer institutions, they play an intrinsic role as brokers of information between their employer and their communities. Trust can only be built on the sharing of information.

Issues of power, knowledge and trust need to be dealt with, as good intentions alone do not provide sufficient justification for the mechanism of community engagement. This is the critical mistake made by community developers and separates the 'do-gooders' from those that do good!

What has all of this got to do with the secondary school strategy that is the subject of this paper you might ask? Well programs such as the Taste of Uni, Secondary School visiting program and Campus visiting programs organised by Indigenous academics for Indigenous secondary schoolers is a meaningful and effective tool in helping to build trust as an essential precursor to effective relationship building.

Indigenous Academic Support Unit Secondary School Strategy

(i) School Visiting Program/Allocation of Portfolios

Each Indigenous Academic Support Lecturer (IASL) has a dedicated portfolio of secondary schools. Within the portfolio, the IASL takes responsibility for cultivating relationships with appropriate staff including Aboriginal and Islander Education Workers (AIEW)'s, careers counsellors etc; visiting the

school regularly (twice a year for urban schools, once a year for remote schools); hosting school visits to the university upon request; and providing information to students in both one-on-one and group situations.

In 2006, IASU Staff visited 33 schools and met with 379 students and 109 staff and community members throughout the Northern Territory (See Tables 3 9(i) and 3 (ii) for schools visited).

Table 3 (i) Visits by IASU to Schools and Communities 2006

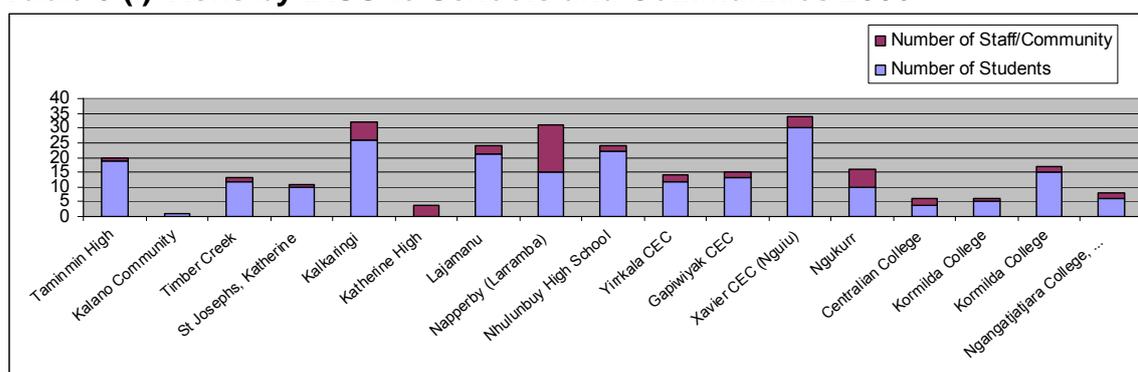
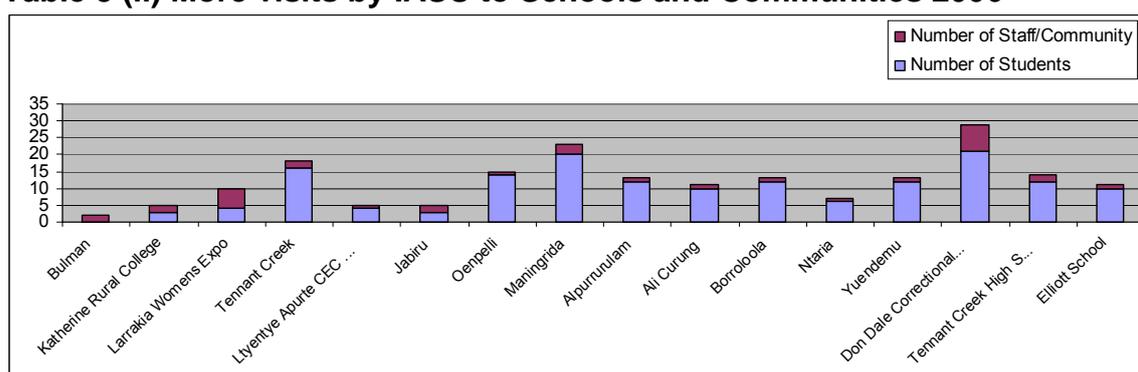


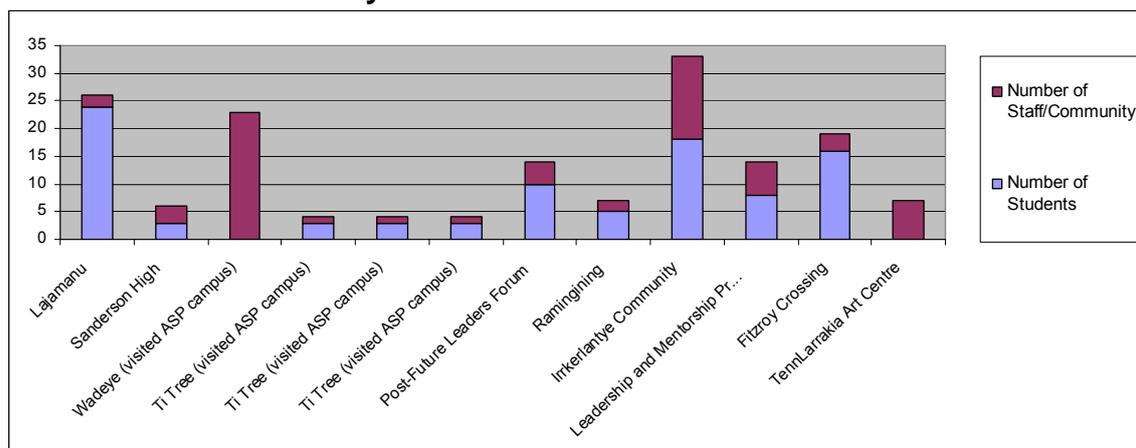
Table 3 (ii) More visits by IASU to Schools and Communities 2006



(ii) Hosting of visits by schools/community on campus

IASU have coordinated visits to CDU campuses by 12 schools with 99 students and 69 school and community members, as indicated in Table 4 below. In organising the visits, schools are asked beforehand to nominate key interest areas of students, and we organise personalised tours and talks from relevant staff.

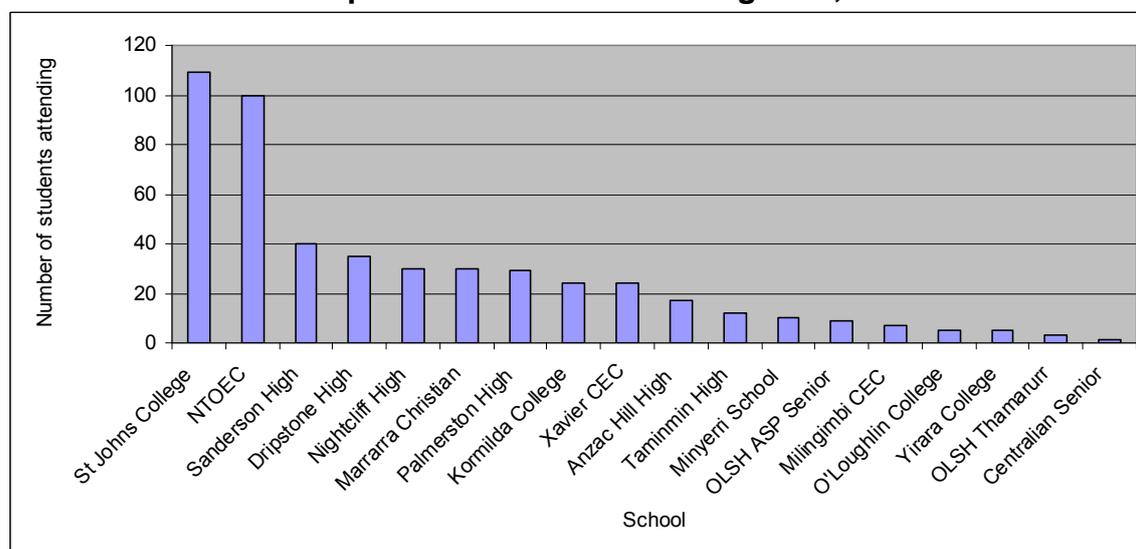
Table 4: Visits to CDU by Schools and Communities in 2006



(iii) Taste of Uni Program

The Taste of Uni is a program championed by the Dean of Indigenous Research and Education and hosted by the Indigenous Academic Support Unit. In 2006, 4 1-day Taste of Uni days were held, 3 of which took place in Darwin and 1 took place in Alice Springs. The participants came from 18 schools from across the Northern Territory. A number of other schools expressed an interest in attending but were unable to secure funds to enable them to come to Darwin or Alice Springs for the activity.

Table 5: School Participation in Taste of Uni Programs, 2006



The program objectives were to:

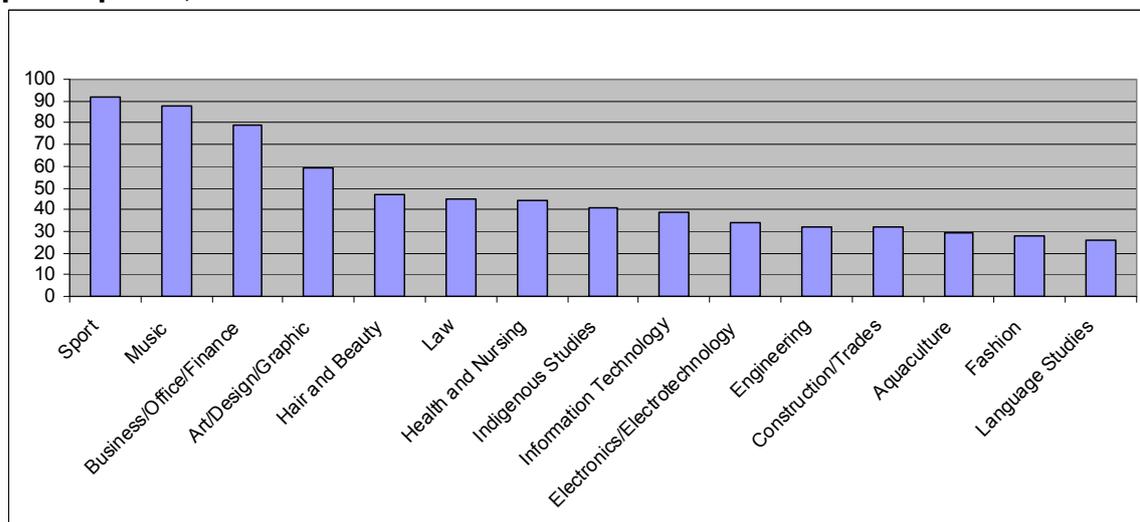
- Identify Indigenous Year 9 – 12 students interested in careers either through Higher education programs, VET or trades,
- Deliver a short program to these students that, provides them with:
 - Information about university courses and procedures, and in particular information the units they should be choosing in Yr's 11 and 12 if they want to proceed to higher education, as well as
 - VET and Trade options available including entry requirements,

- Academic and other support available at Charles Darwin University,
- Scholarships and assistance in applying for them,
- Linking Indigenous year 10 and 12 students and high school staff with Indigenous Academic Support Staff and teaching staff within relevant disciplines within CDU.

Students who attended a Taste of Uni program spent the whole day on campus and got the opportunity to select specific discipline areas which they could visit. Each visit included a 'hands-on' activity that gave the students a 'taste' of what might happen in a classroom, a 'look' at the different teaching resources that might be used, and were provided with information about the discipline area including what courses might be on offer and what sort of jobs they could hope to get after completing the courses. Students got the opportunity to meet with some of the current Indigenous students studying with CDU and importantly to meet the Indigenous Academic Support Staff, who would mentor and support them in their transition to, and participation in university life.

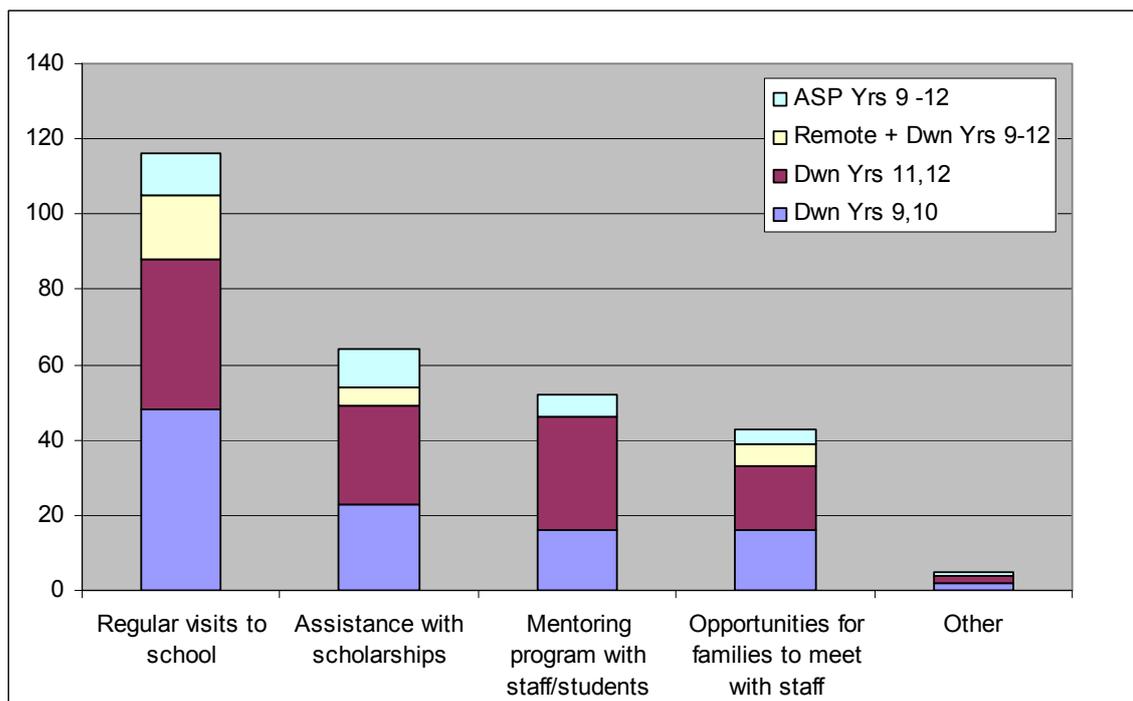
The Taste of Uni provided us with a captive audience with which to implement some rudimentary market research to assist CDU in better understanding the target group. Students were asked to indicate the areas of study they might be interested in pursuing. The top 15 areas of interested are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6: Top 15 Areas of Study Interest indicated by Taste of Uni participants, 2006



Students were also what measures could be taken to improve their transition to university and the results are indicated in Table 7.

Table 7: How could we improve your transition to University?



Conclusion

The Secondary Schools strategy provided the Indigenous Academic Support Unit of Charles Darwin University with the opportunity to create and nurture interactions between Indigenous secondary school-age students and a range of university teaching and support staff. This exercise is perceived to be more than simply a marketing or promotional tool, but contributing to the university's community engagement initiatives. This takes place through (i) increasing future enrolments of Indigenous students by providing information about pathways to VTE and Higher Education as well as de-mystifying the spectre of university education and familiarising students with the campus and (ii) contributing to the building of trust between elements of the Indigenous community and elements of the university as a necessary precursor to relationship building.

I have also tried to briefly articulate what I perceive to be issues that need to be addressed in the context of the scholarship of community engagement. These issues include: (i) issues of relational power; (ii) the place of Indigenous knowledge in academia, (iii) issues in research in Indigenous communities, (iv) poor performance by universities in education and employing Indigenous Australians and the importance of developing and nurturing trust as a precursor to entering into relationships that deliver mutual beneficence.

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Learning through community service: Assisting others, learning themselves

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Abstract:

The incorporation of service learning into the tertiary sector is not as easily implemented given the administrative and teaching culture of universities. This paper will present some initial findings in relation to the development of an academic literacy service learning strand within a larger service learning unit. University of Western Sydney 2nd and 3rd year students were involved as mentors working with 1st year, NESB (Non-English speaking background) student mentees, who had difficulty with academic literacy in their first semester of study.

University lecturers, mentors and mentees gained from their experience personally, emotionally, motivationally and academically. Reflections from mentors focused on the personal and academic impact of their experiences. Written reflections rated greater satisfaction as being the most significant impact, while academic support had the greater impact in the online discussion board.

Introduction

Learning through Community Service (LCS) is an undergraduate unit in the College of Arts at the University of Western Sydney. Within the unit are a number of projects or strands. It is an exploration into new pedagogical practices for tertiary students and their lecturers based on service learning principles.

This paper focuses on the strand entitled 'Sharing knowledge, Sharing learning: Academic literacy through online learning' (henceforth, AL strand). The AL strand sought to assist students from diverse sociocultural backgrounds in their first year of university learn about university life, specifically how to gain control of academic literacy, using the principles of service learning. This was a learning journey for all of us in the strand – the mentors, the mentees and the academics. This paper presents initial findings about the impact of service learning on mentors, with a brief mention of impact on academics.

Background

A four-day symposium was conducted prior to semester for all LCS students. Students were introduced to the concept of service learning, the nature of helping and diverse learners. AL students spent a day discussing mentoring, resources for teaching academic literacy (paper-based and electronic), how to complete a needs analysis and learning contracts (for use with their mentee) and developed their ability to articulate their knowledge of language. Both authors were involved as facilitators of the AL strand and mentors accessed both to assist them meeting the needs of their community—the UWS student mentees. Each mentor was matched with two mentees, after an initial informal meeting. Over the semester 80-100 hours of mentoring was to be completed.

Despite the widespread incidence of a range of mentor programs in universities, a service learning approach to supporting tertiary students at risk of failing owing to poor academic literacy is not common. Unlike other mentor programs at UWS, our mentors were trained to help mentees develop academic discourse writing skills. The amount of time available to the mentees for mentoring was significantly greater than mainstream peer mentoring and peer tutoring programs. The latter generally have either a focus on orientation to university life, or a focus on content.

What is service learning?

Service learning has its roots in the work of a number of philosophers and scholars, especially John Dewey and Paulo Freire. While there is no one simple definition of service learning in higher education (Furco and Ammon, 2000, p. 12), researchers in the area accept that it involves students working with a community or agency providing a service which is mutually beneficial. The students' learning occurs as a result of their experiences and reflection during the service learning project. This learning contributes to students' personal, academic and social growth. Service learning is both a philosophy and a pedagogical strategy. It involves active learning, engaging students in inquiry-oriented learning, proactive participation in a project and continuous reflection during the experience (Wells and Grabert, 2004, Swick, 1999a, McCarthy, 2003).

The place of reflection

Service learning requires some form of reflective practice, either during the experience (Kluetmeier et al., 2005, Lodato Wilson, 2005), as an end of task requirement (Cushman, 2002) or a combination of both (Cahill Tannenbaum and Berrett, 2005, Wells and Grabert, 2004). It is the inclusion and nature of this reflection that marks service learning as different from community engagement, as well as from peer mentoring. The service learning 'agency' in AL was a separate organisational unit within the university - the Student Learning Unit (SLU) which provides language and learning support to the UWS academic community: the "community" in AL were the mentees.

LCS had five assessments: four 1000 word reflection essays due approximately every three weeks through the semester and a final 5000 word portfolio assessment which combined the previous four essays (with comments addressed from the Education academic), as well as students' final impressions, experiences and thoughts. Each reflection in the AL strand was designed to move students' reflections from a personal to a more critical, informed reflective text based on research and evidence.

Developing a community of practice

If a community of practice provides "mutual enjoyment, joint enterprise and a shared repertoire" (Wenger 1999, p3), where learning is organized around social communities, the argument for the development of increased student engagement through a service learning unit like AL resonates strongly. Learning communities are central to providing opportunities for "educationally purposeful activities" (Krause in press, p 2) where students feel a shared sense of purpose and are nurtured by learning with others. A variety of obstacles to building community on Australian campuses identified by Krause (in press p 3 citing King and Wooten 2003, and Levine 1998) can be overcome through the several different interactions provided by the AL strand.

For example, technology can support service learning principles and practice (Karayan and Gathercoal, 2005) when used as a teaching, learning and reflection tool. The AL strand employed an online discussion tool. It was included as a means to:

- develop a sense of community within the mentors, located across two campuses;
- provide a means of sharing their experiences;
- ask knowledge-based questions to each other and academics; and,
- support each other.

In addition, informal meetings of mentors and facilitators occurred three times during the semester at the request of the mentors. They felt it allowed them to discuss their experiences more openly, obtain personal and academic support, discuss future directions and clarify the next reflection.

Methodology

The small numbers of the initial pilot group in AL (4 mentors; 8 mentees) made it possible to collect and analyse rich data from three main sources: the student mentors; the student mentees; and academic staff in the School of Education, and SLU. Data enabled thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973/2000) of their experiences to be obtained.

Participants

The four student mentors came from Education (2), Arts (1) and Humanities (1). Three were mature-aged, one was male. The eight student mentees selected were NESB students identified by the SLU in first semester as needing assistance in developing academic literacy. Each mentor was allocated two mentees.

Data collection

Ethics clearances was received prior to the program beginning. All data was collected with permission of participants.

Data from the student mentors was collected through:

- a) the five reflective assessment items;
- b) on-line discussion postings;
- c) group meetings with all participants, including a taped final focus group discussion; and,
- d) informal meetings between mentors and staff, where academics documented the points raised.

For this paper, the written reflections of the student mentors and their online discussion board were used to provide the data for the impact on mentors' personal and academic learning from involvement in the AL strand.

Data from academic staff was collected in the form of documented notes, and discussions.

Data analysis

Data was compiled and thematic analysis applied (Ezzy 2002). Mentors' written reflections were coded and analysed using the categories of:

Personal impact

- Greater satisfaction and sense of worth (Simons and Cleary, 2006, Spencer et al., 2005, Swick, 1999a);
- interacting with culturally different people (Simons and Cleary, 2006);
- Caring (Swick, 1999b);
- Difficulty scheduling meetings (with mentee) (Malone et al., 2002); and,
- Complexity of (academic literacy) issue (for mentee) (Buchanan et al., 2002, Swick, 1999a)

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Academic impact

- Own formal academic studies (Swick, 1999a, Astin and Sax, 1998);
- Connecting theory to practice (Buchanan et al., 2002, Sheldon Woods and Conderman, 2005, Spencer et al., 2005, Cahill Tannenbaum and Berrett, 2005);
- Knowledge of teaching and increased understanding of being a teacher (Buchanan et al., 2002, Malone et al., 2002, Simons and Cleary, 2006, Sheldon Woods and Conderman, 2005, Spencer et al., 2005);

- Integration of skills learned in other courses (Buchanan et al., 2002); and,
- Nature of learning – helping but not doing (Spencer et al., 2005, Roffey, 2006).

The online discussion board postings were coded initially on the purposes for inclusion of the online discussion. Extra categories were added due to their thematic prominence. The categories used were:

- Personal support
- Sharing feelings about their experience, mentees’ progress
- Support for reflection: unit requirements.
- Encouraging reflection
- Academic support: content references
- Academic support: sharing what they were doing and teaching
- Developing group cohesion
- Other: Organising group meetings
- Ethics permissions

Impact of the Academic literacy service learning strand on mentors

Written reflections

Over the group of student mentors, academic impact was commented on in the written reflections more than personal impact (Table 1). Academic impact was reflected most strongly in their ability to make links between theory and practice (Table 2). Their experiences also provided them with a greater knowledge and understanding of teaching and being a teacher. As Bao commented “*Although I had shown them the same concepts ... in regards to writing, I had to be adaptable and use different teaching techniques.*” and “*The confidence in my teaching abilities had risen as well.*”

Table 1: Impact on students (written reflections)

Personal impact	241	44.9%
Academic impact	296	55.1%
Total	537	100%

Table 2: Academic Impact on students (written reflections)

	% of academic impact	% of total impact
linking theory and practice	35 (n=104)	19.4
Knowledge of teaching / understanding of being a teacher	33.4 (n=99)	18.4
Nature of learning – helping but not doing	18.6 (n=55)	10.2
Own formal academic studies	7.8 (n=23)	4.3
Integrate skills learned in other courses	5 (n=15)	2.8

As shown in Table 3, the greatest personal impact for the mentors was the greater sense of satisfaction and feeling of worth gained over the semester. This does not deny the importance of the other areas of personal impact but in the written reflections of the mentors it was the one mentioned most frequently. For example, Melissa stated “*I would never have thought that this project would offer as much satisfaction and fulfilment as it has and consequently I have realised how profound my influence on others can be.*”

Table 3: Personal Impact on students (written reflections)

	% of personal impact	% of total impact
Greater satisfaction, sense of worth	51.9 (n=125)	23.3
Caring	17.0 (n=41)	7.6
Interacting with culturally different people	15.8 (n=38)	7.1
Difficulty scheduling meetings (with mentee)	10.4 (n=25)	4.7
Complexity of (academic literacy) issue (for mentee)	4.9 (n=12)	2.2

In regards to all the coded comments, the greatest impact from their experiences was the personal one of greater satisfaction (see Table 2 and 3). The two academic impacts of linking theory and practice and increasing mentors’ understanding of teaching were the next most frequent impacts commented on in the written reflections. Of the remaining impact categories only one stands out as more significant to the mentors: learning about helping and the nature of learning.

Online discussion

The online discussion board on the unit’s WebCT site provided a place for reflection and support for the mentors as a group. In comparison to the written reflections, the online discussion provided mentors with an opportunity to support the academic learning of their fellow mentors in an informal supportive way, when the frequency of comments made was coded (Table 4). By sharing what and how they were assisting their mentees – academic literacy, university life and personally, the other mentors could use their strategies. They were learning from each other not just from the academic facilitators. For example, Bao commented in one posting “*Beta too has developed her question analysis skills, she can now break down questions and start planning the answers to them using the mind mapping technique that Melissa brought up in our meeting... Fleur, How are your meetings been? What steps or techniques are you using in regards to your mentees.*”

Table 4 Discussion list – online support and reflection

	Student mentors	Academics	% of total coded comments
Academic support –sharing what they are doing and teaching	n=73	N/A	22.6 (n=73)

Sharing feelings about experience/ mentee progress	n=57	N/A	17.6 (n=57)
Developing group cohesion	n=40	n=5	15.9 (n=45)
Other – organising meetings	n=36	n=14	15.5 (n=50)
Personal support	n=22	n=11	10.2 (n=33)
Academic support – content references	n=6	n=22	8.7 (n=28)
Reflection support – unit requirements.	n=12	n=13	7.8 (n=25)
Encourage reflection	n=3	n=4	2.0 (n=7)
Ethics – permissions	n=3	n=2	1.5 (n=5)

Another difference in impact on mentors was the amount of reflection shared with the group about their experiences and their mentees' progress. Some examples of these are "*I've sent off a very detailed email to Hen after looking at her assignment that's due next week. I hope I haven't overloaded her with information. I feel like there are so many issues to deal with that I'm finding it hard to limit myself.*" (Ruth); "*Tiny is doing really well, we email each other all the time and meet up when we can.*" (Fleur); and "*Both mentees have had numerous assignments and only recently the marks have been given back. My goodness ... what happened? Sugar failed on but has managed to pass the rest thank goodness!... I don't know about you guys but I found this quite hard to face.*" (Melissa). Both of these contributions in the online discussion could be considered as developing a community of practice among the mentors. In addition, there were specific comments included to create a bond between the mentors. In the beginning of the semester these were mostly pleasantries, for example, '*have a good weekend*', but developed into more direct support of development of group cohesion, for example, a thread about the Melbourne Cup and directions on how to get to the restaurant meeting.

Impact on academics

From the perspective of the SLU academic, one of the main issues initially was a reluctance to leave the mentors and mentees to develop their own plans for progress in academic literacy, in case they were inappropriate. It was difficult to "let go" and not interfere. Early monitoring of the mentoring sessions, however, immediately displaced these fears. The mentor / mentee relationships and interactions were professional, productive, and no negative situations arose. It was indeed uplifting to witness the progress being made by all those involved.

From the perspective of the Education academic, one of the main issues initially was the feeling that the mentors needed to be 'given' references to read. It was a learning experience to provide space for the mentors to learn what they needed to know and find the links to theory, with guidance not directing. Despite this, the experience lifted my teaching spirit (Krystal, 1999). One unsolved issue was the assigning of a formal grade, within a university-wide grading regime, when all students were highly motivated and had high expectations of themselves.

In regards to the future of the AL strand, it is anticipated to extend it to as many mentees as possible. However, this is restricted based on the number

of mentors that enrol. Tertiary students do not necessarily view themselves as capable academic writers, which discourages them from taking the AL strand. Publicity about the positive impact on mentors will hopefully encourage more students to take on this valuable role. Perhaps it will become an essential component of study for students majoring in English or Adult Education.

Conclusion

All the mentors appear to have gained in enhanced knowledge acquisition and application. Mentors, in particular those who are intending to become teachers, have experienced a valuable teaching situation not otherwise available, and have articulated their own understandings of their development through reflection.

The AL strand has also given mentors the opportunity to appreciate and the ability to relate to individuals from different backgrounds and perspectives. It is this exposure to diversity within a professional yet social setting which has created a learning experience in which all participants have been deeply engaged.

“I have felt privileged to be allowed into their lives because it revealed the mutual depth of trust and respect. This was when I realized that my role had a dual purpose, that is that I wasn't just an academic mentor, I was also a life mentor...” (Melissa)

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Mapping Community Health Needs and Priorities: Reflections on Community Engagement from the Tasmanian University Department of Rural Health and the Meander Valley Community

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Abstract

Pressures on current health care services in rural and regional Australia increase the demands on policy makers to be better informed about the specific health needs of communities. In addition, recent policy developments in regional health services have called for a stronger preventative approach to health care through increased community participation in rural health service delivery and planning. This presents increasing opportunities for universities to engage with communities. It also highlights how an understanding of university community engagement (UCE) processes can assist universities and communities to work collaboratively in capturing the health issues, priorities and actions of a community in an inclusive and empowering way.

This paper outlines a recent health mapping project in which the Tasmanian University Department of Rural Health (UDRH) engaged with the Meander Valley municipality in Northern Tasmania. The paper examines key university engagement principles underpinning the collaboration and explores how these were developed and sustained in successfully mapping the health needs and priorities of the community.

Introduction

Pressures on current health care services in rural and regional Australia increase the demands on policy makers to be better informed about the specific health needs of communities. In addition, recent policy developments in regional health services have called for a stronger primary health care approach to health and wellbeing. A central tenant of this approach is not only an increasing emphasis on health promotion and illness prevention, but also the promotion of community participation and engagement in health care delivery and planning. While the fundamental importance of community participation, engagement and accountability in influencing the effectiveness of health services, interventions and partnerships is well documented (see Crisp, Swerissen & Duckett 2000; Gamm, Rogers & Work 1998; Palsbo, Kroll & McNeill 2004; Johns, Whelan and Kilpatrick 2006). This policy shift presents new and increasing opportunities for universities to engage with communities.

In particular, rural and regional university campuses within Australia, by applying good UCE practice principles are ideally positioned to work alongside local communities in a mutually beneficial relationship. Such benefits include the building of capacity and partnership within communities

and the creation and reinforcement of university-community networks via processes such as community health mapping.

This paper explores a recent health mapping project in which Tasmanian University Department of Rural Health (UDRH) engaged with the Meander Valley municipality in Northern Tasmania. The paper outlines the key stages of the mapping process and partnership and explores how a number of particular key principles of university community engagement underpinned this approach and led to the needs and priorities of the community being successfully mapped and responded to and the creation of further links between the community and university. The paper also discusses how the key stakeholders in the project (including the UDRH, local government council, health service providers and the Meander Valley community) attribute the effectiveness of the project to an inclusive participatory capacity building approach to community engagement.

Background to Community Engagement at the University of Tasmania

The University of Tasmania (UTAS) has a strong history and commitment to community engagement. UTAS community engagement activities are underpinned by a Community Engagement Policy. Under this policy it is prescribed that engagement activities should benefit both the Tasmanian community and the University and should aim to build the community's knowledge, understanding and awareness of the University and its activities.

The University of Tasmania's Department of Rural Health (UDRH) has in recent years increased its commitment and scope of community engagement activities. Located within the Faculty of Health Science, the UDRH is a regional campus committed to improving access to health care resources and contributing to improved health outcomes for people in rural and remote areas of Tasmania. The UDRH seeks to achieve these objectives through active engagement with a range of rural health stakeholders and promotes community engagement as one of its core areas of activity. Much of the UDRH's community engagement work is based around an inclusive participatory approach, whereby communities work alongside the university in activities such as research. This type of approach is aimed establishing a situation that is seen as important to the community and where community members are provided with a genuine opportunity for meaningful participation (Ife 1995). This form of participation has been argued to have some direct health benefit through building a sense of self-worth and empowerment through learning and conscious raising (Anderson 2006). This approach also provides a unique opportunity to bridge academic and practical knowledge and bring these into dialogue with one another (Eversole 2004). A key method that has been increasingly used by the UDRH in promoting this form of dialogue is the process of community health mapping.

Community Health Mapping: A University Community Engagement Tool.

The mapping of community and health needs and priorities provides an ideal platform for collaboration between communities and Universities. Unlike community needs analysis or needs evaluations which have been criticised

for essentially making subjective, technical and disempowering value judgements about a community (see Ife 2005), the concept of health mapping is predominantly concerned with promoting ongoing dialogue with communities that promotes empowerment by allowing community members themselves to make judgements and define the existence of particular needs, if needs exist at all. Thus the concept of mapping is essentially about assisting community members to articulate their own health and wellbeing issues and solutions by using more resources inside and outside the community (Cary 1970).

Whilst Universities can assist in applying more technical aspects to community health mapping such as data collection and analysis, the use of information technology and verbal and written presentation. Communities, on the other hand via principles such as readiness, ownership and their own local knowledge and expertise can enable their own needs and priorities to be mapped, explored and articulated in ways that are most useful. By determining themselves the issues and actions that are important, rather than someone from 'the outside' such as university 'experts' telling them what they should be doing (Ife 2005) is a key element of empowering and establishing community ownership in the process of engagement.

The Meander Valley Health and Wellbeing Map Project typifies a inclusive participatory approach to university community engagement by assisting a community to define their own health and wellbeing. The project involved collaboration between the Meander Valley Community in Northern Tasmania and the UDRH over a negotiated timeframe. A key part of this collaboration was the establishment of a project team which involved a representative of the UDRH, a council employee and local health service provider, both of whom were also community members.

The Engagement Environment

The Meander Valley is one of the largest geographical local government municipalities in Tasmania. Located in Northern Tasmania, and has a population of 18,000. The municipality consists of small to medium townships servicing industries such as agriculture and forestry as well as urban residential areas which form the western edges of the Launceston City municipality. Community members, particularly in the more rural population centres in the Meander Valley also have a strong sense of social capital and commitment to community development. Following ongoing dialogue within the community over their health and wellbeing, the Meander Valley Council along with health services providers in the municipality approached UDRH about mapping health and wellbeing issues. Key objectives for the mapping exercise were defined following preliminary discussions with all stakeholders. The key objectives included;

- To 'map' community health needs, assets, perceptions and understandings of health in the Meander Valley area
- To identify opportunities to assist the community to optimise wellness and remain healthy
- To transfer specific knowledge and skills to the Meander Valley community

- To prioritise and provide recommendations and/or actions aimed at meeting the future health and wellbeing needs of the Meander Valley community

It is significant here to explore some of the key reasons why both the UDRH and Meander Valley community felt the process of UCE could benefit both parties. Table one details the rationale for engagement from both the university and community perspective.

Table One: Rationale for Engagement and Partnership

University Reasons for Engagement	Community Reasons for Engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expanding CE agenda of UDRH ○ Capacity Building and transfer of skills and knowledge to the MV ○ Facilitation and support for improving the health and wellbeing of the region. ○ The opportunity to build trust and develop partnerships with the Meander Valley community. ○ To expand and explore new and innovative models for capturing the health needs and priorities of rural communities via engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased desire within the Meander Valley community to improve and facilitate health and wellbeing within the region using academic process i.e. research methodologies. • Opportunity to draw on the skills and resources of the UDRH • Opportunity for enhanced learning • Scope and provision for objectivity i.e. facilitate ethical considerations, inclusive participation etc • Perception that the UDRH would enhance quality and credibility to project processes. • Desire to create ongoing partnerships and research with the University.

Community Engagement Perspectives in Practice

In achieving the aims of the project, five stages key stages were by UDRH used to structure the project. These stages provided both a practical framework to facilitating and completing the project. Table two details the project stages and the activities and CE principles that underpinned and guiding the process.

Table Two: Project Stages and Guiding Community Engagement Principles

	What?	How?	Core Engagement Principles
Stage One	Establishment of partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Preliminary Meetings - Formal agreement with stakeholders - Community Steering Committee established -Project team established Project plan developed (aims, timelines resources) -Communication processes developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Mutual Benefit -Commitment -Readiness Community Ownership -Transparency and trust - Risk sharing

Stage Two	Community Profile and Literature Review	-Project team commenced dialogue with community Compiling info and data on health issues and services -University provided guidance, resources and support to project Team -Community profile developed	-Commitment -Leadership by University -Capacity Building -Quality Trust
Stage Three	Development of mapping tools	Steering Committee and Project Team identified mapping tools e.g. survey instruments, interviews, focus groups Guidance on ethical procedures -Piloted tools with UDRH staff and community - Workshops for capacity building around info collection e.g. community survey distributors Community collected data -Continued dialogue with community re project progress	-Inclusive Community Participation -Trust -Transparency -Leadership shared -Capacity Building - Risk sharing
Stage Four	Information Analysis and interpretation	-Analysis of qualitative and quantitative information through capacity building with project team -University IT resources used to manage data -Shared data and interpretations with Steering Committee -Report framework established	-Capacity building -Ownership -Transparency -Leadership by University
Stage Five	Report Writing and compilation	-Guidance to Project Team in report writing and structure -Shared responsibility for report writing -Dialogue with community on presentation of report	-Capacity Building -Mutual Benefit -Ownership and Commitment
Stage Six	Actions and Recommendation Planning	-Prioritising of key issues -Actions identified by Project Team minimal input from University -Check and review of actions with broader community	-Community ownership -Leadership by community -Commitment -Shared risk

The project stages provided an opportunity for blending the technical expertise of the University with the local knowledge and skills of the community. In this process the UDRH supported the community in capturing, prioritising and responding to their own health and wellbeing needs. In examining the UCE principles that underpinned the stages of the project, the CE areas of community ownership and participation, leadership, capacity building, mutual benefit and sharing of risk can be distinctly identified as guiding the success of the project from both a community and university perspective.

The following sections considers a number of key principles as identified by project team members drawing on specific examples to demonstrate their influence and importance towards projects completion

Community Readiness and Commitment

A central part of UCE success is the readiness and commitment of any community to be part of the engagement process. Specifically, 'readiness' of a community to capture and prioritise its health needs is based on the premise that there is strong impetus and commitment from the community itself and that there are sufficient structures within the community that are adequately developed to enable effective cooperation, mutual support and empowerment (Grasby, Zammit, Pretty and Bramston 2005).

The readiness and commitment of the Meander Valley community was evident to the UDRH for a number of reasons. First, a strong history of UCE engagement with the community had developed a significant degree of trust with key decision makers and stakeholders in the community. Previous engagement experience suggested that the community maintained a high level of "preparedness" to engage and that it was able to draw on an extensive pool of creative energy in the mobilisation of its resources. Second, there was an evident demonstration that the community had a strong commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of the region.

Further to this, many past and present activities around health in the community had been self initiated and driven by a culture of inclusive participation. Third, the community was characterised by strong internal collaborations between community members and service providers such as local government, health services and private organisations that further facilitated the readiness and commitment of the community for engagement.

The readiness and commitment of the community was a key part of achieving the project stages. Using community members within the project team enabled the establishment of broad networks of support for the project. For instance, the university was able to identify and capitalise on skills, knowledge and attributes of individuals and groups within the community to enhance the engagement process. Ongoing community commitment for the project came from the project team providing feedback on the project's progress, reinforcing the importance of local knowledge and input, addressing local concerns, celebrating project achievements as well as clarifying the role of the UDRH in the community.

Leadership (Existing and Evolving)

Effective leadership has been identified as a key strategy for initiating and embedding community engagement (Winter, Wiseman and Muirhead 2005). Previous engagement experience between the UDRH and the Meander Valley community indicated a high level of natural leadership within the community which is supported by local organisational structures such as the local council and regional health service management. Equally as important was the leadership evident within the UDRH. Leadership within all stakeholder groups were prepared to trust the process and provide sufficient resources and time to support the engagement process and project structure. It was also acknowledged that there was a high degree of leadership within the community in all stages of the project. Significantly, the Meander Valley municipality is characterised by having a number of community leaders who

had the ability to cross boundaries between community and external agencies.

These individuals or 'boundary crossers' were trusted by both the UDRH and community. Their role was to advocate, translate and mediate between the community and UDRH. The skills knowledge and networks of these people in drawing on and building community resources and facilitating interaction with external agencies are important in helping to secure resources for their communities (Kilpatrick, Auckland et al 2006). In recognition of these distinct advantages these individuals brought to the engagement process the act of translating and reinforcing the role and involvement of the university in the project. The UDRH thus actively engaged with these individuals by regular communication and meetings, ongoing input and advice, and by using them as local advocates for the project. This facilitated an effective way of establishing a higher level of inclusive participation.

Clear mutual benefit

A central and defining theme for UCE is the understanding that engagement needs to be mutual and reciprocal in that it benefits each in the partnership in both process and outcome of the engagement (Forde, 2001; Garlick and Pryor, 2002a. Armstrong et al 2005, Winter et al, 2005, Auckland and Brookes 2005). Benefits are understood to include social, economic, cultural or environmental (Murphy and Thomas, 2005). In early discussions with the project proponents it was agreed at the onset that there needed to be tangible benefits in both process and outcomes from the engagement. A participatory approach to the project was considered fundamental to achieving mutual benefit. From the UDRH perspective it was critical that the process was linked to UCE core objectives in a way that builds the University's reputation and standing in the community, and increases the community's knowledge, understanding and awareness of the University and its activities. Furthermore, it was important that the project supported the UDRH mission of facilitating access to education and training opportunities. Application of the core principles of shared responsibility, commitment, mutual learning and integrated planning were integral to realising a mutual benefit.

During the course of the project, mutual benefit was realised and achieved via some key processes. For instance, a review and assessment of each stage of the project by the project team and community provided an opportunity to monitor how project aims were being achieved and/ or not being met within the context of mutual benefit.

Completion of the project has also seen both short term and longer term mutual benefits as listed in table one. In addition, there have been some unexpected mutual benefits such as the employment of a full time mental health worker within the community, new collaborations with the UDRH around mental health and community development. A considerable mutual benefit has also been a community shift from just health service delivery to a more holistic understanding of health and wellbeing.

Capacity Building

The term capacity building is used in a diversity of contexts and disciplines relevant to health, with no solid consensus having been established (see Howe 1997). In this context of UCE, capacity building can be referred to as increasing the ability of communities to tackle health and wellbeing issues. In practice this implies “the nurturing and building of the strengths, resources and problem solving abilities already present’ in the community (Crisp, Swerissen and Duckett 2000: 3). This was achieved through a number of participatory activities that built on the existing knowledge and expertise of individuals within the community. These activities included mentorship around the areas of research design, project planning and evaluation, ethics and inclusive consultation, data analysis and interpretation, report writing and structure.

Through building capacity the University facilitated greater ownership in the direction of health and wellbeing in the community, strengthening the existing social capital, self reliance and sustainability of the region.

Lessons Learnt

This paper has provided insight into importance of UCE in capturing health needs and priorities. Learning’s from a recent UDRH experience have shown that health mapping is a particularly effective tool for UCE in rural communities. The process of health mapping in a UCE context has the capacity to challenge the traditional conceptions of universities as researching ‘on’, rather than working alongside communities. Effective UCE practice is thus essentially about creating equal learning environments that are beneficial to both parties. By assisting and empowering community members to articulate their own health and wellbeing issues and solutions, health mapping is a foundation by which the links between universities and communities can be further established.

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Parents as teachers in a regional university's curriculum: Emotional learning, rational language and research representation

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Abstract:

The Parent Tutor Scheme partners local mothers of children with significant disabilities with small groups of Charles Sturt University speech pathology students over a six week period each year. The objective is for these mothers, paid at academic tutorial rates, to teach students what it is like to be *them*. Both students and tutors report intimately life-changing learning – but a brand of learning experienced as peculiarly resistant to explication through language. This paper provides the theoretical justification for exploring the learning from this community engagement project through the medium of photography and community participation. It does so in order to argue the case for equitable access to knowledge, when this knowledge is generated from community partnership initiatives.

Introduction

This paper lies within the broad swathe of initiatives that are trying to solve problems of recruitment and retention of allied health professionals in rural and remote Australia. Its focus is not with community-based initiatives aimed at attracting and keeping professionals, but rather with the epistemological preparation of professional graduates for rural and remote practice. As such, it is part of an argument that proposes that several central assumptions of professional health worker curricula need to be challenged; and that only by actively engaging in this challenge can we find national and permanent solutions for the crisis in rural, remote and regional health.

The overall goal of the speech pathology program at CSU is to graduate therapists who will favour rural, low-tech, collaborative and team-driven contexts of practice; and to develop these skills that research from other disciplines have confirmed to be central to rural practice (for example Ryan, 1997; Skiba, 1997). Stating our goal has, however, proved to be the simplest part of our curriculum change process. The difficulties have arisen as a result of accommodating change while still teaching the same content areas, the same skills, and both in the same structure of university teaching and learning. To help guide us when considering changes to our theoretical or practical teaching we formulated questions; answers to which govern the change process (Beecham, 2007). Two of the most important of these ask us to explicitly attend to how our educational experiences emphasize community accountability and responsibility, and how these activities serve an agenda of social justice and equity.

Answering these questions helps frame the epistemological direction of change, yet we also realised that what we were trying to reverse was the dominance of a certain type of 'knowing' ourselves as professional teachers and learners. This presupposes that we are scientific learners, and that the sequence of our practice is based on empirical, rational and objective knowledge and reasoning. This tradition has largely failed to consider that our professional topic is communication; that we are a predominantly female profession, or to take into account the inter-subjective nature of therapeutic communication as an act of meaning-making - a joint enterprise founded on care, responsibility, respect as well as knowledge (Fromm, 1956). The result of this fundamental epistemological confusion has meant that while our *practice* stands and falls on the nature of the relationship that subserves it, the *topic* of relationship is not taught explicitly in professional preparation of therapists. At root, therefore, we realised that what we are trying to reveal in the CSU curriculum is the centrality of a student's knowledge and practice of caring relationship in the process of becoming a speech therapist (Beecham, 2000; Beecham & Clark, 2004; Mpumlwana & Beecham, 2000).

It seemed, therefore, that changes to our curriculum needed quite fundamental change to how we understood 'fact' in relation to 'feeling' (Beecham, 2000; Beecham & Clark, 2004)), and to create learning opportunities that nurtured and fostered the affective development of students (Goleman, 1995). There has been a simultaneous realisation that the architecture of the university and its educational procedures and practices cannot provide an appropriate context to frame this learning (Shor, 1996). The onus has been, therefore, upon the clinical fieldwork program to create experiential learning opportunities that can reconcile affective development with intellectual growth; offer powerful learning about equity, accountability and responsibility; and foreground the experience of collaborative dialogue as a legitimate form of meaning-making in practice. As one of three such initiatives within the curriculum (Beecham & Clark, 2004; Beecham, 2005), the Parent Tutor scheme was introduced.

About the Parent Tutor scheme.

Since 2004, and for three hours per week, 6-7 local mothers of children with significant disabilities have been employed by CSU School of Community Health to teach small groups of largely female second year speech pathology students. Over a six week period, and paid at academic tutorial rates, the tutors are asked to share their knowledge and skills around being a parent of a child with special needs. Dependent on individual life experience, therefore, the activities, content, and teaching and learning context are personally important, and thus personally powerful, to the tutors' themselves. Most of the teaching occurs off-campus, and often at the tutors' homes, and while their children may be part of the teaching process, the children themselves are not the pathological object (Foucault, 1973) of the learning.

The educational objectives are to:

- Reverse the traditional power relations of the clinician over the parent;

- Avert the traditional professional gaze away from the child who has a 'problem-to-be-fixed' to understanding family-centred practice as collaborative and negotiated;
- Devolve the power of the professional-teacher, to the parent-teacher.

From 2004, a parallel qualitative research project has been collecting interview and written data from students, tutors, and more recently new graduates in professional practice, about their learning. The balance of this paper concerns how this learning can best be represented.

The powerful learning

To date, all students, (and many members of the academic staff), believe that the Parent Tutor scheme has contributed to their professional learning in meaningful (and often life-changing) ways. A brief selection of verbatim quotes offering some typical responses follows:

Parent Tutor (2005):

See, what it's like – it's like you have to split yourself wide open and you have to open yourself; let the students see and feel your heart, and then you've got to sort of welcome them IN to your life, it's like you can't look at them as individuals, you can't judge them, you've got to just open your heart and welcome them in.

New Graduate in paediatric professional practice (2007):

Out of the whole thing [speech pathology course] Parent Tutors was the best. Every time I talk with a parent now, my tutor's face just swims into view. And it's like she's shaking her head at me every time I even THINK of making a decision without asking the parents, or writing something that might not be that sensitive or something.

2007 student:

I'm not sure what I feel half the time. It's so much, but it's good! She's [Parent Tutor] opening my eyes to things I've never even thought of before. I'm looking forward to next week to listen to her again.

While there is no claim here that every student experiences the same intensity of learning, it is clear that students gain substantially from the learning, and that its influence is deep enough to significantly colour the practice of some new graduates.

Our problem is not in having the ability to *present* the data as academic text-based research, especially given the extensive literatures around social-emotional learning and critical pedagogy that have informed the creation of the Parent Tutor scheme (for example Freire, 1994; Freire, 1995; Gardner, 1983; Elias, Zins, Weissberg, Frey, Greenberg & Haynes, 1997; Mayer, Caruso & Salovey, 1999). The problem is actually around representing this learning as academic research, and there are two components to the issue. The first concerns the equity of doing so, and the second concerns the limitations of language itself to best represent this learning.

As teachers and academics, we have learnt how the genuine concern tutors' have for students, their needs, their accomplishments and their physical and

mental well-being builds small communities of learners where students feel they can safely express themselves. We have also learnt how this communication of care seems to facilitate hope in students about their ability to be more compassionate, responsible and respectful. In creating a learning environment that fosters the affective development of students, therefore, the Parent Tutors have also created a learning environment that has fostered *our* development as teachers.

The pedagogical context seems far broader, therefore, than the tutors and the students; and our responsibility as academics far deeper than the production of text-based research. We believed that doing so would not only abstract the data from its warm and grounded context, but also, and by virtue of the process of academic production, serve to 'other' the Parent Tutors and students by academic objectivising the inter-subjective relationship forged between them. Having realised that this would represent a significant power imbalance, we understood that the teaching of equitable collaboration - like democracy - could not be neatly packaged as an educational outcome of a particular learning experience. We needed to give testimony to it by putting it into practice at a broad practical, and experiential level (Freire, 1996).

The choice of what action to take was significantly influenced by the second component of our representational problem: the messy spaces of language. As can be seen from the brief excerpts offered above, metaphor is commonly used to express the emotional impact of learning. This has occurred annually, together with markers such as, 'I don't know how to say this, but...' or, 'I can't quite explain what it felt like...' that is found in at least 50% of pieces of reflective writing. It seemed we needed to launch a more complex research process aimed at understanding the symbolic representation of the metaphors and markers. Yet to do so seemed extraordinarily intrusive. Because of this reluctance, we began to interrogate our choice of language as the vehicle for revealing learning.

Scollon & Scollon (1995), use the term 'Utilitarian discourse' to describe the preferred style and register of English speakers, and identify discourse characteristics that occur within all forms of the language that reflect the rational, objective and emotionally/ politically 'neutral' beliefs of a benevolently oriented scientific society. As a sharply gendered profession, we paired these understandings with the position that not only do women understand the world differently to men, but that the languages of the western world have been historically constructed by men, for men, and thus reflect male thinking. In sum, we queried whether the difficulties Parent Tutors and students experienced from trying to articulate their intensely subjective learning was linked to the absence of a discourse within which to frame the issues themselves (Gilligan, 1982; Irigary, 1975; Rose, 1994).

These insights, in addition to our need to broaden the experience of equity in the sharing of learning, prompted us to explore photography as a vehicle to represent learning for 2007. This choice was because of our culture being photocentric, where the medium is accessible and everyday. Thus speech therapy partnered with the CSU photography program, and their students

(and lecturer Margaret Waller) became embedded within the Parent Tutor groups for the six week program. As we also wished to broaden the learning to our local community, we partnered with Albury City Council to host a week-long photographic exhibition that displayed the images from the student-tutor interactions. This exhibition, 'Tread softly: Learning from the Heart' also encouraged the participation of our local community in the interpretive research process via text and verbal comment. The images and data generated from this exhibition will form the bulk of the presentation at the AUCEA conference in Alice Springs.

Conclusion

To re-cap, we do not believe that the traditional epistemological assumptions underlying the education of speech therapists best prepares students for collaborative, negotiated, holistic and trans-disciplinary practice. To help develop notions around equitable and democratic relationship as a foundation for developing these skills, this paper has offered a theoretical justification for initiating the Parent Tutor partnership. Yet because of the aims of our curriculum change process, we have come to question our responsibilities in unreflectively representing this learning as text-based academic research. Instead, and through the medium of photography, and with the partnership support of Albury City Council, we have broadened both the presentation, and representation, of the learning from this initiative. In this way, we hope to demonstrate to students, tutors, and community that we are, as a program, committed to collaborative, negotiated, holistic and trans-disciplinary practice.

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Sustainable Online Community Engagement

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Abstract

This paper explores the concept of sustainability in relation to online community engagement. This is done in the context of a series of related projects involving university students working with community groups on a variety of information and communications technology tasks. The intention is to provide a specification for an online structure that enables community groups to support one another to achieve a range of online ICT outcomes.

Background

CommunityWebs

In 2002 the Office for Volunteers, Government of South Australia, approached the School of Communication, University of South Australia, with a proposal for involving young people (our students) with the building of websites for South Australian community groups. The result was the collaborative Communitywebs project (<http://www.communitywebs.org>). Students, as part of their coursework, work with a community group over a number of weeks to develop a website that is subsequently hosted on the Communitywebs server free of charge. Since 2002, 231 South Australian community groups have participated, helped by 276 University of South Australia students from a wide range of disciplines. The Communitywebs project is ongoing and has received funding for 2007/8. In 2004 the project received the University of South Australia's Chancellors Award for Excellence in Community Service.

Interaction between community groups and students is done almost exclusively online throughout the website building process. This is believed to be a key factor in the long term success of the project (Marriott and Patterson 2004) as it is closely aligned with the capabilities and preferences of the students and introduces community groups to the online arena.

Ongoing support to community groups is provided online by a project officer funded by project money. Face-to-face training has also been provided by the project officer and contract staff at various intervals to ensure that community groups are able to maintain and develop their websites after the student(s) have exited the relationship.

Online Community Engagement

Experience gained from the Communitywebs project and discussions held with the Office for Volunteers in 2005 led to the belief that our students could assist community groups with other activities in addition to website building. In

2006, in a parallel and complementary effort, the Online Community Engagement Project (OCE) was initiated. Funded once again by the Office for Volunteers, the OCE project is a widening of scope involving the transfer of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Event Management, Marketing and Public Relations skills from University of South Australia Students to South Australian Community Groups. OCE has directly involved 54 students from 4 courses matched with 31 community groups in activities such as video production, print-based brochure design and publication, public relations, information architecture, and collaborative wiki development.

A curriculum for a University level Online Community Engagement course has been developed with the intention of running this course in 2008. This course is specially designed to adequately prepare students, and then allow them to work with community groups on a range of community engagement projects. The course is now going through the University course approval process. Once again the primary communication mechanism is online.

The Online Community Engagement (OCE) project is strongly influenced by the successful United Nations Virtual Volunteering project (<http://www.onlinevolunteering.org/>) and the work of Ellis and Craven (2000). The OCE project is ongoing and has received funding from the Office for Volunteers in 2007/8.

Sustainable Online Community Engagement

As the relationship between the Office for Volunteers and the School of Communication has matured it has become important to look at ways of ensuring the long term success of the Communitywebs and OCE projects. From a University/Student perspective this can be achieved by making both of the projects part of the curriculum and is centred on the development of an Online Community Engagement course. Currently participating students are sourced from a wide variety of courses across the University and this involves considerable negotiation and flexibility between the project officer and teaching staff.

In the present structure of the Communitywebs and OCE projects the participating community groups initially interact with students and later with the project officer but rarely with each other. This is more by omission than by conscious design and promotes a culture of dependency and does not promote ICT development that is community group driven. As a result of these concerns a third iteration, the *Sustainable Online Community Engagement* project was funded in 2007/8.

The *Sustainable Online Community Engagement* (SOCE) project aims to provide participating South Australian Community Organisations with a developmental pathway to move forward from a simple web-based online presence into the realm of collaboration and information sharing using current online technology. The intention is to encapsulate the successful *Online Community Engagement* (OCE) and *Community Webs* (CWP) projects in a self-supporting member-driven collaborative online environment. This project

is an important step in achieving a sustainable ICT infrastructure - to allow participating organisations to continue to operate in an online environment once formal intervention from the University of South Australia and the Office for Volunteers is reduced to a sustainable level.

Designing for Sustainable Online Community Engagement

The task is therefore to design for sustainable online community engagement. To achieve this I will argue that what we need is to build a sustainable online learning community. This online learning community will allow its members to continue to use and develop the ICT tools developed during their partnership with University of South Australia students once that relationship has ended. In essence it will be an online social space where community groups can discuss and find solutions to their shared ICT problems. The Office for Volunteers is keen that the model be scalable so the domain can be extended into other aspects of volunteerism beyond ICT.

The intended learning that takes place in this online situation is aligned with theories of the social construction of knowledge (eg. Vygotsky 1978, Hung 2001) and the emphasis is on interaction, shared understandings, and active construction of knowledge. This is in contrast with traditional *Instructivist* thinking (eg Herrington 2000) where knowledge is transferred to a largely passive audience. If this project was to follow an instructivist model then it is likely that the outcome would be an online reference, created by the project team, for the community groups to consult. The participatory model proposed here is intended to follow ideas of social construction and is likely to be sustainable.

There are many examples of communities on the web that seem to have a continuing, independent (from government funding) existence and are thriving. For example, the Delica Club website (<http://delicaclub.com>) is a member-driven website with over 3000 members and discusses the maintenance, merits, and lifestyle of owning a Mitsubishi Delica 4wd wagon. These cars are not available in Australia and must be imported from Japan on an individual basis. There are no English language manuals for the car and parts are not officially available from Mitsubishi in Australia. The Delica Club website is therefore a critical resource for Delica Owners in Australia.

There are of course many more sites that support a variety of diverse yet similar communities including boat owners, expectant mothers, parents, and so on. The sites use a variety of technologies to achieve their ends including bulletin boards, blogs, wikis, email lists, and webpages; some will use just one technology others will use a variety. I believe it is important not to concentrate on the specific online technology in use but rather on how the online community is structured and organised. The choice of technology can remain fluid and selected on need and availability, and while the importance of the technology in terms of usability is recognised as being crucial, the intention is to keep away from the imperatives of *Technological Determinism* (eg. Veblen 1921, Chandler 1996), (the autonomy and inevitability of technology and its effects on society), and concentrate on *Social Construction* (eg. Pannabecker

1991) where social and cultural values have a strong influence over the selection and development of technologies. De Souza and Preece (2004) echo this sentiment with:

“What is quite clear from the number of vacant community spaces on the Internet is that technology alone, even state-of-the-art technology, does not guarantee a successful online community. Success is determined by social factors (i.e. sociability) as well as software functionality and usability. (p580)

What then determines whether an online community will thrive or wither? Kim (2000) provides an often cited (eg. Bishop 2005, de Souza and Preece 2004, Vries and Kommers 2004, Koh et al. 2007), prescriptive account of the process of online community building. She identifies four principals that characterise sustainable online communities: (1) clear purpose or vision, (2) clear definition of members roles, (3) leadership by community moderators and (4) online/offline events (Koh et al. 2007 :71) Of particular interest is her identification of the social roles within an online community; in order of increasing responsibility they are: visitor, novice, regular, leader, and elder. She stresses the importance of supporting the leaders and elders in an online community as they are pivotal to the success of the community.

“Behind the scenes of any thriving community, you'll invariably find effective, dedicated leadership. Leaders breathe life into a community: they greet newcomers, coordinate events, manage programs, maintain the infrastructure, and keep the activities lively and civil.

That's why it's crucial to build a strong community leader program. Well-managed leaders will keep your community running smoothly, and make it a friendly, responsive, and satisfying place to be. The key is to understand what motivates your leader, and give them the tools to do their jobs well.” (Kim 2000 : para 1 Ch5)

More often the academic focus is on engaging passive members rather than supporting established leaders. Bishop (2005 :1882)summarises the situation:

“So far, little research has been done into what drives these outstanding individuals to contribute to online communities, with much focus being on why less involved members such as lurkers do not participate.”

There is a clear direction from the literature to suggest that our emphasis should not be on encouraging universal involvement from all 216 Communitywebs and OCE groups (at least initially), rather the challenge for us is to identify and nurture potential leaders among this cohort and use these leaders as a nucleus to grow the online community.

Of course the Office for Volunteers and the University of South Australia as project managers also have a leadership role to play in the building of this

online community and it is likely that a representative(s) from these groups will take on an initial leadership role – gradually relinquishing control as the leadership cohort matures. Interestingly there is a parallel here with Kim’s (2000) notion of STAFF who act as paid facilitators of the online community and while they encourage greater participation from leaders and members they are always present throughout the life of the community albeit in a diminishing capacity relative to the activities of members. Fig 1, below, from Kim (2000 :Ch5) shows the ideal contribution and influence of STAFF and MEMBERS over time as an online community develops. It is clear from this that the STAFF never exit the relationship and if this model is adopted then the University of South Australia and the Office for Volunteers will always have a role in the operation of this online community.

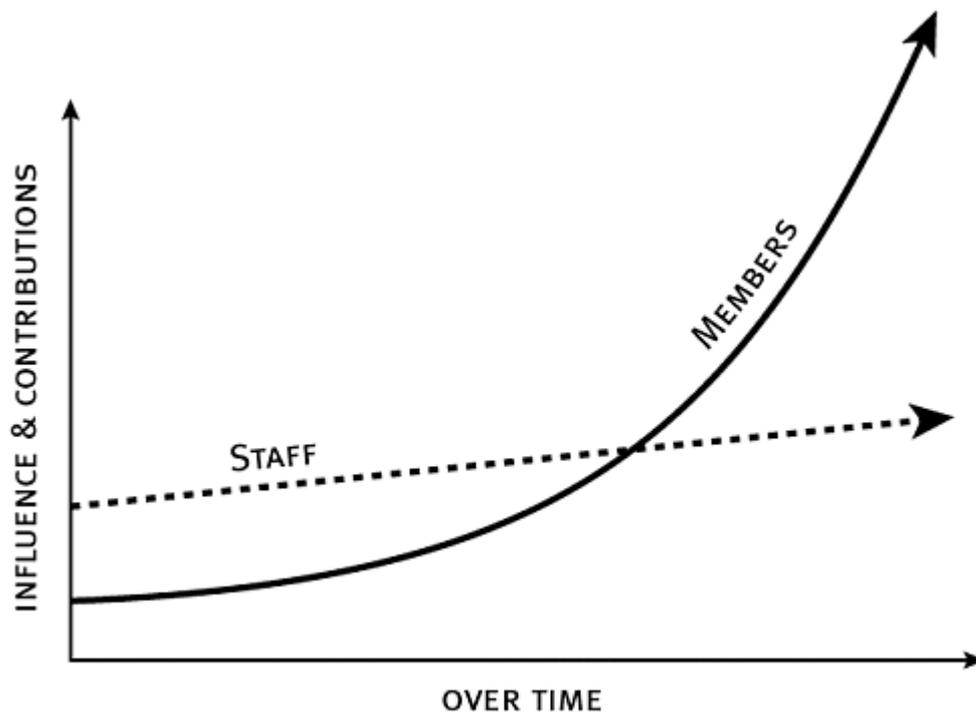


Fig. 1: Contribution and Influence of STAFF and MEMBERS over time for an ideal online community (from (Kim 2000))

The importance of STAFF in terms of sustainability is recognized by Koh et al (2007 :70) and is succinctly summarized by “Virtual communities are unlikely to be sustainable unless properly stimulated.”

Identification of leaders

How then do we identify contenders for this leadership cohort? From our experience with community group members in the past 6 years, primarily based on email records, we can identify a set of qualities that can be used as a filter to select potential leaders.

- Members who maintain regular email or phone contact with the project staff.
- Members who report technical server problems to the project staff (an indication of their desire to see the project run well)
- Members who regularly maintain their websites (evidenced by server logs and last updated times)
- and lastly members who respond to a general call for participation

The leadership cohort will be populated by 1. invitation based on the above criteria and 2. a general call for participation.

Building the Online Community

The leadership cohort in partnership with the project staff will meet face-to-face initially to agree on the specification of the proposed online community. The project staff will then build a prototype of the technical infrastructure (eg. wiki/blog/bulletinboard/ mailing list) and using an Action Research method eg (Checkland and Holwell 1998) combined with case study data collection techniques (eg. Patton 1980, Yin 1994) ; the prototype system will be successively refined to achieve an optimised system. It is likely that three to four development cycles will be needed. Initially the leadership team will trial the prototype for 3-4 weeks and a wide range of data will be collected (survey, observation, measurement). The project staff in consultation with the leaders will analyse the data and use this information to redevelop the prototype which is then trialed for a further 2-3 weeks. At this point a small number of ordinary members will be invited to participate in the trial and the community will begin to grow. The process of successive refinement will continue with ever increasing number of participants led by the leadership cohort and supported by the project staff.

There is opinion in the literature (Bishop 2005, de Souza and Preece 2004, Vries and Kommers 2004, Koh et al. 2007) that there will always be a continuing role for the project staff in facilitating the online community and supporting the leadership cohort – it is therefore unlikely that the online community will be sustainable without intervention from project staff. However the model outlined in this paper should reduce the reliance of the online community on the project staff and allow for it to grow in directions determined by its membership. Initially the principles outlined by Kim (2000) will be used as a reference by the project in many of the design decisions. As the project matures there will be greater opportunity to test and reflect on these principles and their applicability to this domain will be under review. To ensure sustainability all participants in the project should agree and document a life cycle where regular review and change can be implemented.

Future Directions

The Action Research model used in the development of the Sustainable Online Community will provide a rich source of data and it is likely that many interesting aspects of the process will emerge and will be the source of further research and directions for the project. The immediate outcome of a

Sustainable Online Community for the 250 participating organisations should provide a useful exemplar that can be reviewed and potentially adopted for other domains and situations. Success of this project will be directly measured by the number of community groups who successfully adopt and continue to use the ICT tools developed for them by our students.

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SWIRL (Story Writing in Remote Locations): A 12 year IBM/Victoria University community learning partnership in remote Indigenous communities

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Abstract:

SWIRL is a community education program developed over the past 12 years in partnership between IBM Australia and the School of Education at Victoria University. It involves up to 40 preservice teachers and youth workers, with their academic colleagues working in remote Indigenous communities to conduct a month long holiday program, focused on first language and English literacy with young people and their families. The project has encouraged many graduate teachers to return to teach in the Northern Territory communities. This paper reports the practices and outcomes of the project over the past ten years and the directions for the future as it strengthens the program and develops national consortium of universities with state and federal government support.

SWIRL began as a small informal relationship between Victoria University staff and students and remote communities with a focus on educational support. It quickly developed with IBM support to a standard component of teacher education at Victoria University to complement and extend VU and IBM commitment to inclusion of Indigenous education in teacher education. It became evident that Aboriginal students in communities were highly engaged in the literacy and physical activity programs offered in SWIRL and the learning for everyone was significant. As the program has grown it now demands a significant research and development focus to more fully document its impact and potential.

Introduction

When the Roman empire was under the watchful eye of Constantine the Great, he decided that Christianity would be the state sponsored religion. This occurred because, having the “chi-rho” (or the ‘sign of Christ’) symbol appear in a dream, had it inscribed on his helmet, and on his soldiers’ equipment, and proceeded, the next battle session against his rival, emperor Maxentius, to deliver a whipping! Against all odds, he inflicted a crushing defeat on his opponents, and declared that he owed that victory to ‘the god of the Christians’. Signed sealed and delivered. The year was 312 AD.

Constantine from then was the champion of the Christian religion: everywhere the Romans went, the “culture” of Christianity followed. What was once a conversion to Roman culture became increasingly a conversion to Christian culture. That -or the sword! It seems that the English speaking world has had a similar understanding in relation to the teaching and learning of literacy. Literacy in Australia has consistently meant English, and consistently meant Westernisation.

While the Samaritans had created a version of “literacy” some 5000 years before Constantine “saw the light”, in order to help control their slaves and determine who was slacking off during “heavy bag-carrying” working days, Constantine perfected the understanding of intimidation and “standardised testing”: You do it our way, or else! With “Romanisation”, came Christianity, or death.

There were numerous examples throughout history of groups around the world who had developed versions of literacy. The Chinese – while an enormously complex version of literacy, had reading and writing - within their own cultural contexts, millennia before the western world even considered reading and writing. Chinese people learned within the boundaries of their literacy. It seems ludicrous to even mention that their script was not English. But it wasn't. And it wasn't about English countryside cultural life. It was Chinese through and through.

The Egyptians also “did their own thing”! Archaeologists and anthropologists are still to this day arguing and researching the meanings of the complex Egyptian texts. The French, Spanish, Dutch, Russian, Indian etc, etc, had the written word – and to each it was a vehicle to record, study and advance their cultural and complex worlds.

It is becoming less of an argument about the power of English as the lingua franca in the world economy, and it is valuable to realise and accept that a high level of proficiency in English will only advantage the learner. However, that this proficiency in English should come at the expense of one's traditional values and beliefs is disturbing, as well as unnecessary. In each of the above examples the local community shaped and determined the communication framework and so the language.

The SWIRL program (Story Writing in Remote Locations) provides and demonstrate a number of approaches to learning to be literate that not only show respect for traditional and day to day cultural activities, but engage children and adults, as communities, in the processes that lead to good literate behaviour, and open the way for not only “good literate behaviour”, but “good literate behaviour in English”.

What is SWIRL?

Australian Aborigines are the custodians of the world's oldest living cultures. Their stories date back many thousands of years, well before human written records began.

A long term partnership between IBM and the School of Education at Victoria University, the Story Writing in Remote Locations (SWIRL) program enables remote Aboriginal communities in Central Australia to use modern technology to produce digital and print versions of their communities' stories, as well as documenting their day to day activities. Over the past eleven years, SWIRL has built up an archive of many hundreds of stories, providing a unique teaching aid for local schools and helping to preserve stories and processes that might otherwise be lost.

By encouraging young people in the SWIRL communities to record aspects of their lives, the project has helped to improve local literacy levels. It also provides pre-service teachers and youth workers from Australia and overseas with invaluable experience of the satisfaction – and the challenges – of working with remote communities to develop literacy programs that reflect local lifestyles, values and culture. Many of these students return as teachers when they complete their training.

Held once a year, the month-long Story Writing In Remote Locations (SWIRL) program is attended by primary and early secondary school children in each SWIRL community during their school holidays: 100% attendance is the norm. The whole community is often involved, with elders contributing their knowledge and experience.

Children as young as five take part in organised activities then document them in English and, where possible, their own language. SWIRL team members help them to use digital cameras and computers to tell their stories using written and spoken words, video, audio recording, artwork, photos, and stop motion animation. Each child then publishes their story as a printed, laminated and bound book to share with friends and family, with a copy going into the school library. Children are also encouraged to complete their books as digital stories, by adding their voice to a PowerPoint presentation, as each book is initially composed in PowerPoint. Voice additions are done in English, and where the appropriate skills are available, the children's local language. Video clips of children involved in SWIRL activities are also added, which again enhances the "story" experience for the children involved.

A longer term aim of SWIRL is to engage children in life long learning. Drop out rates for remote Aboriginal children in the Northern Territory throughout their secondary schooling are extreme, with only three year 12 graduates in 2004 (the first three to ever graduate from year twelve in remote communities) to approximately 20 last year, and an expected 80 this year, (figures from former Minister for Education, Syd Sterling, Darwin, August 29, 2006). SWIRL's success in engaging children in literacy activities is seen as crucial if

these statistics are to continue to increase. When remote Aboriginal children drop out of school, they rarely recommence formal education.

Statistics for 2004 also show alarming literacy levels for remote Aboriginal children in the Northern Territory at the year three level. Results show 93% (89% at year 5) of mainstream Australian children successfully achieved literacy benchmarks; Australia-wide, 83% (70% at year 5) of Aboriginal children achieved literacy benchmarks, while only 20% (21% at year 5) of remote NT Aboriginal children were tested as achieving benchmarks (Storry, K., 2006). This data is flawed, it can be argued, as these children were tested in a language that was foreign to them – English, which is generally their 2nd, 3rd, or in many cases, their 4th language.

It is interesting to note that nationally students scored lower in year 5 than in year 3 for mainstream as well as Aboriginal children, but that there was stability, albeit small, in remote Northern Territory Aboriginal children's scores. Generally, urban Aboriginal children Australia wide have English as their first language. Urban Aboriginal students in the Northern territory scored significantly better than their remote counterparts: 57% at year 3, and 62% at year 5 achieving national benchmarks.

These statistics seem to highlight a number of issues, one being testing per se, and another being the central focus on English and yet the third the engagement of the whole community in the education of young people which is typical for Indigenous communities and which therefore means that initial education is oral and in their first language, ie their community Indigenous language.

Even the testing regime to determine literacy levels requires adherence to the English language, with those in power either unaware, or in denial of the fact that children speak other languages as their first language, and their lifestyles and community engagement with education. The content of the tests is also a critical factor in the test results, and there is much written on how that can determine children's test scores, but that is not covered in this paper. This structural and cultural disconnect serves to under-acknowledge student capability and ability and misrepresent schools and communities..

Nicholls, Crowley and Watt argue that much of what has gone wrong with education of Aboriginal children is the flawed belief that Aboriginal children learn differently to mainstream children. They identified the practice and argue strongly against the notion of "Aboriginal Learning Styles".

'Learning styles' theory is now thoroughly embedded into the pedagogical practices of almost every Australian institution with a brief for Aboriginal education; in fact, in all probability that means every educational institution of this nature. (Undated).

In the 1980 book "Culture and Learning: Tradition and Education in Northeast Arnhem Land" by Stephen Harris there are identified 'five major Aboriginal

learning strategies' which Nicholls (et al), see as opposite to non-Aboriginal learning styles. Nicholls (et al) see this approach is inherently racist. The five "Aboriginal Learning Styles" are described as:

- Learning by observation and imitation rather than by verbal instruction: or learning by looking and copying, not by talking.
- Learning by personal trial and error rather than by verbal instruction with demonstration: or, learning by doing, not by talking plus demonstration.
- Learning in real life, rather than by practice in artificial settings: or learning by real life, not by 'practice'. Closely related to this is learning 'wholes', not sequenced parts, or learning by successive approximations of the efficient product.
- Learning context-specific skills, versus generalizable principles: or, learning skills for specific tasks rather than learning generalizable principles.
- Person-orientation in learning, not information-orientation: or focus on people and relationships rather than on information. This is related to the absence of the institutionalized office of teacher in Yolgnu society. (<http://edoz.com.au/educationaustralia/contents/pastconts.html>)

This understanding of education for Aboriginal children in remote communities is very widespread. Many presumptions are made, about the way Aboriginal children learn, and the system has been set up to institutionalise that understanding. That such an approach has been shown to be so unsuccessful, but has been entrenched for so long, is difficult to understand. It appears that the other advantage of continuing to believe that Aboriginal learning Styles are different to non-Aboriginal children is that the blame for not achieving the same results as non- Aboriginal children can be rested with them. The tests may be more about western culture than literacy.

At that time most schooling for Aboriginal children disregarded, indeed, actively suppressed, traditional knowledge and learning, concentrating exclusively on western content and learning. Under the assimilation policy, an often evangelical fervour had been brought to the task of teaching Aboriginal children white society's ways of living. The corollary of this was a conscious effort to stamp out Aboriginal lifeways (Nichols, et al, undated).

SWIRL, which accepts, and honours children's home cultures, began as a small informal relationship between Victoria University staff and students and remote communities with a focus on educational support, which directly and deliberately challenges the status of English as the initial, and only, vehicle for learning to be literate. SWIRL quickly developed with IBM support to a standard component of teacher education at Victoria University to complement and extend VU and IBM commitment to inclusion of Indigenous education in teacher education. It became evident that Aboriginal students in communities were highly engaged in the literacy and physical activity programs offered in SWIRL and the learning for everyone was significant. As the program has grown it demands a significant research and development

focus to more fully document its impact and potential, particularly as it challenges the status quo.

SWIRL has been operating for 11 years with strong support from NT Department of Education Employment and Training and Australian Federal Government Department of Science, Education and Training, teachers and families in communities, IBM and Victoria University staff and preservice teachers. The most significant outcomes from SWIRL have been teacher recruitment and student engagement. Both are critical elements in the achievement of improved learning outcomes for young people and for community capacity building, while recognising that currently SWIRL operates for one month each year.

The data which we have analysed indicates a number of critical achievements have resulted from SWIRL, including improved teacher education, professional teacher learning, enhanced literacy skills for school students and successful teacher recruitment to NT Indigenous communities. As well Aboriginal children participate in the month long SWIRL initiative at double the attendance rate achieved normally in the schools. This increased engagement of young people in learning and literacy supports their longer term retention and achievement in education. To date this has been an engagement project for teacher education and community capacity building and it has not been possible to fund sustained research and development despite strong interest from other communities across Australia and universities who work with those communities.

Some Outcomes of SWIRL to date

- SWIRL is conducted in school holidays but still school student attendance and engagement in SWIRL is double that of regular school attendance
- 350 preservice teachers and 20 preservice youth workers have attended SWIRL and graduated from the School of Education at Victoria University
- 35 graduate teachers have returned to teach for a minimum of 2 years in remote communities (the average length of teacher appointment for non-SWIRL graduates in communities is 7 months).
- 2 graduates are currently principals - at Willowra (400 kms NW of Alice Springs) and Atitjere, (240 kms NE of Alice Springs)
- 14 other graduates are currently employed in remote schools in the Northern Territory.

- The 2006 SWIRL program included 40 preservice teachers and youth workers in 5 community schools, involving approx. 30 – 40 Aboriginal students in each community.

Project Development Goals

With appropriate funding being granted, it is proposed to develop and expand SWIRL to a national project in conjunction with a consortium including Australian and State/Territory governments, IBM and at least 2 other universities as well as Victoria University. This will also mean a more rigorous research framework can be developed to report and develop the work. The research project currently underway aims to identify and make explicit the effectiveness of SWIRL in enhancing the engagement of young people in literacy and schooling in community members, who then inform the SWIRL team of community requirements of visitors, local taboos, protocols for each location and general requests.

The school staff are also requested to assist the SWIRL team identify young school leavers who may be willing to work with Student teachers in the setting up and running of ongoing publishing in each community after the SWIRL team departs. There is limited success in this field due to the complex nature of each community, and the rapid change generally occurring in many communities.

Isolation is one of the factors in the high turnover of teaching and school staff. SWIRL has deliberately set out to lessen the impact of that isolation with the use of technology. Therefore access to Internet and email facilities is seen as crucial. On a number of occasions, where that access has not been possible, SWIRL participants has experienced many personal difficulties, which has diminished the whole experience for them. Many teachers in remote communities have not had experience with Internet and email, and so it is not unusual to be without access, although this is becoming less of an issue each year.

In line with that attempt to lessen the feelings of isolation, the SWIRL program has operated a web site through the “MSN” network. Students have been able to chat, discuss issues, and plan social events in main population centres for weekends throughout SWIRL. For reasons of security, this access was denied schools for the last two years, again greatly diminishing the personal and professional experience for many participants. Many SWIRL participants are also regular users of video conferencing hardware and software, making contact with friends and family over great distances a highly valuable experience. The NT school network has had a block on video conferencing, frustrating SWIRL participants’ attempts to stay in close contact with family and friends as possible. The NT education administrators have agreed to allow SWIRL participants access to both MSN networks and video conferencing for 2007 SWIRL.

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The effects of community engaged learning and teaching on instructors involved in academic service learning: Learning through community service

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Abstract:

While there is abundant literature about the outcomes of academic service learning for students, there is much less attention paid to outcomes for academics who are teaching community-engaged subjects. Pribbenow (2005) argues that “generally, service learning led many faculty to be more meaningfully engaged in and committed to teaching” (2005:27) as well as to other aspects of their academic life. This paper explores similar effects on instructors teaching academic service learning through Learning through Community Service (LCS) at the University of Western Sydney (UWS). The data being discussed in this paper focuses on the restructuring of instructors’ pedagogical approaches in their LCS strands; alterations in instructor’s relationships with their students and in their knowledge about their students; and changes in instructor’s orientation to teaching. Data are based on a series of semi-structured, open-ended interviews completed with the 10 instructors who have taught LCS strands.

Introduction

Academic service learning is one form of community engagement in which academic staff are actively involved in engaged teaching and learning. A rich and abundant literature attests to the effectiveness of academic service learning in improving the interest and involvement of students in their own learning (see for example Astin, et.al 2000; Eyler and Giles 1999; Fredericksen, 2000; Markus et.al 1993; O’Hara; 2001; Roschelle, et al 2000; Sax and Austin 1997, Sipe, 2001). Additionally, there is growing awareness of the importance of community linkages and agency involvement in making such activities fruitful and sustainable (Gronski and Pigg 2000; Parker-Gwin 1996). However, there are many fewer studies exploring the effects on faculty involved in teaching community-engaged subjects (Hesser 1995; Kerrigan, et. al. 2003; Leh, 2005; Pribbenow 2005). This paper explores the responses of faculty involved in teaching a strand in Learning through Community Service, an academic service learning subject taught at the University of Western Sydney. Themes explored in this paper include: responses by teaching staff to pedagogical issues such as the restructuring of their approaches to teaching and learning; alterations in the instructor’s relationships with their students and in their knowledge about their students; and changes in the instructor’s orientation to teaching.

Learning through Community Service (LCS) is a 20 point unit organized through the College of Arts at the University of Western Sydney (UWS). LCS began in 2005 and is organized into cohort strands with each instructor designing their own strand and working with UWS students in some form of community engagement that links academic knowledge and reflection with community service. A key aspect of LCS is that each strand meets a specific need of the community, and each student is required to do roughly 100 hours of actual service over the course of the semester. In addition, approximately sixty hours are designated for activities such as the orientation week, periodic seminars, written assessments, and end of term activities. The unit is organized around a three or four day beginning orientation; a reliance on online discussion groups and feedback from the instructors, as well as mid-term seminar meetings, and a final seminar. LCS is organized to avoid conflicting with regular classes and provides students leeway in scheduling their community activities around their other commitments.

Student assessment is based on regular assignments requiring students to reflect on their current LCS activities; the connections of these activities to relevant literature, changes in activities and/or plans for mentees or agencies with whom LCS students are working. In addition, LCS students provide a final essay or portfolio which is a consolidation of reflections, synthesis and overview of what has been learned as part of their final grade. An innovation in evaluating student's work is the use of WebCT on which students upload their assignments for their instructors. Each instructor then reads and comments and makes suggestions for the improvement of each student's assignment. The student is to improve the assignment and at the end of the term submit both the initial assessment with the instructor's suggestions and the corrected copy back to his/her instructor along with the final overview essay. A significant portion of the student's final assessment is based on the corrected work as well as on the portfolios/final essays that are submitted.

Theoretically, the importance of LCS is linked to the work of educational theorists such as Boyer (1994), Dewey (1937), Harkavy (2004) and others, and to cognitive theorists such as Lave and Wegner (1995) who write of situated learning and the importance of context in pedagogical practice. In the move to underfunded, industrialized forms of higher education in Australia, the need for alternative forms of educational practice that permit interactive, reciprocal and affirming exchange among educational participants is deeply necessary. LCS is just one such attempt to provide alternative learning scenarios within Australian higher education.

Methodology

The research design for this study featured semi-structured, open-ended interviews with 10 instructors who have participated in teaching LCS strands. Because this was an exploratory study, the design was kept simple and limited to only those faculty who have been involved with LCS. Each interview took between 30 minutes to an hour, and two of the interviews were done by phone. In each case the interview was recorded and a transcript made. Questions for the instructors focused on the activities of the students in the

strand; the involvement and response of the community; instructor's reactions to using on-line methods of communicating with students; their changing patterns of interaction with students; students' response to their LCS strand; the instructor's evaluation of student's assignments and their perceptions of changes in them; the instructors' experience using WebCT for assignments and their student's reactions to it; highlights of their LCS experience; and their suggestions for improving LCS.

In the analysis of the data, I employed a qualitative, interpretivist perspective focused on understanding the reactions of the LCS instructors to their experiences of teaching their strands. Each interview was read with the intent of looking for emergent themes that provided perspectives on the experiences of the strand leaders. All instructors involved in teaching a strand in any term were interviewed. Three of the instructors have taught their LCS strand at least twice and they have been interviewed twice to ascertain differences in the teaching or learning involved in each strand they have taught. In all a total of 13 interviews have been done.

In analyzing the data, the themes used in the research by Pribbenow (2005) were particularly useful in guiding my thinking. Themes similar to those of Pribbenow occurred in the LSC data, and differences occurred as well. For example, LCS exists as an independent, stand alone subject which is different from many situations in the United States where service learning is attached to already existing subjects. LCS provided a pleasant change from current teaching arrangements of large lectures and repeated tutorials, a format of instruction not necessarily followed in the US.

Limitations of this study are related to the focus on the perceptions of only the teaching staff and the lack of comparative information from students or from community agencies and partners. While such data have been collected, they were not included in this paper. Additionally, the data on the teaching staff will be enriched by longitudinal data that will be generated by interviews with them over the next few years.

Findings

Of primary concern in this paper are the pedagogical effects of instructor's involvement in LCS. What is immediately apparent in the data is the changed relationship of teachers to their students. Among the themes that emerged, three can be briefly mentioned. The areas are 1) deeper connections with students as learners and as individuals, 2) enhanced knowledge of student learning processes and outcomes, and 3) an increased use of student-centered teaching and learning approaches (Pribbenow 2005).

A deeper connection and relationship with students

The ten teaching staff all thought that LCS enabled them to interact with students in profoundly new ways. As one instructor said, "Because it's a new subject, we are all starting from scratch, everyone is learning together." LCS provided a new way of relating to students. In some cases it meant "building

rapport with students, and not being a policeman over them.” Other instructors noted that their students seemed more like “colleagues” than traditional students. This instructor went on to say, “The students are really engaged, and want feedback or suggestions. . . our interaction is discussion-based which is how it should be.” Other teaching staff thought their students “learned heaps.”

Contributing to this change was the fact that students had to take the initiative in deciding what projects to do and how to implement these activities. The fact that there were no formal classes, but a great reliance on online discussion boards and the WebCT meant students had to work together, take initiative, and make decisions among themselves. They had to implement their decisions and follow through. Instructors thought that it was this greater sense of responsibility and involvement that encouraged LCS students to seek out their instructors in unusual ways. For example, in almost all cases, the teaching staff reported that students would just drop by their office to ask questions, seek advice, or check something out. “They didn’t have appointments, they just dropped by.”

As a result, the traditional student – teacher relationship was broken down, and teaching staff noted how they had to adjust their expectations about the nature of teaching. As one person said, “This is a new way for me to relate to them (students). The students want to see me. . . . I never planned on this, but I can’t get away from it. I have fortnightly meetings with them, not a class, I show them how planning is done at the university.”

Everyone was aware that they knew these LCS students much better than they did students in their regular classes, even though they tried to learn names and connect to their regular students. Partially this is due, of course, to the smaller class sizes. But the unconventional structuring of the LCS unit and its emphasis on student’s service to others, on linking classroom learning to real life activities, and on reflective practice that requires students to derive meaning from their engagement with others, also contributes to this more intense learning environment.

An enhanced knowledge of students learning processes and outcomes

Most teaching staff were of the opinion that their students were learning “heaps and enjoying it,” and UWS instructors were aware of their changed roles in relation to students. For example, in becoming mentors to other students, UWS students realized that mentoring others includes personal as well as academic knowledge, and that the process of being involved with others includes more than just the formal reason that brings them together. An instructor discussed talking with her students about why this was okay, within limits, and helped the mentoring students to establish boundaries with their mentees. Instructors were aware that students also enjoyed having the “opportunities to do things: it put the responsibilities on them to get things done: they took responsibility and did amazing things.” Others mentioned “the tenacity of students was lovely to see,” or that students “have to learn to cope with new situations. They’re excited, terrified, and then eventually okay.”

A few instructors mentioned that students sometimes didn't follow through on promises, didn't show up for video shootings, or after school activities. As one instructor said, "You're reliant on them to be accountable. It's interesting relying on them to produce material we can use." Additionally, being so involved with students in more informal ways enabled the teaching staff to see how busy students are, juggling family life and part time work with their classes; they came to know the students personally and thought of them as individuals not just as students.

An increased use of student-oriented teaching and learning approaches

As LCS cohort leaders, instructors were forced to continually adjust how they taught their strands and how to run them. As one staff member said,

The demands of (my strand) are out of the usual pattern of the teaching routine of giving lectures, holding tutes (tutorials), office hours and so on. So I have to figure out what to do, whom to talk to to get something done, how to do it. I'm learning in the process.

Other staff members talked of changes in their teaching that included having to decide what readings they suggested to students, or what they included in on-line discussions because of what students wanted to know or didn't know. This meant that the knowledge teaching staff offered students was tailored to their needs, not to what one instructor call the "tyranny of the book and the syllabus." Examples of what students didn't know ranged from how to do research, or what a timeline was, to the meaning of words such as "synthesize."

Staff noted that they became quite familiar with the abilities and interests of their students. For example, staff reported that some students could make numerous cold calls trying to get support from schools in sending school supplies to Africa, but froze at the thought of addressing a huge lecture class of several hundred students. Other students showed "amazing initiative in developing materials that the schools could use. Like the video (of four kinder students), that was just one of the things they did."

The staff also noted that students who weren't academically strong, nonetheless did well in the LCS strands and mastered the art of reflective writing in the process. "I had one student who wasn't tops academically, but LCS gave her chances to do things she had never done before and it gave a real boost to her self confidence."

About themselves, teaching staff noted, "I've been an engaged learner . . . it's been good for me." Another instructor said, "This has kept me interested in teaching." Still another commented, "I've had to learn to hold back and just

suggest avenues to follow-up, and not provide all the references. I've had to rethink my role as a teacher."

Universally, all the staff would be interested in teaching another strand of LCS, if other commitments didn't prohibit it. The fact that 3 staff have already taught more than one strand of LCS and that others (except for one person), plan on teaching in LCS again, attests to the excitement and reciprocity of engagement that is occurring among teachers and students. The reaction of the community agencies, although not included in this paper, is also overwhelmingly positive. Whether primary schools, long day care centers, UWS student service offices, or a community in Africa, the response from these agencies have been immensely affirming of the presence of LCS students. While much more can be written about the response of teaching staff, students, and community agencies to LCS, it is sufficient here to note the positive beginnings that have been made in creating a show piece for UWS as a university deeply involved in community engaged learning and teaching.

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