Community-University Partnerships: Connecting for Change

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Although higher education reflects the values of the larger society in many ways … universities are not simply extensions of society nor are they helpless in the face of social constraints. Rather they have the potential to act intentionally in fostering moral and civic learning.

Winter, Wiseman & Muirhead, 2006

We add our voices to many others and welcome you to the third international Community-University Exposition (CUexpo 2008) hosted by the University of Victoria. This year’s theme is Community-University Partnerships: Connecting for Change. It is significant because it recognises the value of both universities and communities; it acknowledges the major transformations communities and higher education institutions are currently undergoing; and it responds to the growing need to build stronger alliances and working relationships within and amongst societies and institutions of higher education.

The theme also suggests that important, complex and often inter-connected questions are being asked. What kind of world do we want and how do we get there? What contemporary roles should universities play in general in the local communities in which they are situated, the nation state or internationally? What needs and concerns do communities have and how can research make a difference? What types of research are most effective? What challenges or obstacles do university-community partnerships in research face as they attempt collaboratively to explore solutions to local or global problems and bring about paradigm shifts? Should universities remain as ‘pure’ preservers of culturally revered forms of knowledge or should they become more active agents of social change and development? What is the role of knowledge in our society and whose knowledge counts? How are the skills and experiences of communities valued and respected in the research process? What do ‘true’ university-community research partnerships look like? What are key ethical dilemmas or considerations in university-community research? What is the value added - the socio-political advantage - of collective critical and constructive research and analysis?

The papers, roundtables, workshops and symposia we have brought together in this Proceedings attempt to answer these as well as many other critical questions. With clarity and consideration, authors from around the world present the bad, the good, the problematic and the enchanting of community-university research partnerships in action, offering critical and creative ideas for re-orienting the future of research as well as community and higher education partnerships.

Globalisation and neo-conservatism have made considerable changes to the world as a whole over the past three decades and universities need to be at the forefront of any response. While some sectors of humanity currently experience unprecedented health, wealth and well-being, major challenges have arisen for many others.

The nine thematic areas chosen as the foci for CUexpo 2008 provide an opportunity for community-based and university-based researchers to respond to these critical issues and discuss our collective and mutual responsibility to build a better world. The themes include:

- Community-university engagement, partnerships and ethics
- Climate change and sustainable community green economic development
- Life-long learning, popular education and community / green mapping
- Environmental and social justice
- Youth engagement, food security
The authors, scholars and community members profiled here attempt to respond to these pressing local and global issues. In diverse ways, they draw our attention to the gap between the rich and the poor, the rise of racism and intolerance, the continued marginalisation of women from politics and other decision-making structures, the active and blatant abuses of human rights justified by the ‘war on terror’, increasing ill health and disease, growing illiteracy, homelessness, and a staggering array of environmental issues and concerns.

By coming together over these next few days, we aim to:

- Celebrate and create opportunities for new community-university partnerships;
- Support research that is collaborative and community-based and leads to positive change;
- Create a space for policy-makers and university and community representatives to take action on research, resource-sharing and research ethics;
- Provide opportunities to network across Canada and world-wide;
- Re-assert the role of universities in social and human development.

The Office of Community Based Research at the University of Victoria believes that community-university research partnerships have the potential to provide opportunities for community members to work directly with experienced academics to define a problem, conduct research, interpret findings, and apply results to bring about positive change in their communities. This approach involves new and creative methods of research to meet community needs and produce results that are important and useful to community, academics, and policy makers. Community-based research is an exciting movement of engagement, investigation, learning, and change world-wide.

We hope you find this conference stimulating and challenging the field trips and informal movements enlightening and fully enjoy your stay in the garden city - Victoria. You are welcome here.

Dr. Darlene E. Clover and Dr. Catherine McGregor, Editors
University of Victoria
The Sooke Navigator Project: Connecting Action and Research on Community Mental Health and Addictions Service Needs Utilizing a New Role

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In response to community concerns, a group of community service providers developed a new role that allowed us to collect good data on community mental health and addictions needs, services, gaps and barriers, while increasing public access to appropriate services.

Background

Connecting primary care, health authority service delivery and community organizations into an effective network of care, particularly for rural, remote and vulnerable populations, is an ongoing challenge. Growing communities with complex needs and diverse populations require current, high quality, local data used effectively to inform local and regional service planning and social infrastructure development. For community members and municipal politicians, greater involvement in acquiring and understanding population level data on the determinants of health and illness may lead to greater engagement in problem solving and decision making. For health authorities, altering focus from utilization based service planning to needs based service planning requires a shift in how we acquire and understand community level data on need and barriers to service access. Evidence-informed health and social service planning and delivery require up-to-date evidence about what service is available, what works and what doesn’t, and a willingness to pilot new and flexible models of data collection and care to meet changing needs.

The complexity of client needs and the array of potential service options for clients who experience mental health and addictions issues and those who care for them is often seen and experienced as a confusing set of options or lack of options. Clients and service providers alike describe this as the ‘mental health maze’. We often expect clients with the fewest resources (both psychosocial and economic) to navigate the most complex area of the healthcare system.

Primary care has become the default service for the high prevalence mental health disorders (depression, anxiety, and alcohol misuse). Family physicians and community nurses may be insufficiently trained in mental health and addictions diagnosis and treatment, are overburdened by the sheer volume and complexity of the patients they see every day, and are often lacking the awareness of and access to community based mental health resources. As our population grows and ages and the prevalence of co-morbid chronic diseases increases, we can only expect these issues to become more prevalent.

Objectives

The goal of the Sooke Navigator Project was to connect research on community mental health and addictions service need to timely and accessible service for all citizens in the Sooke region.

The Navigator Project worked to develop and adapt clinical assessment tools, and adapt an electronic database to support systematic documentation and analysis of local mental health and addictions service needs, available resources and care pathways.

Our intent was to develop and implement a variety of qualitative research activities to ensure we heard and understood the experiences of service providers and of community members who live and work with mental illness.

We wished to use the information, knowledge and relationships we developed to advocate for and support improved mental health service planning and delivery in the Sooke Region.
Our objective was to pilot, describe, and evaluate the key elements of the Navigator model of service facilitation, as it has impacted local citizens and agencies.

We wish to inform the health services research literature by providing detail on how a Navigator role can support access to effective and appropriate mental health and addictions services in other locales. It was beyond the scope and capacity of this pilot project to perform formal cost-benefit analysis, or to follow long term outcomes of clients linked to service by the Navigator. These activities are important next steps in evaluating a Navigator service model.

Activities

Together with a community-based Steering Committee, we developed a charter, framework and process to work together, and defined a Navigator role. This role was intended to improve both client access and working relationships between primary care providers, health authority funded services, and community services and agencies. The ongoing support and involvement of the Sooke Family Resource Society (SFRS) enabled the project to operate within an administrative infrastructure. The financial, administrative, and practical participation of the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA), as well as our other funders, was integral to the success of the project.

From July 2005 to February 2007, any community member with mental health and/or substance use concerns in the Sooke region could easily self refer or be referred to the Navigator by friends, family, their primary care or any other service provider. All clients received timely client-focused strength-based assessment, pre-emptive identification of barriers to service access, collaborative service planning, linkage facilitation, and (where possible) a follow-up call to confirm linkage and document barriers to service access.

The Steering Committee and Navigator staff held knowledge translation and skill development workshops for community service providers and provided attendees from numerous local agencies with resources and training to support them in their work once the Navigator Project had concluded.

Results

Our study shows that over 21 months the Navigator service provided:

- Accessible assessment for 258 adults and youth and 36 families in the Sooke region;
- Accessible and timely support for clients through the initial stages of change and/or the process of building capacity to the level necessary to access formal mental health and addiction services
- Appropriate referrals made by the Navigators on behalf of Sooke residents. 168 referrals to other services were made by the Navigators on behalf of the 145 clients who gave consent for research data acquisition and have sufficient data available for analysis. 65% of these clients were connected to those services at the time of follow up contact.
- Improved communication between primary care, health authority/formal service providers, and informal community based service providers about shared clients/patients and availability of local services (demonstrated through data gathered during interviews with local family physicians and community service providers and health authority, MCFD and School District staff).
- Support in the community for effective advocacy to secure locally available youth services. For the first time in >5 years we have (limited) local youth mental health and addictions services.

Despite improved access to better initial assessment, pre-emptive barrier identification, and service coordination, there remain significant gaps in mental health and addiction service availability, and wait times for some services provided both in and outside of the Sooke region. These gaps and wait times adversely affected the Navigators’ ability to connect some clients who sought assistance. By definition, the Navigators did not attempt to link clients to services, however necessary, where there were substantial pre-existing barriers such as distance or long wait times, and linkage was unlikely to be successful.

At completion of the Navigator Project, the Sooke region once again addressed the need to provide timely local service to distressed clients unable to navigate the complex configuration of available resources, or to travel to Victoria. Narrative data collected over the project demonstrates numerous residual benefits from performing this research with our community.

Some of the more obvious benefits include:

- the strong connections experienced by the agencies who participated in the Navigator Steering Committee;
- more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the available services and access pathways;
- collective appreciation of the community action research model;
• service providers’ ability to work collaboratively to solve problems;
• Service providers’ willingness and ability to advocate on behalf of their clients and their communities.

Conclusions
At completion of the research project and after a brief gap in service, we acquired temporary funding for continuation of both adult and youth Navigator roles as configured in this project. As a Steering Committee we believe we have good research evidence to support a Navigator role as a core function for mental health and addictions services in our communities.

With rapid population growth in the Sooke region, it is imperative that we leverage existing resources as efficiently and effectively as possible. It has been our communities’ experience that a well supported navigation role can facilitate this. The Navigator role is one way to support mental health and non mental health resources and services to be utilized appropriately and effectively.

The challenges and successes of the Navigator role are closely related to the key functions of the Steering Committee in defining, supporting and refining the Navigator service in our communities, and the process of collecting data and conducting action research. It is difficult to tease out the relative contributions of the Navigator role, the research process and the Steering Committee to the success of this project. We do not see our particular approach as a static ‘recipe’ for providing responsive community based access that would be applicable in all jurisdictions. What we wish to offer is a flexible, adaptable template which other communities may choose to learn from in order to understand their own local service needs, and develop their own response to planning effective accessible mental health and addictions services.

Our community’s participatory action research model involves community members at all levels in developing research questions, data collection, analysis, and knowledge translation. This participatory model provides both the context of our research, and a framework in which to pilot new models of service integration and collaboration.

Given adequate support and funding, using a collaborative priority setting and decision making model, the communities of the Sooke Region have demonstrated our ability to work together using participatory action research to accomplish the following activities:

• Develop and pilot new community models of health information acquisition;
• Develop and pilot a new community model of mental health and addiction service planning and delivery;
• Engage in systematic enquiry, analysis and knowledge translation;
• Take action to meet the changing needs and priorities of our citizens and communities.

More specifically, as a community, we have stepped up to actively partner with the Vancouver Island Health Authority and academic institutions to address the enormous challenges posed by the need for effective mental health and addictions services in the face of a growing population and changing access to resources.

References

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“Do it in a Good Way”: Enacting Research Ethics in Partnerships with Indigenous Communities

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Two community-campus partnership projects demonstrated the application of emerging ethics of research involving dominant culture academic institutions with Indigenous communities in Canada. The principles of trust, community benefits, mutual capacity building and community participation are highlighted.

Enacting ethical principles and practices in research involving Indigenous peoples is among the most contested issues in the current research environment in Canada. Such research occurs within a historical context of exploitation and misrepresentation by non-Indigenous scholars, artists, journalists and colonial government agencies. Indigenous community leaders and national organizations representing First Nations, Inuit, and Métis populations have been calling for an end to ‘drive-by research’ conducted on Indigenous peoples for the benefit of non-Indigenous scholars and agencies, without meaningful engagement of Indigenous peoples. ‘Nothing about us without us’ is commonly heard among Indigenous peoples, underscoring the principle of inclusion around which considerations of ethics in research involving Indigenous peoples in Canada now pivot (Ball, 2005). Researchers interested in engaging with Indigenous individuals, communities, and organizations are called upon to recognize that, in addition to methodological choices, there are ethical dimensions in their choice of research topic, employment of research assistants, and dissemination strategies. A growing body of literature by Indigenous scholars, organizations, and national research funding agencies offers various ethical frameworks to guide research with Indigenous peoples (B.C. ACADRE, 2007; Castellano, 2004; CIHR, 2007; Schnarch, 2004). Within this movement, community-campus partnership research has emerged as an approach that is particularly well-suited to learning new ways of conducting research that avoid the expert-subject dichotomies and de-contextualization often associated with ‘lone-star’ research conceived and conducted solely by academics. Applying new approaches to research involving Indigenous peoples creates new challenges, especially when projects are components of larger collaborative or networked investigations that involve non-Indigenous partners who may not be aware of research ethics involving Indigenous partners, as was the case in the two projects described subsequently.

Two recently completed community-campus partnership projects were the sites for demonstrating principles and methods for ensuring ethical practice in research involving Indigenous peoples in Canada. Both projects were situated in the province of British Columbia, which is home to about one-third of the one million Indigenous peoples in Canada. Institutionally, both projects were housed at the University of Victoria within the author’s ongoing program of research involving several community-campus partnership projects (Ball, 2008). The main activities in both projects took place in the participating communities.

Study 1: Indigenous Fathers Project

The Indigenous Fathers Project was the first study in Canada to explore how Indigenous fathers conceptualize their roles with their young children and navigate the transition to fatherhood.

Establishing potential benefit to communities. Within emerging ethical frameworks, it is understood that research involving Indigenous peoples must advance internally-identified community development goals and yield knowledge that is useful to Indigenous communities and individuals. In both projects described in this article, potential benefits for the partner communities were confirmed at the outset by representatives of the community groups that decided to participate. The Indigenous Fathers Project was seen by community and academic partners as a first step in moving beyond negative views by exploring the heterogeneity of Indigenous fathers’ experiences and identifying helpful resources and services.
Five community groups responded to an invitation to join a nationally networked project on fatherhood.

**Nationally networked collaborative research context.**

Within this invitational context, it was explicit that the cluster of community-campus partnerships for the Indigenous Fathers project would be one of seven clusters in the national study of fatherhood (FIRA, 2007), funded by the SSHRC-CURA program.

**Study 2: Indigenous Child Project**

The Indigenous Child Project explored how Indigenous parents, Elders, and practitioners in early childhood programs conceptualize conditions for optimal development of Indigenous children in their care. It also gathered their perspectives on the value of monitoring, screening and assessing tools to determine whether a child may benefit from extra supports to achieve their developmental potential.

**Establishing potential benefit to communities**

Many community leaders and program staff are eager to introduce tools, curricula, programs, and services that will promote Indigenous family well-being, community development, and child well-being. Four community groups responded to an invitation to join the project.

**Provincially networked collaborative research context.**

The Indigenous Child Project commenced in 2003 and was one project within a consortium of ten community-university projects in the province of British Columbia. The omnibus project, funded by the SSHRC-MCRI program, encompassed a wide range of aspects of child development, and was called the Consortium for Intervention, Health, Learning and Development (CHILD).

**Research Process**

**Developing trust.**

Both research projects were founded on the development and ongoing reinforcement of trusting relationships between university-based and community-based members of the research teams. The idea of trusting relationships as a foundation for ethical engagement in research is easy to endorse but difficult to enact. Trusting relationships require geographic proximity, time, personal risks, funding, open communication, flexible programs of activity, and other accommodations. This reality competes with other demands in a research project. For example, the CHILD project was funded by the federal government in part to train graduate students in research; the ten component projects of the CHILD project involved over 40 investigative team members including a large rotation of graduate students. Adding to a lack of knowledge in mainstream graduate education about Indigenous research ethics and about community-campus collaborative research, the sheer size of the collaborative CHILD project was not conducive to creating conditions for trusting social relationships to develop among the Indigenous community representatives and team members.

Large geographic distances between communities and the university mean that face-to-face meetings have to be carefully spaced because these are expensive and disruptive to the routine responsibilities of community-based team members and administrators. This was understood in the FIRA study, where the seven component projects were each located in a different province. The study was designed to avoid demands for direct engagement or collaboration between community and university partners in each of the component projects. In the CHILD project, the extent and form of collaboration between the Indigenous Child project and the other nine projects were unclear at the outset of the project, preventing community partners from knowing exactly what would be expected of them. As various ideas and requests for collaboration emerged, team members on the Indigenous Child project became increasingly uncomfortable. They had been unprepared for much direct involvement in project activity beyond their own communities, and they saw themselves as accountable to their communities to explain and seek approval of all the activities involved in the research, especially those activities that involved non-Indigenous, university-based investigators with whom they had no relationship.

**Institutional ethics guidelines and review.**

Plans for the two research projects were approved at their inception by the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Victoria. As well, a second-tier review process was undertaken by an Indigenous committee within the university who applied a set of ‘Principles and Protocols for Research Involving Indigenous Populations.’ The research plan for the Indigenous Child project was also reviewed by the REC at the University of British Columbia, where the principal investigator was a faculty member. The research plan for Indigenous Fathers project was reviewed by the REC at the University of Guelph, where the principal investigator was a faculty member. Neither of these universities had in place a
specific set of guidelines or review committee for research involving Indigenous peoples.

**Community ethics guidelines and review.**

The primary tool for community partners’ approval of all aspects of the projects was a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), customized for each community-university partnership within each study. These negotiated agreements prescribed the involvement of Indigenous and university-based representatives in all the major phases of the research, including the purpose and plans for an investigation, the conduct of the research, the accountability of all members of the investigative team, the nature of data to be obtained from specific sources as well as data sources that must specifically be excluded, jurisdiction over data regarding ownership, possession, storage, and access, and decision-making over research outputs, including dissemination of knowledge yielded by a study.

**Community-campus research teams.**

Research assistants were hired in the partnering communities and an Indigenous project coordinator was hired at the university. In some cases, funds flowed from the university to the community, which then contracted and paid the community-based research assistant. In some cases, the community-based research assistant was employed and paid by the university. Their participation in customized training workshops for the project, attendance at conferences, and optional enrollment in post-secondary coursework were budgeted parts of the research plan. In this way, the research aimed to contribute to the confidence and capacity of Indigenous partners to offer direction and, ultimately, to assume control of aspects of the project. This capacity development was bi-directional: research that is premised on principles of social justice involves commitments to strengthening capacity on both sides of a partnership.

**Two-tiered informed consent procedures.**

In the Indigenous Fathers project, informed consent addressed two levels of participation: first to take part in the Indigenous Fathers project and second to allow the data they generated to be made available to research teams in the larger collaborative FIRA study. In the Indigenous Child project, informed consent was requested in one stage, with participants being told that the project was part of the larger CHILD project and that their participation was being requested for the entire project. In retrospect, given the ambiguity about what was being asked regarding participants’ contributions to the larger CHILD project, it did not seem justified to request their consent at the level of the collaborative study concurrent with consent to participate in the Indigenous Child component. Though onerous, when the details of a project are generated over time, iterative informed consent procedures as well as iterative submissions to RECs reflect the realities of community-responsive, negotiated research.

**Multiple methods of data collection.**

Both projects involved the use of questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, review of community program documents, and analyses of census data. Applying ethical principles for research involving Indigenous peoples does not dictate any particular method, provided the methods are decided through a consultative process and carried out respectfully. There is currently a strong preference among Indigenous researchers for conversational and story-telling approaches in research with Indigenous peoples. Large-scale survey research is also being carried out successfully by some Indigenous organizations (Assembly of First Nations, 1994; Statistics Canada, in press). In both projects described here, project teams chose a mix of fairly structured data collection methods.

**Data analysis and interpretation.**

Indigenous team members worked with the university-based faculty to construct interpretations of findings derived from qualitative and quantitative data analyses. These interpretations were regarded as tentative until they had been vetted by community members.

**Dissemination.**

Community partners participated in reviewing, editing, and approving draft reports of findings before any form of distribution (e.g., presentation, publication). Community control of the outputs from the research projects entailed lengthy turn-around times for community review and feedback, expenses, and indeterminate outcomes. Although not typical in many research projects, these processes were expected as part of community-campus partnership research and anticipated in the MOAs governing both projects. Within the larger CHILD project, however, this critical step conflicted with expectations of a free flow of information from the Indigenous Child project to collaborators in the larger CHILD project that had presumably been taken for granted. An expectation that outputs could flow quickly to the larger group of investigators in the CHILD project and that the university-based faculty members would routinely take the lead may be understood as part of the ‘usual’ practice in multi-year investigations where the funder requires evidence of
research achievements at the mid-point of the funding period. However, requests to distribute up-to-the-moment written progress reports of findings and critical reflections of the research process to members of the nine other component research projects created ethical conundrums for the Indigenous Child project team. Ultimately, priority was given to honoring commitments to community partners in the Indigenous Child project not to disseminate findings from either project until the communities had vetted them and participated in constructing interpretations and recommendations.

Knowledge mobilization

Following through on the principle that research must yield tangible benefits to Indigenous peoples, after the results and recommendations constructed from the research were approved by the community partners, discussion turned to approaches for mobilizing the knowledge to create positive social change. In both projects, community representatives agreed that their first priority was to convey the study results to their communities as a whole, and subsequent to the research community and beyond. Community response to the Indigenous Fathers project has been overwhelmingly positive. The project findings and products developed to mobilize knowledge created in the project have been disseminated throughout Canada and internationally in scholarly literature, practitioner training curricula, a community program toolkit, and resources for Indigenous men. Community response to the Indigenous Child project has been more qualified. While the process was largely positive, there were numerous tensions during the process and some disappointments about the outcome. Some community leaders had entered into the project hoping that the project would lay the groundwork for developing a new tool for assessing Indigenous children using Indigenous knowledge of child development. However, the project uncovered considerable reluctance among parents to accept the introduction of formal assessment tools or any forms of systematic observation and reporting about their children. Knowledge created from both projects is beginning to find its way into policy dialogues and new projects to advance training in culturally safe practices of screening and assessing Indigenous children and policy changes to promote fathers’ involvement.

Doing Research “In A Good Way”

Significant differences were experienced within the two projects with respect to the effort required to ensure a ‘good’ experience for all involved. The Indigenous Fathers project was much less challenging than the Indigenous Child project for three reasons: (a) the subject matter; (b) the clarity of expectations at the inception of the partnerships for involvement in the larger collaborative studies; and (c) the extent of direct engagement of the project team at a community versus individual level.

First, Indigenous fathers are an under-recognized population with almost no previous research or programmatic attention. Indigenous fathers were extremely pleased to be asked to participate in the project and share what they were learning about fatherhood. In contrast, Indigenous children have been the focus of intense scrutiny by child welfare agencies, schools, and criminal justice agencies. Indigenous communities are acutely aware of the need to protect them and to prevent further incursions into community control of Indigenous children and families.

Second, as discussed, the embedding of the projects within larger collaborative research studies raised new challenges for ethics review, informed consent, relationship building, and control of intellectual products. The nature, extent, and timing of involvement by the Indigenous project team with the other projects within the collaborative study was opaque at the outset for the Indigenous Child project, whereas these aspects were clear and unchanging in the Indigenous Fathers project. Ultimately, expectations for engagement by the Indigenous project team with the large group of investigators and community partners in the collaborative project were much greater for the Indigenous Child project than for the Indigenous Fathers project.

Third, the Indigenous Child project involved a more direct and extensive community-level engagement of the university-based team with the community partners. In contrast, in the Indigenous Fathers project, once MOAs were signed, the project team engaged almost exclusively with fathers on an individual basis until the final stage of the project, which involved review, feedback, and approval of data interpretations. In general, greater community-level involvement occasions more practical negotiations involving finances, among other things. Financial transactions often signify trust and recognition. Procedural ambiguities and the slow pace of resolving some financial matters created tensions throughout the Indigenous Child project. These tensions needed to be understood within the context of Indigenous research assistants and leaders casting their lot with a major non-Indigenous organization, in some cases, for the first time.

Addressing these challenges required: (a) recognition of historical and ongoing colonialism that can shape how expectations, performance criteria, and mundane procedural matters can be interpreted by Indigenous team members and communities; (b) frank discussion between community and university partners as issues arose; (c) good faith efforts to learn about one another’s work ecologies and to measure responses based on these understandings; and (d) humor. Across all critical and quotidian events, the MOA was an invaluable tool.

A key to success of the two projects illustrated in this article was the attitude that university faculty, community leaders,
and project team members brought to the work, including a willingness and ability to listen to the concerns, needs, and goals of all involved. The greatest challenge within these kinds of community-university research partnerships is the need to remain open to emergent opportunities, needs, and concerns, while also establishing a sufficiently clear and stable structure so that community partners and research participants know what they are agreeing to and do not feel blind-sided by unexpected objectives or demands. Strong relationships of trust, nurtured from the inception of a project, are the backbone for ongoing negotiation of ethical practice in partnership research.

References


Community-Academic Equity in Service Learning: The TCCBE/U-Links Approach

Barr, T., Trent Centre for Community-Based Education (TCCBE);
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Typical North American approaches to service learning are student-centered, institutionally based and emphasize a charitable approach - reinforcing stereotypes about who holds the power. The TCCBE and U-Links independent broker approach balances student and community needs to ensure all stakeholders benefit.

Competing Self-Interests in Service Learning

What makes higher education civic engagement challenging? The ideal civic engagement model would provide students with life-altering experiential education, faculty with inspiring new pedagogical models, higher education institutions with new educational programs, and communities with enhanced capacity and power. Crafting a practice that serves those diverse interests can be truly daunting.

Ever since Ernest Boyer called for greater student civic engagement in 1987, the dominant North American service learning model has emphasized student education, often at the expense of host communities. Consequently, students do not receive training that could support their service assignments. The majority of student service learning placements are also short-term, producing little benefit for community members (Stoecker and Tryon, 2007; Tryon et al., forthcoming).

Higher education administrators have noticed that service learning is good public relations, showing the institution attempting to provide direct public benefit. It also shows the institution attending to the educational needs of the students in a public way, again reflecting the emphasis on student education in mainstream service learning. It is no accident, then, that the dominant model of service learning is the ‘charity’, as opposed to the more controversial ‘social change’ model (Campus Compact, 2007; Marullo and Edwards; 2000; Robinson, 2000).

Faculty in higher education institutions usually become involved in service learning through two paths. Some build careers from promoting the practice, becoming celebrated educators or service learning researchers (for example, Zlotkowski, 2001). Others respond grudgingly to service learning mandates from higher education administrators to keep their jobs in a context where lifetime tenure is no longer assured.

Community organizations hope service learning will enhance their capacity, yet many experience it as a net loss for productivity. Despite these odds, organizations continue to host student service learners in part because they see educating the public as part of their mission. Many community organizations see service learning as their staff providing services to students, rather than the other way around (Stoecker and Tryon, 2007; Sandy and Holland, 2006). While there are students, administrators, and faculty who truly care about the communities they attempt to serve; student, institutional, and faculty self-interest in service learning has primarily been focused inward, producing an imbalance of power and benefits.

New Models for Service Learning

One of the most popular models for trying to provide community benefit while also serving the self-interest of faculty, students, and higher education administrators is community-based research (CBR). First, the research questions that propel CBR are supposed to come from the community, rather than from faculty or student interests. Second, CBR
emphasizes the application of research to real community issues, requiring that students enter a CBR project with research skills already in place. Third, the research should support action around those community-identified issues (Strand et al., 2003).

Project-based service learning (PSL) is similar. First, the service learning project needs to come from a community-defined need. Second, in contrast to the service learning model where a student shows up at a community organization and staff has to figure out what to have them do, PSL is based on the creation of a project that the community or organization designs (Bradford, 2005; Chamberlain, 2003; Draper, 2004, Joint Educational Project, n.d.). And because there is a defined project, there can also be defined skills that service learners must bring with them. Building websites, creating databases, and organizing community events are typical PSL projects.

CBR and PSL shift the balance of competing self-interests by putting community-defined needs first, and building higher education institution programming to support those needs. This is often easier in CBR, since research methods training is already part of higher education curriculum. Both CBR and PSL emphasize accomplishing positive community change. Particularly in the case of advocacy groups, this can often lead to controversy. Despite this, community organization and member self-interests are still given priority.

Supporting New Service Learning Models: Three Approaches

It is unclear whether institution-based approaches can support these new models. The main forms of infrastructure currently supporting service learning, with one exception, seem to put higher education self-interest ahead of community self-interest.

The institution-based service learning office is very common in Canada and the United States. Such offices are typically charged with getting more students and faculty to do service learning - providing support for faculty to develop service learning courses and trying to connect students with local organizations. It is unclear whether institution-based offices can support these new models of service learning because they do not appear to emphasize intensive cultural competency training or even professional etiquette training for students before they enter the field. These offices also typically do not provide training for community organizations to define service learning projects and community outcomes are rarely tracked.

Other higher education institutions rely on either a single coordinator or committee to guide service learning. In this approach, service learning most often occurs directly between faculty and host organization staff (something that local organization staff deeply desire). Like institutionally based offices, there is often a lack of mechanisms for a) ensuring benefit to local communities; b) supporting community organizations to host service learners; and c) providing cultural or professional competency training to students.

To improve the balance of power in higher education-community partnerships, the independent broker approach is an exception to these more common types of infrastructure supporting service learning. The remainder of the paper focuses on this approach, describing how competing self-interests of students, faculty, higher education administration, local organizations, and community members are managed.

The Independent Broker: Defining Characteristics of the TCCBE and U-Links Approach

The Trent Centre for Community-Based Education (TCCBE) was created in 1996 out of a partnership between the Frost Centre for Canadian Studies and Native Studies at Trent University, the Community Opportunity and Innovation Network (COIN), and the Peterborough Social Planning Council. From the beginning, TCCBE has been an independent organization, originally as a project of COIN and now as a not-for-profit corporation on its own. The Haliburton County Community Co-operative (HCCC), engaged in discussions with the TCCBE in 1998 and a year later U-Links Centre for Community-Based Research (U-Links) was initiated as a project of the HCCC.

In their service learning work, the TCCBE and U-Links deliver the Community-Based Education (CBE) Program in the South-Central Ontario Counties of Peterborough and Haliburton. Through the CBE Program, the TCCBE and U-Links utilize both the CBR and PSL models of service learning by welcoming project proposals from local organizations throughout the year and providing support during the development phase. These models of service learning set the stage for community hosts to define the scope and focus of projects while creating realistic expectations for Trent University student-involved work. Project proposals are reviewed by (University and non-University) members of a Local Community Advisory Committee (one in Peterborough and one in Haliburton) to ensure community and student benefit and look for links to other research and resources in the community.

Over a decade of activity allows the TCCBE and U-Links to work with a wide range of University departments and serve the multidisciplinary needs of the community (Berger and Bowe, 2003; Berger, 2002). For local organizations, the TCCBE and U-Links operate as a ‘clearinghouse’ for accessing particular expertise at the University. Likewise, as more
faculty become involved with TCCBE and U-Links-brokered projects, the staff become familiar with faculty interests and can contact them as research topics are identified (Berger and Bowe, 2003; Berger, 2002). Student involvement ranges from first year undergraduate to PhD-level students on projects that are not always confined to research activity. This diversity of student involvement broadens the possibilities for meeting the short, medium, and long-term needs of local organizations; achieving diverse student learning requirements; and encouraging longer-term community-based involvement from all participants.

In multi-stakeholder projects, it is often important to have a mediation or brokerage mechanism between competing interests and pressures. The TCCBE and U-Links perform this function in five distinct ways:

1. Independence from the University. Since inception, the TCCBE and U-Links have existed as non-profit organizations outside the administrative structures of the University (Berger and Bowe, 2003; Berger, 2002). This independence allows for increased control over governance and resource development and improves opportunities for higher education institutions to achieve student recruitment and retention rates and community-involved research goals.

2. Independence between program delivery agents. The TCCBE and U-Links operate independently (i.e. retaining autonomy over region-specific projects) while delivering a common program.

3. Mediator between project participants. As community-based organizations, the TCCBE and U-Links are intimately connected to the interests of their communities, allowing program staff to often act as ‘cultural translators’ between higher education institutions and host organizations. This cross-cultural work facilitates trusting relationships in CBE projects - from proposal development to project implementation, completion and next steps (Berger and Bowe, 2003).

4. Equitable governance. The TCCBE and U-Links maintain governance structures that ensure equitable University/non-University representation and broad-based community perspective at all levels of governance - from Local Community Advisory Committee to the Board of Directors (Berger and Bowe, 2003; Berger, 2002).

5. Neutral turf. In Peterborough County, the TCCBE has always been located in the downtown area of the City of Peterborough - often renting space on the downtown campus of Trent University. A physically neutral presence and meeting place can be powerful antidotes when competing stakeholder pressures intensify. In contrast to TCCBE’s close proximity to the University, and many institutionally based programs that attempt to serve rural areas through a central office, U-Links operates its own office in Haliburton County, 150km from the University - employing local resources for assuring rural CBR and PSL are controlled by the local community. At the same time, its close partnership with TCCBE and affiliation with the CBE Program provides access to University resources.

How Well Does it Work?

In considering the TCCBE and U-Links independent broker approach, a joint CBE Program staff meeting was held focusing on the following questions: 1) what are the pressures or factors affecting main stakeholder groups? (i.e. hosts, faculty, students, staff, and the institution) and 2) what do CBE Program staff do to manage different interests? Summary results follow:

Students often lack the time to fully implement a project, lack confidence with research and working in the community, and are unsure how to balance project accomplishments with academic goals. University-identified pressures are less associated with concerns about public image and more associated with the sense of risk associated with trusting an outside agency to run an academic-related program (e.g. concerns about quality). Faculty pressures include lack of recognition for community-based work within the institution. Lack of recognition usually leads to lack of time because CBR and PSL may take away from more highly rewarded work. Faculty also express concerns about the quality of student-involved work and worry that community needs are not being met. Such concerns are amplified by the fact that, in some projects, evaluation can also be a challenge. Host pressures include lack of understanding about CBR, research in general, PSL and academic expectations and schedules - with time constraints and lack of resources making it difficult to overcome these information deficits.

As independent brokers delivering the CBE Program, the TCCBE and U-Links have developed several practices for mediating these factors and pressures inherent in the process:

- Creating clear, realistic expectations in the project development stage and when projects are matched. This prepares project hosts to be flexible with students. By communicating regularly with faculty we also better understand acceptable academic expectations.
- Incorporating projects into established courses more often than into independent/reading courses. This provides more support for students and time allocation for faculty.
- Being proactive in communication is a simple, important and time-consuming strategy that takes many forms. For
students it means regularly checking in via email, on-campus office hours and visiting classes. For faculty and hosts it means keeping in touch throughout the year, whether involved with a current project or not. In addition, the TCCBE and U-Links organize events for bringing stakeholders together to talk about CBR and PSL.

- Providing background information to students to help get them started on a project. This may come directly from our libraries or from the host.
- Using project agreement forms to serve as a contract between hosts, students, faculty, and the independent broker. Crafted by the student(s), it outlines the deliverables of the project and each stakeholder’s responsibility in making the project a success.
- Being in the community is a key piece of the independent broker model. To the TCCBE and U-Links, attending host meetings and events and having office hours in convenient locations keeps CBE staff in touch with host issues.

The TCCBE and U-Links are also continuously refining common program staffing structures for a supportive environment that promotes communication and the ability to step-in for one another. For example, CBE Program staff (Projects Coordinators) link with project participants by project, not by stakeholder group. This positioning balances community and student needs and can facilitate quick turn around - often a key to success in project management. Another useful tool is an online database where staff can check on project status and be prepared and able to respond to situations they are not directly responsible for.

While the above practices are helpful in making CBR and PSL projects successful, there are many remaining challenges to equitable stakeholder participation. Future strategies to address these challenges include:

- Supporting larger research projects where student-involved work becomes part of a longer-term process involving many stakeholders. Linking student projects to something bigger provides students with more cultural and professional contexts; provides local organizations with more significant pieces of work, and provides faculty with more opportunities to link teaching and research.
- Creating networking and learning opportunities for stakeholders to come together and develop better mutual understanding of the competing interests at work.
- Focusing on skills development, quality and rigour for building confidence of all stakeholders. Suggested strategies include: popular education research techniques that incorporate quantitative and qualitative methodologies, peer-reviewed processes such as publication and awards, community-based course design, CBR ethics review, and communication of a ‘skills/quality/rigour strategy.’
- Supporting stakeholder engagement to increase the ability to participate. Suggested strategies include: community-based scholars-in-residence, enabling grants for faculty, hosts and students, mentoring programs, appraisal of faculty promotion and review policies, and review of government research funding practices.
- Building community-based relationships and diverse resource supports that allow us to stay true to purpose and ensure sustainability. Suggested strategies include: community-based business planning and marketing, social finance, and multiple partnerships that are issue-driven (e.g. poverty reduction) and knowledge-driven (e.g. innovation, education and research).

Conclusion

Is this a better approach? U-Links and TCCBE have now brokered more than 450 community-inspired projects with an overall 80% success rate focusing on equitable stakeholder benefit. It is doubtful that an institutionally based office or a single coordinator approach could have done as well implementing CBR and PSL models of service learning in North America, encumbered as they are by the student-centered and ‘charitable’ models of service learning. That said, the Science Shop model in Europe does seem to support community-defined projects despite offices being located in higher education institutions. Until we are able to fully implement the European model in North America, however, the independent broker model may be our best bet.

References


Building Community with Locally Relevant Data: The Sooke Community Health Information Project (CHI)

Marlene Barry, Ellen Anderson, Kate Kittredge, Lori Messer, Nancy Falconer
Sooke Community Health Initiative

Desiring current locally relevant data on all the social determinants of health, Sooke region residents conducted a health survey, youth resiliency survey, created a resource inventory and held a community forum to set priorities and plan next steps.

Background

The Sooke Region on southern Vancouver Island encompasses the unincorporated areas of East Sooke, Otter Point, Shirley, Jordan River and Port Renfrew as well as the Municipal District of Sooke and three First Nations Bands (T’Souke, Pacheedaht and Scia’Neu). The region is undergoing rapid growth and change, with each community within the region facing unique social & geographic challenges. Changing communities with complex needs and diverse populations require current, high quality, local data used effectively to inform local and regional service planning and social infrastructure development. In the usual data gathering/survey processes (StatsCan, BC Stats, Local Health Area) the Sooke Region is evaluated in conjunction with more densely populated areas of the Western Communities (Colwood, Langford, Metchosin, View Royal, Highlands) which are closer to urban concentrations of service. The geographic and social infrastructure challenges facing residents of the Sooke Region are therefore not reflected in the standard datasets and analysis.

The Community Health Initiative (CHI) was founded in 2002 in response to the desire of community members and service providers to understand local needs and address gaps in the social infrastructure of the region. We felt that the unique issues facing our region were poorly represented in the larger context in which they were surveyed. Our area consists of large tracts of undeveloped lands with pocket concentrations of population. This is rapidly changing with a surge in development and the release of vast tracts of land from the Provincial Tree Farm Licenses. Obtaining locally relevant information to assist planning, setting priorities, and advocating for improved services proved timely in the current political landscape.

- Citizens felt their quality of life and control over change was threatened by the degree and speed of development.
- Community members had difficulty in accessing local data.
- Citizens felt that local experiences were not reflected in the quantitative data available
- Citizens were concerned that local politicians seemed to be focused only on physical infrastructure

Our community’s participatory action research model involved community members at all levels in developing research questions, data collection, analysis, and knowledge distribution. This model provides both the context of our research proposal, and a framework in which to pilot new models of service integration and collaboration.

Objectives:

- To acquire information on the determinants of health in our region and to increase community members' understanding of the same. We found that locally relevant data was difficult to access, especially in a timely fashion.
• To support collaboration among interested parties in acquiring the information and priority setting to improve the health and wellbeing of citizens.
• To be as inclusive as possible by connecting potential partners and expanding on those positive connections throughout the process.
• To address competing values and vested interests. Previous to this process there was a general feeling of mistrust and a perception of competition between service providers, planners and members of the public. This sometimes caused duplication of services and competition for the same ‘pot of money’.
• To collectively develop Terms of Reference for clarity and focus, working on a ‘consensus’ basis rather than voting on issues. This helped to unify the group in the beginning and gave new partners a clear understanding of the groups position.
• To generate data on specific topics and questions of interest and relevance to the community. After reviewing various options, including developing our own survey, CHI decided to utilize sections of existing surveys to cover main areas and create a ‘Sooke Region’ module for specific questions. This would ensure our data was comparable to other surveys and add validity to the results.
• To own and understand the data so that we could return it to the community. The data needed to respect privacy and still be presented in a way that was accessible and useable by community groups and individuals to advocate for improvements and priority setting. Training sessions and experiential workshops would be developed to assist this process.
• To assess and develop a baseline of services and assets already in the community. The Community Survey, Youth Resiliency Survey and Resource Inventory let us know what we had when we started for accurate future comparison.

Results

We took the data we acquired back to our communities by organizing a public forum to include them further in the process and encourage continued public engagement. Participants were invited to attend workshops directed at local knowledge translation, setting community priorities, and informing local decision makers. The results were collated and presented in a final report to UBCM with copies provided to local planners and service providers as well as public copies at the Vancouver Island Regional Library.

At the community forum held in September 2006, three main community priorities were identified with more specific recommendations under each category:

1. Strengthen community connections and relationships for children & youth.
2. Strengthen collaboration between community service organizations.
3. Create supportive physical environments for healthy lifestyles.

We now have a baseline data set that we have been re-evaluating and we plan to reassess over time. By utilizing existing survey modules and developing a region specific module we have more options on how to review the data from a variety of perspectives.

Agreement on priorities allowed us to focus on developing further projects and next steps. CHI continues to address priorities and create plans for future action. Since the completion of our survey process in 2006 the following projects have developed as a result of the community concerns highlighted by the data:

- CRD Transportation & Health Project: Citizens partnered with the Capital Regional District Director, the Vancouver Island health Authority, the Canadian Cancer Society, and multiple other partners, to obtain $35,000.00 in funding from UBCM to conduct an assessment of healthy transportation needs, priorities and options. This project was completed in December 2007 with a public forum and final reports. Two types of reports were prepared in this case, one available to the public outlining community assets and areas of concern, the second full report included detailed maps of ‘wish lists’ of potential walking, cycling and transit routes to support healthy transportation.

- Food CHI: this is a vibrant and active group of community members with a wide range of interests in all aspects of food, including production, food security and food culture. Food CHI is currently completing an environmental scan of local food resources and issues facing region residents. We are working on a number of projects including expanding existing community gardens, supporting farmers and promotion of the Slow Food Movement in the community. Food CHI is in the process of incorporating as a society in order to apply for grant monies to support their efforts towards a stable secure and accessible food supply in our region.
Youth Resiliency: The youth resiliency survey highlighted the pressing needs of youth and young adults in our region for increased access to pro-social activities and meaningful relationships with adults and community activities. We are partnered with UVic and the District of Sooke and are currently completing a survey and focus groups with local youth. In April 2008 we will be facilitating an action planning forum to prioritize next steps with youth, parents and local decision makers.

Integrated Health Network (service planning): In the face of rapidly increasing population and declining numbers of primary care providers, many Sooke region citizens are unable to access basic health care services in a timely fashion. We are active participants in the Provincial Ministry of Health Integrated Health Network (IHN) project that will see a nurse and social worker integrated into family doctors' offices to provide comprehensive team based care for residents with one or more chronic illness.

Resource Inventory: The District of Sooke has recently budgeted funds to upgrade the two year old searchable Health Resource Inventory. This information is valuable to the community but quickly becomes obsolete. We are looking at ways to have the inventory kept up-to-date by the individual businesses and services with only periodic overall re-assessments.

Sooke Navigator Program: the Sooke Navigator Action Research Project was the first project CHI undertook in 2005. Its goal was to document local need for mental health and addictions services while at the same time optimizing client access to local resources. It has now been completed and the project has become an ongoing program, managed by the Sooke Family Resource Society, directed by a volunteer community steering committee, funded by the United Way, and widely used by community members of all ages seeking mental health and addictions services.

Opening Doors With Respect: CHI and the Navigator Steering Committee recognized early on that we needed a respectful way to understand the needs of local First Nations and offer appropriate services. We conducted a literature review on developing service delivery agreements with First Nations. In partnership with the T’Souke Nation we developed a template service delivery application, and cultural information document which is now owned by the T’Souke Nation and used by community agencies and service providers who wish to work with local First Nations clients.

We have developed strong and productive working relationships among CHI members, and between CHI and local decision makers, planners and service providers. We now have a track record of meeting our deliverables, due diligence, effectiveness in creating positive change and fostering a more optimistic outlook within the community at large. Many of the projects that have developed since our initial survey process are the result of the accessibility of the information, but also reflect the fact that more citizens understand the process. We have increased local skills and understanding thereby enabling more people to be involved and work on projects that they are passionate about.

CHI, District & Regional Planners and local citizens will continue to set priorities and develop a road map for future activities. Results from our survey project are appearing in Letters to the Editor in our local paper and new partnerships continue to develop. The Municipal District of Sooke is currently using the CHI report to inform their official community plan review, and the CRD Transportation & Health Study as a base line for assessing where the community stands in an accessibility and inclusiveness study called ‘Measuring Up’. The Juan de Fuca Electoral area planning staff are using the transportation study to inform Regional Park and trail planning. Integrated Health Network planning staff are using the CHI report to inform their priority setting process.

CHI has a track record of commitment and community involvement, resulting in the Sooke Region and CHI projects being used as pilots for development of Best Practices and survey processes in other communities.

Key to the success of our action research projects have been the communication and partnerships between community members, the Vancouver Island Health Authority Population Health Observatory, the Provincial Health Services Authority, the University of British Columbia Department of Family Practice, the Vancouver Foundation funded Community Based Clinician Investigator Program, Simon Fraser University, The Center for Applied Research in Mental Health and Addictions at SFU, the University of Victoria, the District of Sooke, the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area, School District 62, the Edward Milne Community School Society, the Sooke Electoral Area Parks and Recreation Commission, the Canadian Cancer Society, the T’Souke Nation, Sooke Family Physicians, and the Co-operative Association of Service Agencies, which includes numerous local non-profit organizations.
Conclusions

Community members can create the opportunity, relationships and tools to understand the determinants of health in their communities, and work effectively to inform regional health and social service planning. Community members clearly understand the social determinants of health and are able to use this as a framework for understanding the health of their community.

A lack of good quality up-to-date data can limit effective community process, and foster discontent, mistrust and general misunderstanding. Relevant, timely data is powerful in supporting healthy change and can positively influence community development. Pertinent, accessible data is necessary to confirm priorities, gaps, needs and strengths within any community and leverage for improvement. Good qualitative data that reflects the stories and personal experiences of citizens enriches our understanding of what it is like to live in this region.

It is possible to tackle specific questions of interest to any community that may be uniquely determined by geography, history, culture, demographics or many other determinants. Community driven research builds more effective working relationships within the community and cultivates trust in the results and how they will be used. The community owns, and has access, to the results, enabling them to continue to find positive ways to promote healthy change. The community knows this is not a report developed from the top down that will disappear into a binder on someone’s shelf.

The level of cooperation and participation we received throughout this project has fostered a more optimistic outlook in the community and helped us feel more engaged with area politicians. While we were successful in developing positive relationships with governing agencies, we struggled with finding necessary university connections and support for our community determined research agenda. A supportive and financially supported academic partner has been key to allowing us to understand community needs and activities in an action research framework. Additional academic support and resources for grant writing, ethics review, literature reviews, and developing research questions would further enhance the scope and quality of our research and knowledge translation.
ReUse-Computer – a Green Economic Enterprise Network

Frank Becker
TU Berlin, Science Shop kubus

Building up value conservation networks of SME can make a contribution towards an economy of sustainability. Problems of sustainable development often focus on economic issues. The reuse of computer hardware can contribute to reducing greenhouse-gas emission.

Enormous volumes of electronic waste are generated – and levels are still increasing at an alarming rate. In 2004, 160,000,000 new PCs were sold worldwide. In Germany, at least 200,000 tonnes of electronic waste are generated annually. But practitioners and experts have long been convinced that this so-called electronic waste contains numerous usable appliances and valuable raw materials.

Alterations to the consumer strategies of use and attractive offers could result in a reduction in the burden on the environment, along with the conservation of resources the development of sustainable strategies of use in the computer sector.

Project “ReUse-Computer” - aims and goals

Against this background, we began a trans-disciplinary research project in 2001 at the Science Shop of the Technische Universität Berlin - kubus which continued for 3 ½ years, and which was funded with EUR 1.1 million from the German Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). In all, 17 project partners participated in the project and up to 27 companies were involved.

The main goal was to establish a network of companies for the refurbishing, repairing, and re-marketing of valuable used computers.

Within the framework of the project, we applied methods from the social sciences which made use of systems theory to develop an understanding of heterogeneous social networks. Against the background of this inventory, computer companies (particularly SMEs) were recruited which were interested in targeting their market activities more towards the re-use and extended use of products.

On the basis of statistical and scientific methods of analysis, the ecological rucksack of computer manufacture (or the
material intensity) was investigated e.g. by Karsten Schischke and his colleagues of Fraunhofer IZM, Dept. Environmental Engineering (www.izm.fraunhofer.de). There had not previously been any reliable investigations in this field. In parallel, surveys were conducted among private individuals and companies about their willingness to acquire used PCs.

Our activities were rounded off with an integrated media strategy which informed key sections of society about the technical, social and economic aspects of our project. Various media contacts still exist today and provide an important basis for the marketing of ReUse-Computers.

As a central aspect of our investigations, we came to the conclusion that the re-use and extended use of computer hardware can be achieved without any problems and that users do not face any greater risks or disadvantages in comparison to users of new appliances.

The main risk associated with the establishment of a company network for sustainability in computer technology lies in the economic aspects. For years, the prices of new computers have been falling. This is the result of a strategy of cost reduction per unit through the increased numbers produced. One effect of this falling price of new appliances is that ReUse companies find themselves subjected to economic pressure – because refurbishing work and repairs demand considerable expertise and are labour-intensive. At the same time, the cost reduction strategies and the increased production output leads to an exponential growth in the consumption of energy and raw materials. These increases in consumption are so enormous that they outweigh all strategies to increase efficiency (e.g. Factor 4, etc.).

“Growth” is the key concept today. In 1966, the economist Kenneth Boulding has coined a graphic term for this (pp. 3-14). Growth models involve “Cowboy economics”, in which land is grazed to destruction before simply moving on to another part of the supposedly unlimited prairie to repeat the procedure (Boulding, 1966). Those strategies aimed at increasing efficiency per unit are technologically and scientifically effective, but they have a rebound effect through which the increased demand more than negates the beneficial effects. It appears that effective and noticeable reductions in the emissions of greenhouse gases, in the consumption of raw materials, and in the amounts of waste generated can only be achieved either by decelerating the predominant economic processes or by developing an economy which is adapted to the principles of sustainable development.

The key result of our project, however, is that we have indeed managed to establish a regionally-focused, decentralised network of companies (see below) for sustainability in computer technology: ReUse-Computer (www.reuse-computer.org)

Three basic factors were identified for the functioning of the network from the point of view of systems theory:

**Reciprocity**

Reciprocal exchange is different from the contractually regulated exchange of generally accepted equivalents (usually money) and refers to the situation in which agents only exchange their material goods, services or intrinsic needs for appropriate or approximate counter-performances.

**Trust**

The partners share a common past with shared experience and an anticipated common future. Exchange or cooperation is not based on contracts but on trust.

**Significance**

There is an understanding that ones own success can be seen in the benefit of a counterpart.

The heterogeneity of our ReUse-Computer network is demonstrated, among other things, by the way in which agents from different areas of society work together in this network.

The majority of network participants are specialist computer companies, and in view of their specific size (1-15 employees and in part considerably less than EUR 500 000 annual turnover) we refer to these as micro-companies. Other participants include a publicly oriented environmental research institute (UfU e.V.), university
At the end of our project, the ReUse-Computer Network has established itself with the legal form of a registered association. Representatives of various points of view negotiate from their own perspectives within the association.

In the extent to which the ReUse Computer network runs through the learning loop shown here it develops reflective ability and its own identity. The heterogeneous composition of the network is important, in our opinion, because we see correspondences between this network structure and the society as the environment of the network both in terms of the form (heterogeneity) as well as the function (negotiation and mediation). For us this represents the importance of this specific form of a social network: In its mode of operation, it represents a key aspect of the strategy of sustainable development. We understand sustainable development as a strategy of negotiation between the views of various groups of social agents. The result of such a process of negotiation is the integrative capacity and cohesion of society. These results are important for our further work inasmuch as we perceive current society as functionally differentiated. The (advancing) functional differentiation leads to a loss of societal integration. With regard to the environmental problems generated by the manufacture of computers mentioned above, the problem is less a lack of differentiation and rather the increased need for integration.

Through their interaction, the value-creation processes of the various sectors of society ensure the reproduction of society, of a region, or of a network. Therefore, we expect that our work in the Science Shop, as intermediaries promoting the dialogue between science and society and providing “socio-cultural translation” between different societal actors, will result in productive contributions for the development of heterogeneous social networks for sustainable development, through an approach which I call value conservation networks. Starting from the value-creation chain, we worked in the ReUse Computer project on value-creation processes. But this concept seems to me to be doubly inappropriate for economic activities in the Reuse-Computer Network:

a) Values are being conserved and not newly “created”.

b) The processes are not linear: working in network systems also means the activity of companies in value creation NETWORKS.

In turn, if the “value creation process” consists of maintaining value, then this is in fact a value conservation process. And so because it is taking place in network structures, I speak of value conservation networks.

Both in their internal cooperation structures and in their external relationships, such value conservation networks represent aspects described by the economist Karl Polanyi, who refers to the disconnection of the economic exchange process from its social context as the “dis-embedded economy” (Polanyi, Arensberg, & Pearson 1957, Polanyi 2001).

Market, barter, distribution and reciprocity are four basic elements of economic activity in the history of mankind:

**Reciprocity**: the exchange of goods and services takes place in accordance with a principle of mutual obligations; the goods and services are exchanged on the basis of pre-determined or freely negotiated relative benefits.

**Distribution**: Goods and services are collected in a determined relationship, stored (as far as possible for the item in question), and redistributed.

**Market**: the exchange of goods and services is based on a price established through supply and demand.

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Barter: the exchange process is based on the usability of the bartered goods and services.

Alternatively, the German economist Niko Paech proposed four different economic-technological concepts:

Renovation: The reworking or refurbishment of existing goods for the re-use or continued use.

Imitation: The adaptation / supplementing of an existing good by transfer / adaptation / extension.

Exnovation: Taking an existing good out of use and disassembling it into its parts.

Innovation: The development of a new additional good with all its (production) technical pre-conditions.

In the currently predominant forms of business, as described above with relation to the production of computers, the activities are restricted to the interface between market (supply and demand) and innovation (production of a new additional product). The figure shows that the scope for the development of an economy of sustainable development is much greater. Polanyi and Paech cover a broad field of various possible economic activities.

We have developed this strategy of value conservation networks through our work in the ReUse Computer Project. We are currently working on the extension of this approach to establish the company network ReUseVelo (www.reuse-velo.de), which is concerned with the refurbishment and remarketing of used bicycles.

We expect in future to be able to test contributions to what Kenneth Boulding in 1966 termed a “spaceship economy” for sustainable development (pp. 3-14). In such a spaceship economy, according to Boulding, the aim is to minimise rather than maximise the consumption of energy and materials. This spaceship economy is concerned primarily with the care and maintenance of its stocks, so that every technological change which leads to less production and consumption is a definite gain. This would also mean that we would have to develop a new concept of progress in which human welfare is not based on the maximum possible consumption of goods, but rather on a healthy relationship for man and nature between the satisfaction of material and immaterial needs.

We refer to such practical testing as “practical discussion contributions”. They seem to be more suitable than theoretical disputations when it comes to overcoming what Gregory Bateson in 2000 referred to as the “Roots of Ecological Crisis”, namely “We live within an infinitely expanding 'frontier’” or “Technology will do it for us” (pp. 498-501).

As we have shown, the environmental problems, climate catastrophe, and pollution have primarily political and social implications and cannot be dealt with as purely technological and scientific problems. Looking for political strategies which would conform with the approach of value conservation networks and the principles of sustainable development, among other things we have come across the political model of the “community of interest in an interdependent society”. This was formulated by the 32nd President of the United States of America, Franklin D. Roosevelt. He also pointed out that “We must hold to the fact that economic laws are not made by nature. They are made by human beings.”(p. 657).

It seems that we would be well advised in the pursuit of our ambitious goals for the future where we can to re-use the ideas and approaches of those who have gone before us and have already worked on comparable topics.

It would be a mistake to identify complexity with completeness and sophistication with wisdom.
There are some serious shortcomings in the modern discussion.

(John Kenneth Galbraith, Development as a Process)

References


Does this Count as Research?
Reclaiming and Revitalizing Cultural Knowledge as Community
Participatory Methodology

Helen Brown, University of British Columbia School of Nursing
Vera Newman, Alert Bay, BC
Barb Cranmer, Alert Bay, BC

In this paper we question how conventional research methods can be transferred into a community context where academic inquiry has contributed to ongoing colonial relations under the guise of community-academic ‘partnerships’. We share methodological insights to illustrate how cultural knowledge informs both research methods and ethical practices.

Introduction

Research has been described as inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). The way in which scientific research has been implicated in the historical forces of colonialism raises important questions for conducting research under the guise of ‘community-university partnerships’, particularly within the context of studying forms and expressions of cultural knowledge. In a study underway in Alert Bay, British Columbia, the co-leaders of the project undertook the research with a commitment to ‘decolonizing methodologies’ and then took on the harder work of asking how such methodologies are to be understood and enacted within a study examining the intersection of culture and health in one rural Aboriginal community.

Working broadly from the philosophies and participatory inquiry practices described by Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury (2006), we began our study by asking about how pursuing research for “worthwhile human purposes” can be understood when such purposes cannot be de-contextualized from the lives, histories, and struggles of Aboriginal peoples and communities. The “we” or ‘shared human purpose’ that is underscored in participatory and democratizing research methodologies was not particularly helpful when we set out to develop a decolonizing approach to participatory community based research. Who ‘we’ are as a research team is constructed through our diverse experiences as Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal researchers committed to enhancing the health and well-being of individuals, families and the community as a whole.

This paper outlines various inquiries and decisions made in the early months of the study to examine the intersection between decolonizing methodologies, complexities and meanings of ‘partnership’ and the democratizing intentions of research and knowledge to enhance the health and well-being of people in Alert Bay.

Constructing Methodology in Context:
A Participatory Study of Kwakw’akawakw Culture and Health

A critical finding from our past research done in the area of maternity care for rural Aboriginal communities (CIHR 2002-2005) undeniably showed that healthy birthing and healthy families are most likely to be realized when culture is strong. A strong culture and healthy people were also seen to be inseparable from the historical, social, political and economic realities of living in Alert Bay.

The project described in this presentation rests on the central assumption that Kwakw’akawakw culture is a resource for health, and that current ways of understanding, conceptualizing and planning for health service delivery in our community does not account for this critical connection. The study works from an understanding of culture as a life force that creates connections among us. To study this connection and to honour the wisdom contained our cultural heritage and ways of knowing, we decided that being ethical in research meant enlisting cultural knowledge as community
participatory methodology. We are working from view of methodology defined by Caputo (1987) as ‘meta-odos’. Resisting the ‘dogma of methodology (Lauden, 1976), we concur with Caputo when he argues for a view of method liberated from the strict adherence to technique, one that could lead to orientation to research methodology where the methods themselves are developed to serve the knowledge-generating process. In this project, this has meant drawing upon indigenous knowledge and cultural practices and activities to learn about how culture is a resource for the health of the community.

The question guiding the research study is: How do culture and health together make us healthy? One of the research methods we are currently using enlists the early teachings of the Kwakwaka’wakw people to revive the practices of knowing the spirit and soul in everyday life and all relations. Through the research strategies and actions to collect data we are engaging participates to appreciate the gifts given by the Creator and by sharing with others and utilizing the gifts and talents that have been given us. It is in these moments that we invite participants to speak about what health means to them and its connection to culture.

An important aspect of the project is to explore our connection with the land and utilize the healthy living of our ancestors throughout many generations. This makes us stay connected and gives us a strong sense of belonging that is at the root of optimal mental, physical and spiritual health in the community. We know if research is to have meaningful benefit to the community, the research itself has to meet our needs, respect our knowledge and ways of living to transform how services are delivered and ultimately enhance the health and well-being of our community. We know that poverty has no power, and a sense of power and a meaningful life are at the roots of good health. These are the important connections that are creating the orientation to the research and the specific methods of the study.

The Colonial Context of Research in Aboriginal Communities. Tuhiai Smith (1999) suggests the word research “is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary”. She writes:

When mentioned in many indigenous contexts it [research] stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful. It is so powerful that indigenous people even write poetry about research. The way in which scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism remains a powerful remembered history for many of the world colonized peoples. It is a history that still offends the deepest sense of our humanity (Tuhiai Smith, 2005, p. 1).

Indigenous peoples have expressed a number of concerns about research into their lives, particularly regarding control of, and participation in, the research process. The kind of research that has warranted scrutiny has included historical, archeological, and anthropological research (Rose, 1986). Conventional research methods have perpetuated unequal power relationships between researcher and those researched, and have contributed to the ‘commodification’ of indigenous knowledge that perpetuate past harms and reproduce research relations that do not have ultimate benefits for Aboriginal communities themselves (Battiste & Youngblood, 2000).

We propose that there exists a politics and ethics of academic-community partnership approaches that draws attention to the importance of sharing in the process and the respect for the cultural heritage and ways of knowing of Aboriginal people in Canada (Royal, Commission, on, Aboriginal, & Peoples, 1996). In the current project we take seriously the argument that health and social scientist have a moral obligation not to be complicit in actions that repress others (Rose, 1986).

Accordingly, for reasons of social justice, and in an effort to critically examine and construct ethical practices in community-based research in this historical and contemporary context, we began the study by taking account of past harms experienced in research and the more general concerns in the literature about research into the lives of Indigenous peoples. Assuming that research and imperialism are closely linked we set out to develop the methodological approach open to different kinds of epistemological claims than those that dominate Western biomedical influences in health research. We took our ongoing task, the development of methods shaped by an analysis of imperialism, and the complex ways in which the pursuit of knowledge is deeply “embedded in the multiple layers of imperial and colonial practice” (Tuhiai Smith, 1999, p. 173).

In each moment of research, this meant asking how dominant understandings of “legitimate knowledge” and associated methods of inquiry ought to be reframed as a study committed to decolonization of research. Making this theoretical commitment has had several practical implications for conducting the research and for constructing responsive methods of inquiry and data collection that are ultimately informed the research phenomenon itself. Simply, the ‘what’ of the research has informed the “how”. Methodology, in essence has become folded into the topic itself, such that at various moments of the research, the Aboriginal co-leaders of the project have asked “Is this really research”. In this project, “to act otherwise is to repeat the familiar pattern of decisions being made for indigenous peoples by those who presume to know what is best for them” (Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2000, p. 144).

The Intersection of Research Ethics and Partnership Research Methodologies. Knowledge of technique needs to be
complemented by an appreciation of the nature of research as a distinctly human process through which researchers make knowledge. Such an appreciation stands in contrast to the more common view of research as a neutral technical process through which researchers’ simply reveal or discover knowledge. Such appreciation requires we reframe understanding and debate about research in a way that goes beyond the consideration of methods alone (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000, p. 7)

Any research methodology begins with a theory and analysis of how research should proceed (Harding, 1991), and sets the parameters for the kind of research questions asked and the kind of data obtained. The methodology of any research is therefore closely linked to the kind of epistemological claims made in the research process. Constructing the methodological approach and specific methods informed by the worldview of the co-leaders and participants in the study has allowed us to proceed in ways responsive to the experiences, concerns and hopes for change shared by participants. We have posited that this is precisely the space wherein the ethics and rigour of the research are constructed. Holding a view of research and knowledge is the very ground from which ethics and rigour are being meaningfully understood and practiced. A reorientation of research practices proposed here has provided a location from which to change the everyday moments of research that shape claims to “know”. Although cultural awareness and power-sharing have been advanced as the critical elements of ‘collaborative’ research with Indigenous peoples (Gibbs, 2001), we argue that examining how ethical practices in research are also framed by the link between research and imperialism locates methodologies at a critical juncture in health research.

Considering that both research and ethics are political acts and that health researchers are always the medium through which research occurs (May, 1993), research methodologies under the guise of academic-community partnership must account for and act on the critical intersection of decolonizing methodologies and research ethics to effectively account for the particular ‘genealogy’ (Foucault, 1972) of indigenous knowledges. Obioma Nnaemeka (2003), speaking in the context of Africa, aptly frame the connection between such knowledges and how ethical practices can be enacted in research:

No one bothered to ask us how we view knowledge, its formation and articulation; no one bothered to find out if we draw frames for knowledge (framework); no one cared to find out if our journey with and into knowledge is an ever-evolving boundless love affair that sweeps us along with our neighbors, our ancestors, and those we have neither met not ‘read’ (p. 358).

Responding to the question, “is this really research?” is situated in this complex intersection of community-academic partnerships, decolonizing methodologies, and research ethics.

References
Providing Opportunities for Adult Learning and Employment in Aboriginal Inner-City Organizations

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As part of a larger project examining the experiences of adult learners in Aboriginal community-based inner-city agencies, this paper describes the perceptions of agency directors and program managers regarding the practices, benefits, and challenges of hiring community members.

Introduction
With a population of 55,755, Winnipeg has more Aboriginal residents than any other Canadian city (Mendelson, 2004). Within Winnipeg, Aboriginal peoples are disproportionately concentrated in the inner city (Silver, Mallett, Greene, & Simard, 2002) and experience lower levels of education, lower incomes, and higher rates of unemployment than the non-Aboriginal population (Hallet, 2006; Hull, 2001; Mendleson, 2006). Aboriginal adults face a number of barriers to learning within mainstream formal education systems and as a result experience difficulty securing adequate employment.

Within Winnipeg’s inner city, a number of community-based agencies are involved in neighbourhood and employment development activities (Loewen, 2003). Some of these agencies focus on the Aboriginal community within Winnipeg’s inner city and work to address existing barriers to education and employment. In addition to providing a variety of supports and services for residents, community-based agencies provide residents with work and volunteer experience (CCPA, 2005).

Despite the important contributions made by community-based agencies, there is a paucity of research that examines their practices. There is a lack of information on the experiences of Aboriginal adult learners who are employed in such organizations, the benefits of such arrangements and the challenges that organizations face in providing learning and employment opportunities.

Method
This project was guided by the principles of participatory research, and was developed and implemented collaboratively with an advisory group composed of community members from Winnipeg’s inner city. Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with nine directors and program managers from three human service organizations located within Winnipeg’s inner-city community. During these interviews, participants were asked to describe their own professional development, the policies and procedures of their agencies regarding hiring members of the community, their ways of working with community members, and their perceptions of the benefits and challenges associated with hiring community members.

Findings
Personal Professional Development. Interview participants included two males and seven females. The average age was 43 years. Participants had been involved in their present organizations from less than one year to over 11 years, and together had held over 17 different positions within the organizations. Several started out as volunteers, practicum students, or mentors within their organizations before moving into roles as program developers, coordinators, and managers. Over half had top-level administrative (i.e. executive director, acting executive director) experience.
Participants talked about the paths they took to their positions of leadership within the organizations. While some started out within community organizations and moved “up to” their current positions, others made lateral moves into their positions from other community organizations. Getting a first job within the agency depended on someone giving them a chance to do the job, and support to learn what was needed to advance.

…somebody believed in me and gave me a chance…
…I told people who hired me that I could write proposals…so, once I got the job, I got friends to help me learn about proposal writing!
…I got to where I am today as the result of excellent leaders and teacher… our agency always provides growing and learning opportunities to their staff…this is what empowers ones ability to grow and learn…

Having their own expertise valued and recognized as a prospective staff member was passed on to others they later were in a position to hire.

The pathways to their current positions were not the same, nor clearly laid out in advance. But, they talked about their desires to do something to help out in the community that would address common concerns, as well as their ongoing commitment to this goal and process, years later.

…I started off as a community member same as everyone else with concerns in the community… volunteered at kid’s school, went back to school myself and got a Social Work degree…
…In the community, a lot of people’s jobs are through networking…they get to know you first…
…hired as a favor to a friend on the board at the time, and said I’d do it for a year, but I’m still here years later…

Policies and Procedures for Hiring From the Community. Participants discussed their organizational policies related to hiring locally. All agencies had policies about hiring from the community. Some of these policies were related specifically to hiring from the Aboriginal community, and others were more specific to hiring from the local neighborhood community.

…we only hire Aboriginal people…others tend not to share the same values, have different operating philosophies, and there are huge value differences, plus there are lots of Aboriginal people who don’t get jobs, period…so we make sure our opportunities are for Aboriginal people…
…there are lots of opportunities elsewhere for non-Aboriginal people…
…it is our practice and philosophy to hire from the community because people here are best served by others from same background…this leads to the best outcomes…

A strong commitment to the process of hiring from the geographical and cultural communities within which their organizations were situated was evident throughout the interviews. The reasons are based on a strong sense of respect for local wisdom and expertise, and the utilization of those gifts for the benefit of each other.

…our community (members are) genuinely the experts in what direction we (the organization) should be going… they have more passion in what we’re about and where we are going…
…self empowerment goes along way in our community investing their gifts and strengths…
… We really believe in hiring from the community…(we) know that it is messy, complicated, all tangled, up, but it’s the most powerful way for the individuals and for the community…
…employees feel better and neighbours get a sense of hope for themselves…

The procedures for hiring locally included a series of steps to advertise for positions. Positions were first advertised within the organizations, then outside of the organizations, but within the community and were only advertised outside of the community if suitable candidates could not be found. Qualifications for hiring included good personal qualities and related life experience.

…our policy is to hire whenever possible for any position to hire within the community. We look at the pool of volunteers (have to be community members), then participants, then advertise in the local community, and only after that, if there is still nobody, do we advertise within broader community. If there’s a position we can’t fill locally, we look outside the community. That doesn’t mean that the skill set isn’t available in the community, just not at that time.

…educational background is good, however we also look at a persons gifts and strengths and what they can offer to the community and the youth we work with… I look for staff that have pas-
There were also common practices related to hiring individuals with criminal records. All organizations had hired individuals with records, but looked carefully at the record in the context of the individual’s life and the position applied for.

...all staff must pass criminal record and child abuse registry check...a criminal record does not exclude you from being an employee... but, the charge cannot be related to child abuse check, and the charge should be 4 years prior...

...we inform applicants during the interview (about criminal record check), give the opportunity to tell us what we’ll find...we tell them it won’t stop them from being hired...it is more to see if they’ll talk about it...we look at fit between what the record is and the position, and do not hire anyone with a child abuse registry...

Working with Staff From the Community. Although staff members from outside the geographic or cultural communities working within these organizations were relatively few, participants indicated that there were be some differences between how they worked with those staff.

...all staff are expected to perform all the same duties whether or not from the community...but, what may be different is that I’d rather send someone from the community to events in the community and someone from outside the community outside community events...

...we are the place of 1000 chances, but if I hired from outside wouldn’t be as quick to give more chances...

...I expect more from outside people... that they know they can’t come in late everyday... don’t need to supervise closely... they know when reports need to be done. I expect less of my time is used when I hire professional people, though that’s not always the case...

The philosophy and approach to working with staff from the community were described by participants.

...people here speak more about the value of their work than the outcome, keeps us honest, more supportive...team-building is important...skills are secondary because you can teach those...we hire people who are passionate, trying is important – here we focus on supportive learning...

...I handle staff with patience, caution, sometimes people are sensitive, but everyone is different, different moods, financial situations, different relationships problems, personal problems, large families, and not set in their lives...

...here we put the people first, like loan someone money and take it off their cheque, take time off when kids are sick, understands if there is something you have to go out of town...

...we are about learning and everyday you learn something different... sometimes our staff need support and we are here to help them as well to best of our abilities...

Participants noted that they needed to be aware as administrators and supervisors of potential problems, and had developed ways of recognizing and dealing with staff-related challenges.

...I don’t take anything for granted...try not to make assumptions and to spell things out. Have reinforced how critical it is to be flexible. Have to respond to different folks differently. Learned some creative responses to discipline issues. Harm reduction in terms of staff who use substances. It is about responding to that individual person’s needs as a supervisor, their previous experience and how they’re functioning in the job.

Benefits. Participants described a range of benefits to hiring from the community, for the staff, residents, organization, and the community as a whole. In addition to gaining valuable training and experience, the staff who are local already know the people they are working with.

...It is closer for them to get to work, they know the area and the people...a lot of them know each other...

The qualifications that local staff members bring to the jobs, given their knowledge of local issues, resources, as well as life experience, make them more approachable to those coming into the organizations.

...knowledge of the issues in the area...personal experience of the area...personal contacts...because of the knowledge and experience they have about the area/community, it is easier for the community members to accept them...

...local people relate to youth better...they have come from backgrounds where they’ve lived in the
North End/reserve and have had hard lives, so the youth open up more…

…the community has more invested in where they live… they have relationships with the community members … we are a capacity building agency… our community are the experts, not those who are the professionals in our community… hiring experiential people also benefit the youth we work with on a daily basis, as being a survivor is what helps our kids to have hope in their future that they too can be survivors…

The organizations benefit from hiring locally. People who come for service get relevant service from people who understand local realities, and are more receptive to working together.

…we already have a relationship with the person, we share values, we’re already connected, we know them, they know us, there’s a sincere commitment to working together…

…hiring locally ensures that programs are appropriate and make sense for the community…

The community as a whole benefits from local hiring, because there is a greater sense of ownership, commitment, and sustainability, as well as formal opportunities for people to share their strengths with each other.

…it’s in their community so they’ll give more, will stay later without necessarily needing to get paid for it…

…it leads to the best outcomes, community economic development, the model of hiring from the community has integrity, shared values at the core, and we’re not afraid of our own…

…it is consistent with who we are – about developing individuals, families, and community – and, the best way is to provide opportunities to people and work with them to make successful…

Challenges. Participants described multiple challenges associated with hiring from the community, including the need to provide higher levels of staff training and support without any being allocated resources for such purposes, mobility, and managing dual relationships. The training needs of staff hired from the community are diverse and can be multiple, including awareness of other supports available, specific job-related skills, general work experience and self-confidence.

…need for more training, hardest on administration, there are things that have to be taught…

…often, there’s no work experience at all, so complete training is required…

…must have tolerance…they don’t understand the importance to come to work everyday…

…require training for basic job behaviour, such as coming into work on time after payday…

…find what their good at, develop skills they may not have…

In addition, there is considerable mobility of staff members from the community to other opportunities outside of the organization.

…we are a stepping stone to help them move onto better jobs, get the skills and move on…to stay here defeats the purpose…

…hard for them to keep the job…always coming and going…high turnover rate.

The challenges of dual relationships are many. Not only do staff members have personal as well as business connections with each other within and outside of the organization, but also with recipients of service who may also be friends, neighbors or family members. Problems in relationships outside of work can interfere with functioning in the organization, and vice versa.

…community conflicts that take place after work…here, they have to learn to respect everyone whether they like it or not….

…keeping confidentiality is an issue because they have friends outside of work and sometimes say things that should stay at work…people talk…

…because they work together and socialize with one another, a conflict outside of the organization can come in to the centre and impact work…

…our community is small and sometimes the people you are working with find out where you live and may come to you for support when you are on off time with your own family…
Summary and Conclusion

The interviews with directors and program managers revealed that the strong commitment to providing opportunities for community members carried a great deal of influence on who was hired within their agencies. Multiple benefits and challenges to hiring locally were also identified. These included the pre-existence of relationships between people, the ease with which trust is developed between agency staff and community members because of shared values and experience, and the ability to enhance existing capacity from within the community in a way that respects local realities and recognizes individual and collective gifts. A major challenge involves meeting the training needs of staff within the constraints of existing resources. In addition to the mobility of staff, the dual relationships between staff and individuals who approach the agencies for service can also pose challenges.

The provision of opportunities for employment and training by community-based inner-city organizations is an important contribution to individual, family, and community well-being that has been noted in the literature (Cox & Espinoza, 2005). The findings of this study suggest the need to further investigate the benefits and challenges of hiring from within the community and the need to develop ways of overcoming the challenges that were identified.

Selected References (contact author for full list)


Service Learning in Action: Insights from a case study of undergraduate student volunteers at a children’s water festival.

Sarah Burgess, Trent University
Heather Reid, U-Links Center for Community-Based Research
Dr. Stephen Hill, Trent University
Robert Loney, Trent University

This case study focuses on an undergraduate service learning experience. Evaluation results indicate both students and community benefited. This service learning example highlights the benefits of including a third party “broker” (U-Links) in the service learning model.

Children's Water Festivals occur throughout Ontario during both spring and fall of the school year. They strive to educate children about water ecology, watershed conservation through interactive learning activity stations. Elementary students ranging from grades 3-6 participate in a full day of games, education, and awareness. Most festivals depend upon community volunteers to organize the event and to manage and run the activity stations. In fact, without these volunteers, many of these festivals would not happen. The Haliburton-Muskoka Children’s Water Festival is no exception. All three years that the festival has been running, recruiting volunteers has been a major focus of energy. In 2008 the festival partnered with the U-Links Centre for Community-Based Research (U-Links) to explore the possibility of including Trent University students as volunteers for activity centers at the festival. As a Haliburton-based organization with a mandate to link the resources of the university and the community, U-Links was well positioned to support this type of partnership.

Service Learning

Service learning is defined as “a teaching method which combines community service with academic instruction as it focuses on critical, reflective thinking and civic responsibility. Service-learning programs involve students in organized community service that addresses local needs, while developing their academic skills, sense of civic responsibility, and commitment to the community” (Community College National Center for Community Engagement, 2007). Students were asked to evaluate their experience based on this definition of service learning. By getting students out of the classroom, service learning advances their understandings and relations to problems through hands-on activities where students must apply their own knowledge in a real-life context.

Service learning enhances the classroom experience through service activities. Service learning ranges from volunteer and community service to field projects and internship programs (Furco, 1996). It is an external means of reaching educational objectives and curriculum credit and brings new life to the classroom and increases student's interest in the subject (Bringle, 1996). A common theme in the literature is that service learning only occurs when both parties involved benefit from the activities.

Service learning opportunities often focus on social issues yet, recently, service experiences in environmental programs are growing more common. The environment provides an ideal opportunity for a successful service learning experience to take place. Moreover, environmental non-profit groups face continual challenges finding volunteers and evidence suggests that universities often fail to adequately prepare students for their careers strictly through course material (Haines, 2003). Service learning within an environmental learning setting allows for an increase in community relationship, and leadership skills (Clifton, 1998).

It is important that a service learning experience be about more than simply creating a volunteer opportunity. Rather, it should allow students to apply concepts, skills and contents from their studies (Babcock, 2000). Applying course
material through service learning can help students understand how their courses can be applied in the real world and explore future career options (Haines, 2003).

Depending on the type of service learning experience, students will receive different outcomes based on their attitude and willingness to participate. Studies indicate that students will develop strong morals, personal responsibility, positive self-esteem, and willingness to explore new roles. These opportunities also help the students focus on personal skills, problem solving skills and summarizing and reflecting upon their own actions (Babcock, 2000).

A Service Learning Partnership: Haliburton-Muskoka Children’s Water Festival, Trent University, and U-Links Centre for Community-Based Research

The Haliburton-Muskoka Children’s Water Festival is currently entering its fourth year. The festival draws its board committee from the surrounding community and regional board members. Children from across the Trillium Lakeland’s school board attend the festival on one of the three days it runs in September. The festival currently takes place at the Kinark Outdoor Center. Kinark not only provides a beautiful natural setting, but also contributes staff support and provides meals for volunteers. The festival committee has organizational representation but is primarily made up of individual volunteers who are passionate about environmental education.

U-Links supports service learning at Trent University through their delivery of the Community-Based Education Program (CBE) in Haliburton County. The aim of the CBE Program is to develop meaningful community projects with host organizations and match them with students and faculty who are interested in the topic. The development of service learning opportunities has been supported by Trent University and the McConnell Family Foundation. In this case U-Links approached Stephen Hill and Rob Loney, who are both involved in the first year class in Environmental Studies (ERSC100), to explore the possibility of incorporating volunteering at the Water Festival into their curriculum. The response was very enthusiastic and so a partnership was born.

During their first week of classes, students from ERSC 100 were introduced to their first assignment. The assignment topic dealt with how we learn about environmental issues and the students were given the option of volunteering for one full day at the water festival or writing a 1000 word essay. From the Trent University perspective the goal was to encourage students to critically examine how and why we are taught and learn about environmental issues so that students might engage in more reflective learning throughout the rest of the course. The volunteer opportunity also served a team-building function early in the course. For the Water Festival, the Trent students provided much needed volunteer capacity, with approximately 40 Trent students volunteering each day. Each student was required to complete these as part of a pass/fail assignment, where participation as a volunteer or submission of the 1000 word essay were the sole criteria for passing. It is worth noting that the service learning assignment was on a volunteer basis yet was oversubscribed (i.e., more students wanted to volunteer than were able). Two key reasons for the assignment being voluntary were: (1) the large class size (250 students) and (2) the requirement for student volunteers to be gone from campus for an entire day, likely missing other course lectures or labs. Because there were two unique assignments (i.e., essay and service learning), the instructors deemed it unfair to assign grades.

The Service Learning Experience. Given that this was the first time a first year course had been involved in the festival, an additional project was developed to evaluate the student experience. Also working through U-Links, a senior student (Sarah Burgess) took on a coordination role at the festival and conducted an evaluation of the first year student experience. Sarah structured the evaluation so that we would collect information about the festival overall, the individual activity centres, and the service learning experience. Results that focused on the service learning experienced are summarized below.

The results from the student surveys suggested the majority of students held a positive impression of their experience volunteering for the Haliburton-Muskoka Children’s Water Festival within the context of a first-year environmental course. Students also felt the event was generally well organized. One student commented, “I feel that overall the Haliburton-Muskoka Children’s Water Festival was very well organized and all of the staff there were incredibly friendly and helpful.” Many of the student’s comments reflect the same feelings.

Another important component of the evaluation was to understand, from the students point of view, whether or not this service learning option should remain in the ERSC 100 course. An overwhelming 98% of students believe this service learning experience should remain part of the ERSC 100 course. Student’s comments were very positive towards this question including comments such as “the Haliburton-Muskoka Children’s Water Festival was an amazing addition to a course like Environmental Science 100.” Nonetheless, 80% of the students felt the service-learning component should remain optional rather than a mandatory course requirement.

This service-learning experience was intended to provide Trent students with the opportunity to expand or learn new skills. The students were responsible for organizing information and presenting it to groups of 6 or more students.
while fielding questions regarding the topic. This allowed the volunteers to utilize their public speaking, organization, leadership and build upon their self-confidence and ability to work with others. The majority of students felt that this service learning experience allowed them to utilize and develop in these categories. This is an important aspect of service learning as it encourages students to utilize these skills instead letting them remain unused in the classroom environment.

Lastly, it was important to see how this experience influenced the student’s views towards their community, personal academic goals, career development, and social and personal development. The majority of students indicated that participating in service learning influenced their thoughts and goals pertaining to each of the areas listed above. It helped the students feel like part of the community and give back to what has been provided for them. One commented on working within the community: “this volunteer experience was great because it allowed so many of us who are not from this area to connect with the local volunteer that we will be living with for the next four years”. This comment indicates that students appreciated this opportunity to get out into their community, if only living here temporarily. It allowed them to consider what they want to do with their life, how they want to make a difference and do well in their academics. This festival also provided students with an opportunity to network with people who are working in the environmental field and establish contacts. It allowed them to go out and meet their peers, people in the community, and get involved with younger generations. One student summed up their feelings, ‘I feel more motivated and confident to get involved where I once may have been nervous and backed down from such an opportunity’. Beyond developing and expanding on important life skills, the students also took away new information they learned from their activity center. Room for Improvement. Students and organizers of the festival were asked to provide recommendations for how to improve the partnership between Trent, U-Links, and the Water Festival. The festival currently takes place during the second week of Trent's academic year allowing little time to organize student volunteers (i.e., sign up, deliver preparatory materials, etc.). This was a significant challenge for the Trent instructors. Options for addressing this include: delaying the festival by one week, presenting the service learning option to students during their orientation week, or looking into other sources of volunteers so festival does not rely solely on ERSC 100 students. Student orientation was identified as an area for improvement. The development of an orientation package that provides background information for students would help them respond more confidently to questions. From a practical point of view, tips about how to facilitate activities and work with the children would also be helpful. An introduction to the concept of service learning would also enhance the student experience by highlighting the purpose of their involvement. Many of the other recommendations related to the logistics of specific activity centers and are not detailed here.

Summary. Service learning is an important component in our education system with the growing awareness of social and environmental problems (Wade, 1997). There are essential components for a service learning experience to be successful; these include preparation, collaboration between the community, students and teachers, service activities, curriculum integration and reflection (Wade, 1997). The partnership between the Haliburton-Muskoka Children's Water Festival, Trent University, and U-Links provided these important components, and resulted in important, positive feedback from the students. To celebrate and show their appreciation, members of the Haliburton-Muskoka Children's Water Festival, provided every student with a certificate with their name on it for volunteering at the festival. This helps the students understand the value of their work and know that their time and knowledge was greatly appreciated. Both the Haliburton-Muskoka Children’s Water Festival and Trent University benefited from this unique relationship. As a pilot project, this was extremely successful. The festival benefited from having increased volunteer capacity and the students had a positive experience. Moreover, the evaluation has provided clear recommendations for improvement to the festival in general and, more specifically, input into how to maintain the partnership.

Conclusion
This case study is an interesting example of how an independent organization can contribute to the development of service learning opportunities. The festival occurs approximately 150km away from the Trent University campus and it is unlikely that this partnership would have happened without the presence of an organization like U-Links. Because U-Links' staff have knowledge of the community’s needs and an awareness of what is happening at the university, they are uniquely positioned to make these types of connections. In this case, U-Links was also able to provide financial support for transportation for the university students. In a pilot stage, costs like these can be a tremendous barrier. Eliminating the cost contributes to people's willingness invest their time in trying something new.

The partnership established through the festival has continued long after the 3 days in September. U-Links worked with the festival committee to develop student projects to respond to some of the feedback from the evaluation. In January, four students started working on enhancing current activity stations to better match the curriculum and provide more detailed instruction for next year's volunteers. Two other students are working on developing new activities that will be piloted at the 2008 festival. The committee members are interested in committing time to better orient the students next year and have already scheduled the festival for later dates to accommodate university student participation.
Professors involved are willing to look at incorporating this experience again, perhaps also including more senior students. U-Links will continue to provide a coordination role and is currently active at the festival committee level.

References


Opo Yeye: Raise Your Spirit
Community-Based Participatory Mental Well-Being from a Non-Western Cultural Perspective

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Reflecting the worldview of the Afro-Surinamese, Opo Yeye - meaning Raising the Spirit, is a community mental well-being program currently being developed in Lexington, Kentucky in a community-university partnership effort. This paper reviews its current progress and lessons learned.

Introduction

Opo Yeye is a Surinamese statement which translates into Raising the Spirit. It is also the title of a program of mental well being that is based on Afro-Surinamese experience and knowledge. This model was designed at the outcome of a two year study (2003 – 2005) among the working class Afro-Surinamese in Paramaribo, Suriname (Cairo, 2007). This study was the continuation of a previous study on mental health among African Americans in a low-income neighborhood in Lexington, Kentucky (Baruti, 2001). As such, both studies were motivated to understand the concepts of mental health and mental well being as experienced and defined by the people who live it as opposed to an interpretation by the medical establishment. Secondly, these studies purposely focused on two populations of the African Diaspora.

African Diaspora peoples as other Diaspora and indigenous people often find themselves being spoken for or about. The knowledge within these populations is often devalued, marginalized, ignored or suppressed by the dominant knowledge paradigms. Not only is their knowledge marginalized in terms of content, the procurement of knowledge also fails to include indigenous models (Tuhiwai Smith, ). This research then and the subsequent development of the Opo Yeye program, set out to uncover voices and knowledge from the African Diaspora to provide additional and hopefully more effective tools to address mental well being. As Dr. Mehl Madrona (2007) states:

I propose that medicine must reinvent itself to include the voices and visions of indigenous peoples. Those of us within medicine must discover how to get from where we are today to a paradigm (or a story) that is more conducive to health and well being. We need to think differently about medicine, psychotherapy, and healing. What we have are collections of stories that make sense to members of the cultures who tell them. The world’s indigenous medical systems deserve appreciation for their wisdom. These traditional methods of healing include North American Native, traditional Chinese medicine, Ayurveda from India, and African medicine, to name but a few. They hold many useful stories about health and disease, as valid in their own right as the stories told by conventional medicine. (p. 5)

African Diaspora Mental Well Being

The African Diaspora is used as a lens to view mental well being, something which is not commonly done. Early scholarship of the African Diaspora involved numerous works on psychology and personality (Akbar, 1984; Nobles, 1986; Cress Welsing, 1991). However, most of these works were based on rather essentialized notions of African personality, and did not really look at the broader concept of mental health or mental well being.

One psychological issue that has been addressed in the diasporic literature is the affect of racism on the psyche, as people of the African Diaspora globally have been positioned in minority and or marginalized status. This work dates back as far
as the early 1900s with Du Bois’ work on double consciousness in the US (1969). Another significant work is that of Fanon in the 1950s on the psychological ramifications of racism experienced by Africans in Algeria and France (1984).

Mental well-being is a site where the African Diaspora and globalization come together. Globalization significantly influences the lives of those of African descent, especially as the majority of these populations are over-represented in the lower socio-economic classes (Drager et al. 2001, Singer 2001, Mesa-Lago 2001, Whiteis 1998, Alarcon and Aguilar-Gaxiola 2000). The flow and lure of consumption goods, international money flows, government priority in providing individual business opportunities over state funded social welfare programs, small enterprises losing out to big business, the loss of jobs due to big business mergers, push and pull migratory movements, are all aspects of globalization that can compromise the well being of marginalized populations. Furthermore, globalization contributes to a ‘diasporic consciousness’ through improved global communication (Levy 2000) by providing continuous comparative information streams about the rest of the world. Improved communication can revive dormant institutions, but more often than not, it confirms and reinforces one’s marginalized status in comparison to others.

Finally, the African Diaspora is promoted here as a starting point and entryway into other Diasporas. The African Diaspora explores a variety of factors between groups of people who have African ancestry in common. Comparisons can and should be made with people who do not necessarily have African ancestry, but who do share in a history of colonial oppression, exploitation, forced relocation, or other aspects of marginalization. It is telling that the most inspirational work for the Surinamese study on mental well being did not stem from a study on a sub-Saharan African population, but from one about migrant Arab Muslim women who are marginalized in Canada (Dossa 2002, 2004).

What can we learn from each other and how can our collective knowledge contribute to a better understanding of the plights of marginalized people? It is my intent to use the African Diaspora as a doorway to global understanding of people’s mental well-being, and to use the African Diaspora to broaden the viewpoint, rather than to narrow it.

**Opo Yeye: the Afro-Surinamese approach to mental well being**

Findings of the Surinamese study have been conglomerated into a useable approach to mental well being entitled Opo Yeye, which translates into “Raising the Spirit”. At the core of this program stands a model of the self as a divisible vessel through which numerous forces seen and unseen flow and interconnect at any given time. The self is connected to spiritual and nature forces, family members seen and unseen, organizations, the physical environment and other people. The goal is to live in harmony with all of these forces, which defines mental well being. Hence, there are actions that raise one’s spirit (opo yu yeye) and thus help move one towards harmony, or alternatively that lower one’s spirit (saka yu yeye).

The program acknowledges three concepts that challenge and undermine mental well being, and one concept that supports it. **Fa a go a go**, which translates into “It goes how it goes” are the “C’est la vie” kind of attitudes that express agreement or resignation with certain actions, even though on a deeper level a person might disagree. These types of responses are based on external encounters, but are extremely detrimental because they are the kinds of experiences that never get dealt with or resolved. As a result they fester and have the potential of causing serious harm over the long run.

**Mek’ multi**, which freely translates into “To struggle” or “To make an effort”, are those type of extreme decisions that people consciously make even though they know it goes directly against their mental well being and can place themselves, family, and community - thus their extended sense of self- at great risk. An example might be drug trafficking or prostitution with tourists. These choices are often the direct result of economic challenges that are shaped by globalization.

**Hebi sani** are “heavy things” or burdens that people carry. Here they refer to internal challenges; unresolved psychological, emotional, spiritual or even ancestral burdens that people carry with them. These are the lessons people have learned or picked up along the way, either consciously or unconsciously, and that people hold on to. These hebi sani don’t always have to be negative, once engaged and processed they have the potential of being great forces to opo yeye.

**Tak’ taki** lastly, translates liberally into “language” or “the Word” and refers to practices that support mental well being. Supportive practices are centered around spaces of engagement and dialogue. **Yu e mus’ taki,** “you must talk” is a common saying in Suriname. People are encouraged to talk, when they are troubled, not only with each other, but especially with themselves. In addition, engagement with “the Word” also extends beyond the spoken word. Artistic expressions through song, poetry, story telling, music, proverbs and fashion, are all tak’ taki expressions exemplifying a rich heritage. On the most abstract level words are sound vibrations. Engaging tak’ taki on a more abstract level can relate to creation or awareness of a certain “vibe”. It entails awareness, sensibility, and sensitivity to the spaces required for engaging mental well being.
Opo Yeye Community Based Research Project

Implementation of the Opo Yeye program was designed as a pilot research project by Aminata Cairo, Ph.D., and Rosalind Harris, Ph.D., in order to develop a curriculum on community mental well being. Community based participatory research was selected to ensure continuous community feedback and evaluation in the development process. It was also expected that through using community-based participatory research eventual ownership by the community and sustainability of the program would be assured. Unfortunately the selected African American community had been subjected to many University studies, assessments, and projects, and there was a common sense of exploitation throughout the community. Restoring proper community-university relations then were going to be pursued, especially through including students in the process. Through designing a service learning course, students would be introduced to all aspects of the research process, including working alongside community members.

Community implementation of the program then involved the establishment of an advisory “Elder Council” and the training and development of a lay community “First Responders” team. Initially the plan was to work with an African American community, and to do additional hands-on direct mental well being work with one other population. The feedback from this hands-on work would also contribute to the research and development of the Opo Yeye community mental well being model. Per request from the community however, two other populations were included. Since the community approached us we found it important to respond and accommodate the groups.

As a result four population groups participated including an African American, a Latino, an African refugee, and a teen mother group. For each group thematic issues were identified and an accompanying thematic name was chosen. Accessible language facilitated engagement, reflecting the importance of tak’ taki again. The African American population was confronted with many issues of community change. Concepts of re-building and renewal were regularly used to address and describe this community in urban planning. The theme of Re-Spirit the Community was chosen to address the community well being of the people in the community.

For the teen mother population, the concept of tak’ taki proved easily applicable. The young women engaged extensively in “knowledge talk” (knowledge tak’ taki). They seemed eager to give advice each other about “what I know”. At the same time there were significant spaces of silence. Neglect, lack of support, body issues, and abusive relationships with parents and/or mates, either observed or experienced, when brought up would often instantly create spaces of silence. The theme of Womanhood was chosen for this population. Through the safer category of “Womanhood” all aspects of what it means to be a woman were able to be addressed, including the more difficult issues of abuse, neglect, coping, and so on.

For the African refugee population the cultural and emotional adaptations to living in a new environment carry a great toll, and after a honeymoon period of three to six months, problems arise among the children as well as the adults. For this population for whom issues of safety, security, displacement, and general survival are so prominent, the theme of New Neighbors was chosen.

For the Latino population, initially no thematic name was given. The Latino population already had a lay health worker outreach program in place that was very successful named Promatores. Rather than inventing a new group we decided to work with the existing Promatores group and to help them develop the mental well being aspect of the program, which until then had been minimally addressed. Local anti-immigrant developments put working with the Promatores on hold. Through the after school program that initially targeted the African refugee children, Latino migrant children became included as they both attended English as a Second Language (ESL) classes together. Through engaging with the Latino population in this manner we decided to include them under the nomer of New Neighbors.

Lessons Learned

At the time of this writing the first phase of the Opo Yeye program has been executed. The biggest lessons learned have been in two particular areas that shape the course of this project: the role of tak’ taki and the role of Spirituality. The biggest Spiritual lesson that guides this work has been about creating movement through joining, rather than controlling. Through tak’ taki, bringing all the right elements together to create spaces of engagement, consequentially one has to join the process and move with the energy that is being created, rather than trying to force it. Along with that then comes a certain amount of faith, trust, flexibility, and confidence in the process of moving. An example of both tak’ taki and Spirituality can best be described in an account of the creation and development of FACE Time.

I was approached by the Multicultural coordinator of the local social services to assist in addressing the mental health of African refugees in the community. Through her recommendation I met with the staff of the refugee services center, African refugees, and school staff. Some of the major issues identified included after school child care and transportation; child adaptation to education and American life in general; loss of expressive culture when adopting to American culture; a deterioration of family functioning after a three month “honeymoon” period; and the educational gap.
of many refugee children, some of which who have never attended school.

I requested a meeting with the school superintendent and the director of Family Resources Services. At this meeting I shared the comments of the different groups of people I had spoken with and presented my concerns, which was received by attentive ears. Another meeting followed with additional people including ESL staff, and community outreach staff. Within a week after this second meeting I received a telephone call that an after school program for ESL children had been approved and that transportation was going to be provided. The ESL teacher and the Family Resource Coordinator at the school took care of all the administrative logistics in rapid time and Families and Communities Educating, also known as FACE Time was born.

The three college students that signed up for the service learning course, turned out to be three of the most wonderful young people we could have asked for. Within a week they recruited over 30 fellow students to volunteer in the after school program. They consistently initiated positive improvements on the work we were already doing. More so, however, they moved with awareness. What we found ourselves doing with them in our guidance, was teaching them about going with the flow, moving from right intention, not being so hard on themselves when things didn’t go as expected, being patient, and about appreciating the little as well as the large accomplishments. As a result, we have seen the students grow in their confidence, their capacity to make things happen, and their ability to support each other.

Faculty members at the school have remarked about the change in participating FACE Time students over the short time that we have been working with them. Excitement, joy, and confidence are some of the terms that are repeatedly used to describe them. As part of FACE Time we are in the process of starting a support group/sewing cooperative for the mothers of the children, a support group for the fathers and a family reading program. All this has developed in the time span of about two months.

Some skeptics might say that there is nothing so called “Spiritual” about the development of this project. All that has happened, and the rapid progression can be argued to be merely due to coincidence and hard work. Indeed, working from a spiritual perspective does not preclude one from hard work. But what if through tapping into that what connects us, we can contribute to making things happen that collectively will raise our Spirits, and what if we were to engage in that capacity with awareness, rather than reflect on it, or dismiss it as an afterthought?

I believe there are many of us closeted and not-so-closeted academicians who want to move from a different level of awareness, and who want to bring about positive changes in the heart spaces in addition to our physical realities. Being academic and rigorous does not have to preclude being sensitive and aware of potential invisible forces that traverse and even guide our work. In effect, it could be a perfect marriage, and Opo Yeye might be the guiding light to make it happen.

Selected References


Working together at the margins: research to break the revolving door experience of homeless service users

Liz Cunningham and Dr Carl Walker
University of Brighton

This paper reflects on the development of a collaborative research relationship between community and university partners working together as researchers at the margins. It examines the processes that facilitated working in collaboration and reflects on the difficulties and lessons experienced.

Introduction
Within Raeithel’s (1982, 1998) model of reflection, there is a component he calls ‘decentering’ by which he means to take a step back and reflect as an observer in the process you are engaged in. Using this as our model of practice, we present some of the issues we have identified through this process of reflection. Parker (2005) suggests, within a research process, it is the relationships between co-researchers that are often unreported and forgotten and Nelson and Prilleltensky remind us (2005) that it is responsible research practice to remain ‘attuned’ within our research relationships, in particular to power issues, but also to acknowledge the moral values that influence us. This is particularly important when engaged in the process of collaborative research with community partners (Fals-Borda and Rahman 1991).

This process of stepping back and considering the relationships has enabled us to think about what we have done, what we have learnt from the experience and to consider how we might work in future collaborations. All too often we work in a contained way in our research partnerships, rarely working with different people and in ways which challenge us. Partly, therefore, this reflection has enabled us to consider the whole process of creating a piece of research as well as forming and maintaining new research relationships.

Positioning Ourselves at the Margins
Researchers who choose to place themselves in, and work with others at what Tuhiwai Smith (2006) describes as ‘the margins’ - places where the ‘other’, ‘outsiders’ and those locked out of the mainstream are located - are those who can identify a purpose, that is both intellectual and concerned with social justice and change. Their numbers are growing. They are building on the work of minority, feminist and participatory action researchers and identifying their work as radical research (White 2006); critical research (Nelson and Prilleltensky, 2005); and community action research (Ochocka et al 2002). In the majority of universities, there are risks to working in this way, with limited, if any, financial support and limited, if any, understanding of the academic benefit of working collaboratively with, rather than on, people. There is a view that those working in this way endanger the ‘expertise’ and ‘authority’ of the academic researcher. (Tuhiwai Smith, 2006, p.161)

Brighton Model
Those who are working in collaboration with communities, stress the need for a more ‘organic’ approach to research and an understanding that these activities challenge the status quo of knowledge production as a ‘privileged university activity’ to a community focused and based activity that considers ‘community needs within webs of responsibilities’. (White, 2006, p.220-1).

Our university facilitates us to work with this more organic approach and has created a model that could be effective for others. David Watson (a former Vice-Chancellor of the university) states (CUPP, 2008) ‘there was a sense that Brighton was making a case for growing out of the community and giving a lot back to the community’. It has been suggested
(Hart, Maddison and Wolff, 2008) that this view originates in the vocational and professional educational provision of the university when it was a Polytechnic with strong links to the local workforce. It is also drawn from a desire to ‘generate a degree of mutual benefit’ (Laing and Maddison, 2008, p.8). There had always been a degree of community-university partnership working at Brighton but this was ad-hoc and low key. The Community-University Partnership Programme (CUPP) model built on what was there and created a central ‘brokerage role’ (Balloch et al, 2008, p.23) to match up partners, which was a research Helpdesk. This enabled the university to refine a process that already existed and structure its response to community requests for help (Rodriguez and Millican, 2008).

The Process

So what was the process in our case? In January 2007 the New Initiatives Manager (Tracey) of a homelessness community organisation made a request for help to the CUPP research helpdesk. The helpdesk manager referred the request to the senior researchers group and the Academic Director (Sue Balloch). It was passed to the Health and Social Policy Research Centre to Liz as a Research Fellow who had an interest in narrative methods and homelessness and had experience of developing research proposals. A second round of funding was coming up from the joint Brighton Sussex Community Knowledge Exchange (BSCKE) programme. It was decided that it would be good to develop a joint bid to BSCKE to carry out the research in partnership.

The process of developing a funding proposal is a very demanding one but Tracey and Liz got to know each other well during this period. Although the bid to BSCKE was unsuccessful, this had helped to cement a working partnership and when Tracey decided to carry out her own unfunded research, Sue and Liz maintained interest and involvement in the project.

A new lecturer (Carl) with an interest in community mental health research was also informed about the project and showed an interest in taking part. As part of the process of developing the BSCKE bid, an advisory group was set up which had members from other community stakeholders including public sector organisations and we were also members of this group. Carl attended some advisory group meetings and provided research advice at the start of the project.

Sue was able to provide a small amount of funding to engage a research assistant (Sarah – a recent Brighton graduate) to carry out a literature review and this funding was extended further to assist in the interviews of service users and service providers. By the end of the project, Sarah was working as volunteer as the funding had run out. She maintained her involvement for a further five months.

Negotiating the Process

We had no formal conversation about boundaries with Tracey and Sarah. This was negotiated as we went along with each request for assistance and at each stage of the research process. We have developed with them mechanisms appropriate for each stage. This often involved alterations in the nature of our involvement and variations in the degree to which we were involved in the direction of the process. This is an arrangement that was appropriate due to the changing nature of our involvement.

Our initial involvement was very much in an advisory capacity regarding practical issues like, how to design and carry out qualitative research, what resources are available for support at the university, how to obtain financial support and how to work towards the creation of an academic report. This involved a series of meetings where such processes were discussed and support and advice provided wherever possible. We then became more involved with the analysis phase and the boundaries changed to reflect a working involvement on our part. This led to a greater feeling of ownership on the part of the academics, a process that continued with the creation of the final report since the academic input increased in response to, what became, challenging circumstances.

As part of negotiating this process, both academic contributors had to consider how able they were to balance their different roles and contributions to the project, meaning consideration of boundaries in terms of time and what they would ‘do’ for the community partner, or rather, encourage the community partner do for themselves. There was a definite tension on this issue as we were conscious of the commitments we could make to the project, in terms of time and activities.

Support

Tracey also felt the need to develop more skills as a researcher so she asked about some more formal mechanism for this. She took a post-graduate module entitled ‘Doing Qualitative Research’ and this increased her confidence to develop her research questions further and to carry out her first interviews.

Confidence in the research process was a key issue that we needed to manage throughout the time we worked on the project. Tracey understandably felt that she needed support in an academic context so that the ‘validity’ of the work could not be brought into question. She placed a heavy emphasis on this and on our importance in fulfilling this role.
This was because she felt that she was unable to judge whether they had achieved the validity that she desired or that other people would look for in the research findings. As such, through the project we worked to provide a sense of academic support, both through advice and the analysis of the data using a triangulation process.

We were involved in the design of the interview schedule and helped to shape some of the questions so that the interviews would access the kinds of experiences that service users were having while helping to ensure that the leading nature of some of the first draft of question were changed. We also provided considerable feedback to Tracey that both she and Sarah were being sufficiently rigorous and detailed in their analysis. Their work was of a high standard but they required considerable feedback from Liz and Carl in order to feel sufficiently confident that this was the case. Two meetings were set up between Liz and Carl and Sarah in order to share thoughts both on the process of generating key themes and the ways that these could be presented effectively although it should be noted that Sarah’s previous training in research methods at the university meant that she was working to a consistently high standard. Sometimes it is just necessary for a university partner to remind their colleagues that this is the case.

In a conversation with the research assistant about the analysis of the data, we each read the bare interview data, identified themes we saw emerging and compared these with her presentations of themes. This was an interesting process since from our point of view it involved not only the process of triangulation and data analysis but required a very delicate negotiation of the analytical process. Since Tracey and the research assistant had little confidence in their ability to produce ‘academic’ themes from the text, Liz and Carl had to provide support and advice without undermining their efforts. Conversations with colleagues and students don’t provide a template for this kind of situation and so we were aware of the need to tread carefully. We concurred broadly with their the key themes that they identified from service user accounts but found that occasionally they were too broad in nature and did not represent some of the complexity in the accounts of service users. We made these suggestions with very specific examples of what we meant and how this might be integrated into the report. It should be noted, however, that the process was one of negotiation rather than taking the role of teacher/pupil and together we came to an agreement about the level of detail necessary that would enable the rich experiences of the service users to be understood.

**Writing up**

During the process we changed directors at the research centre which did have an impact both on the nature of the process and the deadlines, something that was not initially factored in. A few weeks before the intended date for the launch of the report, a draft was received by the Liz and Carl and also by the administrator (Pippa) at the research centre. Pippa came to talk to us and pointed out that the criteria for publication of reports had recently become more rigorous as a result of a change in the director of the centre. She expressed concern over the way that the report was constructed, the writing and the length of the report and intimated that she believed that substantial proofing would be necessary before the head of the research centre agreed to publish. This immediately placed us in a challenging position since we were faced with the possibility of a considerable piece of work, time and effort not receiving the dissemination within the department that had been agreed. As members of the university, this now increased the pressure on us to play an effective intermediary role that would meet the needs of both parties. Such a position had the potential to strain the relationships, either with our community partner or colleagues (or possibly both). Negotiating a course of action to satisfy all parties was necessary. Liz and Carl created a plan to work with Tracey to amend the report such that the content was retained, but in such a fashion that it was appropriate for publication within the department. We set a timeframe for this and a detailed plan of action that would allow us to work together to accomplish it. The process was not without difficulty but we were able to shape the draft into a report that reflected the high standards of the research centre.

**Maintaining voice**

One of the main problems we faced in the project was to make sure that the voices of service users and staff remained to guide the findings and help people to understand the experiences of people who move through the ‘revolving door’. Not only did Liz and Carl have to be careful about this process but we needed to ensure that Tracey was happy that her understanding of service user’s voices was retained. Our opinion of the extent to which people’s voices could be heard may have been very different to Tracey’s. Due to the inherent power imbalance between academic ‘experts’, with confidence in their analysis and Tracey, who had far less confidence, we had to be very careful not to move Tracey toward a representation of the service user’s voices that she did not recognize but which she would accept due to her lack of confidence in the process. Such an issue can only be negotiated with clear and honest communication and we tried to encourage forthright opinion wherever possible. It also requires a highly reflexive approach on behalf of the academics since the subtlety of such processes is not always easy to recognise.

We outlined a plan of action that would lead us to successful publication and sent this to Tracey in order to find out whether it would fit with her plans for both the report and the launch. It was felt that this more hands-on approach was
necessary during this stage in order to allow the project to be disseminated effectively. Tracey decided on a new launch date for the report as we had all underestimated the amount of work necessary to bring the report in line with academic and departmental conventions.

**Transitions**

Currently we are finalising the production of the report and supporting that process. The next phase of our involvement in the research is to support Tracey in the transition from professional and stakeholder dissemination into academic dissemination to allow the results to reach maximum exposure. We anticipate that this process will require considerable input from Liz and Carl who both have experience in publishing in journals before. Other than the writing relationship, we will wait to see what develops and how we might be able to work together on other projects in the future.

**Conclusion**

This kind of research relationship does work, but there is a tension between what we intend - to hand over power to the community partners to enable them to become researchers and them coming to understand that we don’t want to do everything - we don’t want the power of the professional. But, sometimes community partners want you to have that power in order to validate their work in the eyes of others.

We believe, as a result of this reflection, we have maintained a successful research relationship and, despite its challenges, working in this way, together, at the margins, has proved rewarding for both partners with capacity built on both sides.

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Breaking out of the local: European dimensions of Science Shops

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Summary
We want to give an overview of the European dimension of and the interest of the European Union (EU) in the concept of Science Shops. The European Commission (EC) manages the day-to-day business by initiating and implementing EU policies and spending EU funds. The EC support for Science Shops has been an important factor for the increasing international interest and progress of the Science Shop movement. This paper summarises international developments of the Science Shop Network (Living Knowledge), and Science Shop backgrounds as well as links with EU policies like the EU 7\textsuperscript{th} Framework Programme for Research. It shows that community-based research does not only have a local dimension and outlines the strengths and advantages of international Science Shop activities and international cooperation to break out of the local and to bring local issues on the international agenda. Detailed information about the Science Shop concept and daily routines of a Science Shop can be found at the Living Knowledge website (www.livingknowledge.org), e.g. at the FAQ section.

Local air quality

What about the air quality at my front door, downtown this big city? Science Shops as well as regional and local Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have been confronted with a growing number of requests from citizens on local environmental issues. During the last years there is a growing concern from citizens on local air quality and its impact on their health. The European Environment Agency (EEA) concluded that traffic-related air pollution one of the most pressing problems in urban areas.

A typical observation is that many citizens are not aware of other citizens that raise the same questions. In truth those individual questions are of general importance and not individual at all. The fact that so many individuals and local environmental organizations and even regional umbrella organizations contact the Science Shops, clearly show that there is concern about local air quality. Here Science Shops offer the opportunity to break out of the local. But once broken out of the local, concerned citizens face the next problem: Although some general information is available they lack access to this information in a practical way. And in the case they do have access to the information they often miss the expertise to assess it.

Since 2005 the Science Shop for Biology at Utrecht University initiated several projects on local air quality, often in close cooperation with the Interfaculty Institute of Risk Assessment Sciences at Utrecht University and several community organisations. In cooperation with a local CSO’s the Science Shop developed guidelines, and a pilot version for an information tool for citizens on local air quality at their front door. In cooperation with the Dutch Cyclists’ Union they initiated real time research project to measure exposure (of cyclists) to fine particles and ultra-fine particles. This research was the base for a national discussion on air pollution by mopeds compared to cars early 2008.
Mediating acquaintance

The many requests Science Shops receive clearly show that providing information isn’t sufficient to raise citizens understanding of scientific information. Awareness and understanding of scientific information and knowledge will be an essential step towards public participation in decision-making processes. Thus additional efforts are needed to really bridge the gap between science and society. The Interacts case studies (Jørgensen e.a., 2004) show that when NGOs or citizens approach Science Shops, their need for knowledge can be categorized in terms of:

1) Scientific analysis of a problem;
2) Enhancement of knowledge around a certain topic;
3) Research on the impact of governmental projects;
4) Development of solutions;
5) Evaluation of NGO or community services/projects.

The fact that Science Shops respond to civil society’s needs for expertise and knowledge is a key element that distinguishes them from other knowledge transfer mechanisms.

Science Shops: from 1970 to 2008

In the early 1970s there was no direct link between universities and daily problems in society, where at the same time some of the side effects of technological development were becoming visible. Universities had to increase the role of society in research and to foster contacts between a large public and science and scientists.

The efforts of critical students as well as some university staff to increase civil society groups’ knowledge coincided with a growing environmental awareness. On the waves of this movement in the Netherlands the first Science Shops (a direct translation form the Dutch word for these organizations Wetenschapswinkels, where wetenschap means science, and winkels means shops) emerged. The word ‘science’ in the name Science Shop is used in its broadest sense, so it includes social sciences, natural sciences, humanities and engineering.

These first Science Shops were grounded on the idea that universities had to play a more prominent role in the solution of social and environmental problems. Within universities Science Shops started to build partnerships with civil society. By the end of the 1970s, almost all Dutch universities had a Science Shop. Science Shops became recognized intermediaries between science (the universities) and society, working in an open and interaction-oriented way (Farkas, 2002).

Nowadays Science Shops consolidated their bridging function between university and society. Science Shops offer students the opportunity to do community based research and enabled community groups to get access to university research resources, or get support in scientific methodology or processes in all areas of science such as nature, environment, health, art and culture, law, social aid and communication. From a modest extension of a university service on a voluntary basis, Science Shops developed to professional organizations. The idea spread to many countries across the world (e.g. Videnskabsbutikken in Denmark, Wissenschaftsladen in Germany and Austria, Intermediu in Romania, Science Shop in the UK, Community Based Research Center in the USA, or Shopfront at the University of Technology, Sydney).

In France and Belgium, the Science and Society Action Plan of the EC (EC, 2001) led to a revival of the Science Shop concept, while in Spain the very first Science Shops came onto the board for the first time. Some of the most recent Science Shop-like initiatives are the emerging of Italian Science Shops in 2006, the start of the first Science Shop in Hungary (summer 2006) and China (Shanghai) in November 2006 and the opening of the Office of Community Based Research at the University of Victoria (BC, Canada), early 2007. And yet these actors of the “new generation” differ from those of the founding generation: they tend to be more heterogeneous regarding their organizational structure as well as their fields of work, orientating themselves to the approach of community-based research. They also profit from the experiences that scientists and citizens have made with numerous new forms of dialogue and participation.

Demand driven approach

There is not one standard model for Science Shops because they function within different socio-political, cultural, scientific and organizational contexts (Mulder et al, 2001). Science Shops need to be flexible in adapting to contextual changes. In the Netherlands, like in many other European countries, there is a change in universities role in knowledge transfer. As a consequence in recent years also the scope (and embedding) of many Dutch Science Shops changed. However, there core activities and main target groups remained unchanged.

There are some important parallels among the many different types of Science Shops. By focusing on these parallels an international group of organizations identified themselves as Science Shops and defined Science Shops as:

A Science Shop provides independent, participatory research support in response to concerns experienced by civil society.
Science Shops appear all over the world but operate in many different ways. What they have in common is their demand driven and bottom up approach. They also share their interactive communication with community and community involvement in research (Mulder and De Bok, 2006). A participant of the Science Shop summer school in 2006, an activity in the EC funded Science Shop project TRAMS, compared the Science Shops with goulash soup. The taste is different anywhere you cook it but the ingredients are the similar.

Indeed there are many differences in the way Science Shops meet the definition but they all have a general mission statement in common. They all seek to:

- provide civil society with knowledge and skills through research and education;
- provide their services on an affordable basis;
- promote and support public access to and influence on science and technology;
- create equitable and supportive partnerships with civil society organizations;
- enhance understanding among policymakers and education and research institutions of the research and education needs of civil society;
- enhance the transferable skills and knowledge of students, community representatives and researchers.

In practice, Science Shop work starts with a first contact between a civil society organization and a Science Shop on a specific problem. Then in a cooperative search for a solution new knowledge is generated, or at least existing knowledge is combined and adapted in a true partnership without ‘science’ prevailing in any way. In nowadays society a straightforward publication of scientific results and one-way science communication will not do anymore. But there is a change going on. Through their contacts, however, Science Shops also provide a unique antenna function for society’s current and future demands on science (Hende and Jørgensen, 2001).

**Science and Society in the European Union**

In 2000 the European Union adopted the Lisbon Agenda (EU, 2000). By 2010 Europe should be the most competitive and dynamic knowledge based economy, with sustainable growth, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. Europe should be a real knowledge society. As one of the instruments to achieve the Lisbon targets the European Commission in 2001 launched the Science and Society Programme and the “Science and Society Action Plan” (EC, 2002). With this programme, established in the Research Directorate General (DG Research), the EC intends to bridge the gap between the scientific community and society at large by creating better interaction between science and society. One focus of the Science and Society Action Plan was the dialogue between citizens and scientists, without which the current, short-lived and complex scientific community cannot function. The Commission’s support for the mediators acting between the citizens and science was really strong. Now Science Shops were really catapulted Europe-wide into the public eye.

With the EC decision to fund several projects on Science Shops in order to facilitate exchanges among Science Shoppers and science policy makers at the European level, Science Shops have managed to organise themselves Europe-wide (and abroad) into a network called Living Knowledge. Online information, training material, empirical reports, meetings and conferences have been developed or organised. Above all, however, the network is a help for those who wish to open up a Science Shop. They can inform themselves which models of Science Shop exists and they can choose the one which seems most suitable for them.

In France and Belgium, the Science and Society Action Plan of the EC led to a revival of the Science Shop concept, while in Spain the very first Science Shops came onto the board for the first time. In Germany and Switzerland, too, several initiatives have got under way. And yet these actors of the “new generation” differ from those of the founding generation: they tend to be more heterogeneous, orientating themselves to the approach of community-based research, a process which allows those carrying out the research and those requesting information to work much more closely together. And they also profit from the experiences that scientists and citizens have made with numerous new forms of dialogue and participation.

Some of the most recent Science Shop-like initiatives are the merging of Italian Science Shops in 2006, start of the first Science Shop in Hungary (summer 2006), Glamorgan (Wales) and China (Shanghai) in November 2006 and new activities in Cork (Ireland) and Lisbon (Portugal). And of course the start of the Office of Community Based Research at the University of Victoria (BC, Canada) in 2007. And some students have come knocking again: from Greece, Turkey and Iceland as well as from the new EU-member states in Eastern Europe.
European research policy

Emphasizing the local dimension of the research and simultaneously fostering the international cooperation with organizations dealing with the same kind of local research questions (e.g. on local air quality) were the key elements of EC calls for proposals in 2006, 2007 and 2008.

The 2006 call for proposals has been one of the most successful EC calls in Science and Society. 40% (27) of the proposals passed all evaluation thresholds for funding. However, the available budget for this call was as small as 1 million € and only four projects could be funded.

But Europe’s research policy is changing: On 18 December 2006, finally, the European Community (EC) adopted the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7) for the period 2007 – 2013. This framework programme clearly shows the new vision of Europe on research and the future role of Europe in science (http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7). Of course the new vision has been heavily discussed and negotiated with many stakeholders, from multinationals to research institutes. To a smaller scale representatives of NGOs and citizens’ organisations have been involved in the discussions as well, e.g. at the Science and Society Forum. At this forum there was a clear voice to open up Europe’s research funding structures and instruments to small NGOs and citizens representatives (EC 2005).

In FP7 more attention seems to be paid to the role of citizens in the structure and content of the EC research policy. As stated on the FP7 website ‘contentious issues relating to emerging technologies’ should be addressed by society on the basis of well-informed debates leading to sound choices and decisions. Therefore, another key issue of FP7 is the encouragement of societal dialogue on research policy; stimulating civil society organisations to become more involved in research; debating and promoting shared values, equal opportunities and societal dialogue’.

With FP7, major changes in Europe’s research policy will take place due to a renewed selection of research themes and instruments for project funding and research cooperation. Although there have been thematic shifts in the new European research strategy for 2007-2013, the Science and Society programme at large seems to be strengthened. The Science and Society programme is now part of the Directorate Science, Economy and Society (http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society). There is a general tendency (not only at the EC) to narrow down knowledge-society to knowledge-economy. When now talking about innovation in relation to research, mainly technological innovation is mentioned. Social innovation is not that often included in this context. On the other hand there is a growing understanding that this limited approach is only a short term approach. To achieve a real knowledge society in the long term, there is a need for a broad view on knowledge society.

Future

In the last years Science Shops entered back on the agenda of science policy-making. But they also seem to be at a crossroad, where their work focus and their coalitions may have to change. On the one hand, they are still connected to their roots, the social movements. On the other hand, a general trend towards business co-operation in science policy can be observed. In this new context Science Shops face the challenge of positioning themselves between these two trends. (Fischer e.a. 2004).

In addition resources have to be built up to maintain active co-operations on an international level and to allow Science Shops to work in a network, but still remain active near the citizens.

In this context the 3rd Living Knowledge conference, held in Paris August 2007 and titled ‘Communities building knowledge - Innovation through citizens’ science and university engagement was already a great success. More than 330 people from more than 50 countries joined one or more of the 18 sessions, stating that the number and the quality of the presentations showed the expertise and the competence of the associations and social movements in the scientific domain. So it’s time that civil society is recognized as producer of knowledge, and that this ‘third scientific sector’ is accepted as partner of a public research directed towards public interest. One of the most important outcomes of the conference therefore was the strong wish for global networking. Many participants expressed their willingness to help with next steps in building global connections in Community-Based Research. This is also a question of marketing and lobbying. We now have to think about how to combine our network capacities and how to link initiatives at different places in the world. The alternating CUexpo and Living Knowledge conferences are just one of the good practices. We hope to meet many non-Europeans at the 4th Living Knowledge conference, in Belfast, August 2009.

References

EC (2006) FP7: Tomorrow’s answers start today.


A Case Study of Participatory Data Analysis:
The Kingston Area Men’s Project

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This paper describe the analysis process we used in a community-based research project with the gay and bisexual men’s community in Kingston, discusses the benefits and challenges of participatory data analysis, and raises implications of this process.

Introduction

In recent years, researchers, practitioners, and community members have increasingly questioned the validity and applicability of traditional academic research results to the "real world". This has resulted in growing interest in applying research techniques that explicitly and meaningfully draw upon the lived social realities of the communities researchers study in order to benefit community members directly. Variously called community-based research, community-based participatory research, action research, or feminist research, such approaches involve community members in all aspects of the research enterprise. As cited by Minkler & Wallerstein (2003, p. 4), in 2001 the W.K. Kellog Foundation’s Community Health Scholar’s Program defined community-based participatory research (CBPR) in the health realm as:

>a collaborative approach to research that equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings. CBPR begins with a research topic of importance to the community with the aim of combining knowledge and action for social change to improve community health and eliminate health disparities.

Implicit in such an approach to research is the principle that community members are not merely "subjects" to be examined, but that community members should be seen as participants who bring as much to the research process as do university-based researchers. For a research endeavour to adhere strictly to CBPR principles, community members should be involved in all phases of research, including selecting a topic or topics for study, identifying research questions, developing a research plan, collecting and analyzing data, disseminating findings, and acting on the research findings. Admittedly, however, the practice in CBPR is for community members to be more involved in some stages than in others.

Engaging community members at each research phase involves particular strengths and challenges, depending on the stage. Community members, for example, may have unique insight into how to recruit participants into a study, or in how to research sensitive topics in their community. At the same time, community members often have minimal prior exposure to and understanding of how to conduct research, and therefore may not be able to immediately contribute to each phase. Community members may also have competing responsibilities and interests, and may not be able to devote the time or energy necessary to being involved in all research phases.

Perhaps the most technical and time consuming phase of research is the data analysis phase. This phase may present CBPR practitioners with significant difficulty involving community members. Yet, community members have much to offer to researchers at this phase. They may be able to offer critical insight into the meanings behind what research participants discussed—or even into what research participants did not discuss—which may not be apparent to university-based researchers, who are often outside of the communities they study.

Few papers or studies have explored the participation of community members in data analysis. This exploratory paper describes our experiences as university-based researchers and community members analyzing data from the Kingston
Participatory Data Analysis Process

The results of our study will be described elsewhere. Here we focus on the participatory data analysis process we used to analyze the focus group and interview data. As a first step in our analysis, we held a series of meetings with the CAB to generate a preliminary, comprehensive list of codes. At each meeting members of the project team read over selected transcripts and then engaged in a group brainstorming session in which CAB members were encouraged to list and describe every topic that came up in the transcripts they read. We wrote all of these topics on a blackboard, and after we were all satisfied that all possible topics had been raised, we then worked together to organize the topics or codes. We did this by combining codes that covered similar themes, or by listing some codes as sub-codes to larger headings. For example, in numerous sections participants discussed various places in and around Kingston where they felt it was easier or harder to be open about their sexual identities. As we discussed the codes, CAB members recognized that the spaces could all be identified as being either on the Queen’s campus, or off of the Queen’s campus. We therefore created two sub-codes “Queen’s” and “Kingston” under the larger parent code “being out”, with the various spaces categorized under each sub-code. We continued this process until we had completed every section of the transcripts.

The next step was to use a qualitative software package to go through each transcript and to code the data. Because of their already extensive commitment of time to the project, CAB members were not interested in learning how to use the software, so the principal investigators did this themselves. In doing so, it became apparent that the CAB code-generating meetings had resulted in a far too comprehensive list of codes. Using the list as it was would have made the coding too time-consuming, and would have applied a much too finely detailed coding structure to the data—some codes, for example, only referred to one or two pieces of text across all transcripts. We therefore simplified the CAB-generated coding structure, primarily by collapsing or deleting sub-codes. For example, rather than coding every establishment listed under “bars and clubs” with its own code, we elected to simply code all discussion of a bar or club with the code “bars and clubs”.

Our final data analysis step was to hold another series of meetings with the CAB members. Each of these meetings was devoted to one of the five themes covered in our focus group discussions and interviews. In preparation for these meetings we used the qualitative software to print out the text across all transcripts that fell under each code within each category. At the CAB meetings, all of us read all of the text that fell under each code. This ensured that the entire project team read all of the qualitative data. The principal investigators developed a one-page list of questions to provide some framework for analysis. As we read we considered the following questions: What did most participants agree upon? In what areas was there disagreement? Was there anything you found surprising? These questions formed a starting-off point for our
Discussion

We have described one way of conducting participatory data analysis in CBPR. There are certainly other ways of doing so. We believe that our method carries with it certain strengths, and is associated with certain challenges, which others interested in participatory data analysis may wish to take into consideration when developing a participatory data analysis plan for their particular research context.

Strengths

Validity of findings. Perhaps the greatest strength of conducting participatory data analysis the way we did is that the CAB provided an instantaneous member check of our results. As we worked, the CAB members could reflect upon their own experiences as community members, and could assess how our emerging findings fit in with their own understanding of the topic being analyzed. For example, one of our results was that the community sees Kingston’s lesbian and bisexual women’s community as being more organized than the gay and bisexual men’s community. Some community members explained this by suggesting that there may be some stigma associated with being seen as a community leader in the men’s community, using the term a “highly critical peanut gallery” to describe some of the community’s reaction to its leaders. During data analysis, two of our CAB members recognized this as a reaction to some of their own work in the community, lending support to this finding.

Feelings of ownership. Involving CAB members in the data analysis contributed to their feeling that the project belonged to them. A key tenet of CBPR is that of having some action outcome. Actions, in turn, are most likely to succeed when they come from the community itself, and are not imposed from outside. When it comes time to distribute our findings and to work with the community to address whatever it may choose to address, KAMP’s CAB will be key to ensuring that the actions are carried out. Had CAB members been involved with all aspects of the research except for the data analysis, they may not have felt as invested in the findings and therefore may be less likely to be involved in the action phase. Also, because they were involved in the analysis, CAB members are well-positioned to communicate the study’s findings to the community, which may lead to the community at large feeling ownership of the findings.

Inclusion of multiple perspectives. There were seven of us involved in analyzing the data. We have varying levels of involvement in Kingston’s gay and bisexual men’s community. Three of us were born and raised in the area, while the rest of us moved to Kingston as adults. One of us had been in Kingston less than one year when the project began, while one had been in Kingston for more than 20 years. All of us being involved in data analysis allowed us to capitalize on our various understandings of Kingston’s gay and bisexual men’s community, making our reading of the data and therefore the study’s results much richer than if only one or two of us had analyzed the data. Those of us who had lived in Kingston for a relatively long time, for example, knew about the various establishments and social groups from the past discussed by participants, and were able to apply some context to participants’ comments. Those of us new to Kingston, on the other hand, brought our experiences of gay and bisexual men’s communities in other cities and countries, which we were able to compare to what participants told us about Kingston. These differing understandings brought a richness to the data analysis process.

Challenges

Validity of findings. Though we believe that our participatory data analysis process lends credibility to the validity of our results, we are also aware that our process is not without its potential drawbacks. As community members, CAB members may have been too close to the data to give it an “objective” reading. We tried to guard against this problem by providing CAB members with training in research methods, and by ensuring that we constantly asked CAB members to reflect on whether our emerging findings truly arose from the data. We should note as well that all researchers, whether they are insiders or outsiders in relation to the community they study, bring their own biases to the analysis process. Community members are no different, though the benefits of bringing their unique perspectives to the analysis may outweigh this potential challenge.

Depth of analysis. With so many people of varying research and academic backgrounds analyzing the data, we found that our ability to delve deeply into an interpretive analysis of the data was limited. CAB members were unfamiliar with academic literature concerning queer theory, community involvement, or stigma and discrimination, for example. We were therefore limited in our analysis to a general, descriptive reading and interpretation of the data. This, however, may be reflective of one of the tensions in academic and community collaboration in CBPR. Academic researchers bring specific sets of knowledge to the analysis process. The challenge is often how to integrate theoretically driven analysis in ways that are actually relevant to community members. Involving community members in the data analysis process makes this tension even more evident.
Representativeness of CAB members. Although we were able to include on the CAB an HIV-positive man, and men of varying ages and economic statuses, the CAB was not completely representative of Kingston’s gay and bisexual men’s community as a whole. We were unable, for example, to recruit a visible minority CAB member. Additionally, the CAB members were all willing to have their full names listed on the project materials and website, suggesting they are representative of men who are more out with their sexual identity, and may not represent more closeted or semi-closeted men. We included visible minority men as focus group participants, and attempted to recruit men to participate in focus groups with varying levels of disclosure about their sexual identity. We do not know, however, how our analysis and results may have differed had our CAB been more representative.

Time intensity and burden on CAB members. Phase one of our data analysis—generating a list of codes from the data—involved four three-hour meetings. The final phase—discussing the coded and disaggregated data—involved ten two- to three-hour meetings. Some of this time was spent socializing and discussing other project-related issues, yet this still represents a significant investment of time by the principal investigators and the CAB members. The principal investigators were continually surprised and thankful for the amount of time devoted to the project by the CAB members. We did not have funds to pay the CAB members for their time. This may have contributed to the non-representativeness of our CAB, and it is likely that researchers will not always have access to such dedicated community members when working with some communities. At all of our meetings we provided good-quality food catered by local restaurants, which we believe provided an incentive for CAB members to come to meetings, and also demonstrated our respect for their time. We would further suggest that researchers interested in doing CBPR build honoraria into their project budgets to provide some monetary compensation for community members who volunteer their time to serve on a CAB.

Researchers contemplating employing participatory data analysis should also be aware that CAB members have other interests and activities competing for their time, and should plan for the data analysis to take quite a long time. We did not feel that it was fair, for example, to ask CAB members to commit to meetings more than once per week. At times we also felt it necessary to have a few weeks or more of down time between meetings, to maintain interest in and enthusiasm for the project.

Implications

This description of our experiences on KAMP with participatory data analysis has several implications for qualitative methodology and CBPR. Chief among these is that we need to study how to best involve community members in analyzing data. We do not know, for example, if or how the challenges we faced can be addressed sufficiently for other research topics or communities. We also do not know when the benefits we outlined may outweigh the potential drawbacks. At the very least, researchers contemplating engaging in participatory data analysis should consider how the strengths and challenges we discussed may apply to their particular situation, and make decisions about their projects accordingly.

Another key implication is that researchers contemplating engaging in participatory data analysis, or CBPR more generally, need to hold several characteristics and skills not necessarily taught in doctoral training programs. These include diplomatic skills, humility, and patience. University-based researchers need an ability to collaborate with people who may not share their background, and need to be able to facilitate diverse groups of people working together. University researchers also need to recognize that the community members with whom they are working may hold knowledge about and insight into the community of interest in a way that the university researcher does not. This can be a humbling experience, as it requires the academic to understand that their research training is only a piece of the complete puzzle required to do meaningful research. Finally, university researchers—and funders and tenure review committees, we hasten to add—need to be patient with the length of time it may take to establish the relationships necessary to conduct participatory research, and to actually carry out the work, including the data analysis phase.

All in all, we believe that participatory data analysis can be a valuable tool for researchers interested in ensuring their results are grounded within the realities of people’s lives, and that lead to community action. We found our experiences to be professionally and personally rewarding, and believe that our study was greatly improved because of it.

References


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Learning To Soar: A University-community Study Of An Arts-based Learning And Knowledge Mobilisation Project For Street-involved Women In Victoria

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Our university-community study explored the impact of an arts-based adult education and knowledge mobilization project on 35 street-involved women in Victoria. Findings show that strong growth in terms of belonging and connectedness, learning new skills and competencies coupled with the high esteem their artworks provoked in the people who attended public exhibitions of their artworks made this an extremely powerful and empowering project.

In the city of Victoria where “alongside the postcard perfect Inner Harbour, the majestic Empress Hotel and the horses clip-clopping gaily past the legislature are hundreds of people with no place to live” (Brash, 2007, A1). Traditionally, however, “homelessness has been viewed as a male experience” (Lenon, 2000, p.123). This is problematic because the feminization of poverty, unaffordable housing coupled with an increase in domestic violence and decrease in health care facilities has driven many more women onto the streets or into inadequate, unsafe or transitional housing. Moreover, male-centred understandings of homelessness drive not only programming but also, women’s specific experiences and needs into invisibility, even to the social service agencies who aim to serve them (Casey, 2002; Lenon, 2000). In 2006 Our Place Society, a community organisation that serves the homeless in Victoria, undertook a needs assessment of women in order to identify their programming and other needs. Based on the findings of the survey, they developed an arts-based adult education and knowledge mobilisation project. Our university-community study explored the impact of this project on the women as well as the people who attended the three public exhibitions of their artworks created through workshops. While there were many challenges, the overwhelming positive-ness of the project is a testament to the potential of arts in lives of these women as well as the general public.

The Arts-based Adult Education Project

The idea for the arts-based adult education and knowledge mobilisation project came from the homeless/street-involved women themselves through a needs assessment survey in 2005. This is important because the needs and identities of women who rely on social service organisations are often ‘interpreted’ for them rather than based on what they want, how they see themselves or how they wish to be seen (Fraser, 1989). The project provided a space for the women to explore collectively their own issues, ways of knowing and experiences and develop artworks based on these for public display. It ran for eighteen months and was divided into two phases. The women participants came from diverse cultural backgrounds including Chinese, Metis, First Nations, South African and European. Ten women took part in the first phase and named it Warrior Women Garden of Art. Four artist-facilitators ran workshops for four hours per day, four days per week for four months. Individual artworks included masks, poetry, collages, paintings, and bead work. There were three collective works: a quilt, a mural and a life sized marionette named Busted but not Broken. This phase culminated in a public exhibition at the Victoria Arts Connection that ran for two weeks. Over 80 people attended the gala opening.

The women named the second phase of the project Phoenix Rising. This metaphor of rising from the ashes was chosen to represent empowerment. This phase ran for four months, four hours per day, three days per week. Seven women attended these workshops, four of whom had taken part in the first phase. Individual artworks included masks, poetry, collages, paintings, and bead work. There were three collective works: a quilt, a mural and a life sized marionette readying for flight. This phase culminated in two arts exhibitions in May 2007 at On Canvas Gallery and The Project Community Art Gallery. Approximately 150 people attended the two galas and each exhibition ran for one week.
Aesthetic Epistemological Standpoints

The arts as emancipatory and critical forces for learning and change are constructed from several epistemological standpoints. One is the need to move away from the passive reception of the arts towards more active creation and engagement in the arts as it provides an important means “to personal or social development” (Thompson, 2002, p.30). It also works to demystify and democritise something that is often relegated to the elitist art world and beyond the reach of so-called ordinary citizens (Felshin, 1995). Another standpoint is that access to the arts is ‘needed’ in our lives. This is the ‘bread and roses’ argument whereby people need both “to enhance the quality of their lives in ways that are relevant to their urgent problems and real concerns and which lift their spirits in difficult and troubled times” (Thompson, 2002, p.26). Other scholars draw attention to the value of the imagination and creativity in learning and “the significance of the aesthetic dimension within a politically oriented emancipatory pedagogy [as an expression] of support for a more just society” (Collins, 2005, p.125). For Cole and McIntyre (2006) the arts are powerful tools of knowledge mobilisation due to their innate ability “to evoke relational, emotional, cultural, social and political complexities” (p.18). Not only are they more accessible but they creatively engage “the audience/reader in meaning making and knowledge construction” (pp.60-61). This has strategic value because communications with the public around complex social issues must move beyond ‘just transferring information’ towards creative communication mechanisms such as symbolic cultural practices of social exchange (Chwe, 1998, p.48).

Research Site and Design

Our study involved 35 homeless/street-involved women of diverse cultural backgrounds. Our feminist research approach used multiple data collection strategies (Hess-Bider and Leavy, 2007). The first was individual in depth interviews with the women project participants and ten members of the public who attended the exhibitions. A second method was focus groups with the women participants and the artist-facilitators. A third was Learning Journals. Each woman including the artist-facilitators received a journal to record reflections on the process, the artworks, and the exhibition. The fourth method was observations to explore bodily and physical movements and interpret silence as “sources of knowledge” (Hesse-Bider and Leavy, 2007, p.13). Method five was a guest book placed at each exhibition site into which members of the public were actively encouraged to write thoughts and impressions and the final method was information extracted from articles published in local newspapers about the project. The data from these multiple sources was categorised manually into themes that responded to theoretical and research questions around community building, capacity development, meaning and identity and social change.

Findings

Trust, bonding, new feelings of belonging and connectedness were major themes that emerged from the data. One excellent example of this was articulated by Doreen who attributed her ability to do something she had never done before to the project: “For the first time I sleep in checked sheets and I let someone [the artist-facilitator] cover my face [to make the mask]. I couldn’t do either because it was part of my abuse as a child. But it happened here because it was safe and I can trust.” Building on this, street-life is often referred to as ‘flight-life’ – away from a violent or potentially violent situation, the police or even an angry member of the public. Jane articulated how she had come to deal with this reality: “So much in this a year and a half has changed. I used to sit on the edge of a chair and was ready to run at every moment. But now I can sit on a chair and feel secure.” The majority of the women participants who talked of connectedness and belonging attributed them to the art. For example, Doreen spoke of the art as the catalyst “to get and keep you connected…with other people on a common ground. Art is that common ground.” Ellen added “trust, faith and hope are being brought to us again, and we are being renewed in spirit. I was happy painting.” Happiness like trust is also often illusive in these women’s lives but it too became palpable. As Carol, an artist-facilitator described, “one of the women…just seeing her face when she [got to the workshop]. She was giddy - she smiles and she giggles.” There were not simply smiles but full belly laughs and we were reminded that “at their simplest level, the arts…bring aesthetic pleasure and gaiety to our lives” (Wyman, 2004, p.14).

Developing communication and critical reflection skills and capacities is fundamental to adult education and this was another major theme in the study. Over the course of the 18 months, women began to really reflect more deeply and creatively on their own situations: “I started on my face [mask] but it needs to be redone. We are learning how to do it...an experiment. I wanted to do my face [as a mask] because for a long time I had different faces for different situations” (Doreen). Others spoke often of learning to keep an open mind, not to close down and to realize that while each woman's experience was different, there were many commonalities. According to Habermas (1990) people learn the ability to challenge and change assumptions when through communication and discourse. Based on this study, we would go beyond ‘discourse’ to add embodiment and the aesthetic and imaginative dimensions as change-making devices: “The art is helping me understand things about the body, the soul, the logic – how they betray each other and work together. Things I saw as a negative are turning out to be a positive for me and others at the same time” (Gretchen).
There were many examples of technical and artistic skill development – learning to work with “beads and wax and casting and canvases and paints” (Doreen) – and we came to see just how important these aspects were. None of the women had a stable source of income and Stalker (2003) reminds us women have for centuries used the arts to make “pin-money or even [for] full economic independence” (p.402). The women very much saw these new skills as a way to create or supplement an income. What is extremely interesting to note here, however, is that although these women had little money for themselves, they unanimously agreed that most of the money made from the exhibitions (through a silent auction) should be re-invested in supplies to keep the project going rather than for personal gain.

Wenger (1998) suggests that “human engagement in the world is first and foremost a process of negotiating meaning” (p.52). Meaning-making in the context of this study emerged in different ways. The first was the simple feeling of having meaning brought back into their lives as a result of having goals to work towards and simply “something to look forward to which has been missing for a long time” (Edna). If we ever under-estimated the value placed on the act of creation we were reminded time and again by comments such as this one by Doreen: “Because it [art] is something denied to us when we live in a violent world. When you are a victim it is the one thing you are unable to do – always hiding and running and no space to do art.” The workshops often presented what Belinda called “magical moments” and frequently a woman would show up with a poem she had been “inspired to write for the first time in a long time” (Gillian).

Issues of identity are integral to experience, participation, community and meaning and these two were reflected in and through our study. At the beginning of the project, a question such as ‘so you are an artist?’ would be met with a firm ‘no’ although many would admit to painting or writing poetry. But eventually comments such as these emerged: “Now I want to let everyone know about my art, that I am an artist in my own right” (Doreen). The greatest sense of an artistic/aesthetic identity came from public recognition. For example, this comment was written into the guest book: “An inspiring show by an inspiring group of artists. Best of luck in your artistic career and I look forward to seeing more of your individual and collective work.” Moreover, many audience members publicly acknowledged the strength, new skills and new public persona the women had gained: “I think the women demonstrated their growth in confidence by attending. Those who spoke publicly really showed that they were not very different from everyone else attending this event.” The final comment – “not very different from everyone else” is interesting. Twenty two entries written into the guest book contained the word ‘surprise’. But surprise that homeless women are ‘like others/us’ or artists should come as no surprise since this is seldom the light cast upon them. The public discourse of homelessness is one of victims, addicts, or worse, people lacking ambition who simply live off the backs of ‘working people’.

Making connections, building solidarity, giving voice and encouraging “social actors and political agents” are all important aspects of contemporary arts-based adult education work (Shaw and Martin, 2005, p.85). These themes came through in a number of ways. The naming of the second phase of workshops was done with careful social deliberation: “This project has to go beyond the last one [phase one]. It has to make us stronger, together and not just go back to the same things. That is why we chose the phoenix [for the mosaic]. It’s rising above Busted but not Broken,” (Linda). This metaphor of ‘rising’ Linda articulated is the central piece of the art, symbolizing collective action, and a new willingness to address issues and concerns as a community. When the project began there were strong feelings of self-blame in terms of the women’s situations. But as the artist-facilitators pushed to stimulate creative thinking, we began to see a shift from self-victimisation to empowerment; from the more personal to the decidedly political: “When the collective piece comes together it tells a whole bunch of different stories – several people’s different thoughts. Government won’t listen to one person. [But] they don’t like people with a gang behind them!” (Gretchen).

The exhibitions proved to be powerful in terms of public awareness. They inspired action in some audience members and feelings of empowerment: “I think I will go home and write a poem...An absolutely fabulously talented group of women. Thanks for letting me be part of this evening. I have been empowered.” It is argued that the arts create empathy, touch people affectively and deeply (Cole and McIntyre, 2006; Shaw and Martin, 2005) and this came through loudly in the writing by one young homeless man who attended the first gala opening who talked of the ‘hope’ they had given him. What we saw and read in the audience reactions is articulated powerfully by Greene: “For me, as for many others, the arts provide new perspectives on the lived world. As I view and feel them, informed encounters with works of art often lead to a startling familiarisation...What I have habitually taken for ranted...frequently reveals itself in unexpected ways” (quoted in Shaw and Martin, 1995, p.95).

But there were also challenges and mental illnesses and addictions were one. In other instances women would shout that a particular idea was ‘stupid’ and severe moods swings were common. Gaining power and control over and one’s life is what enables people to be what Freire (1970) calls more fully human. But there is a distinction between power over and power to/with, as feminists note. Instances of domination, particularly in the beginning of each phase prompted Carol to exclaim: “Can these women not be given an advocacy role? They need a role where they work for each other, especially those with that sense of ‘peacock-ness.’” A grassroots leadership/advocate role might teach them to guide instead of pushing other women out the door. They’d learn that they need to be wise and kind.” Yet underneath it all was
a real sense of wanting to change, to engage, to move beyond and to stay connected no matter the ups and downs as the women returned day after day to the workshop.

Discussion and Conclusions

Wildemeersch and Vandenabeele (2007) suggest that “identifications necessary for the constitutions of society are constructed through practices of ‘belonging’ rather than through practices of ‘autonomy building’. Belonging results from “the active social participation of people in groups or communities which form the linking pin between society and its individual members” (p.23). A human being does not exist solely in her own consciousness. Each has an effect on those around them and one’s being is also held in their estimation; in their appreciation or otherwise. While it can easily be argued that belonging, building community and trust are important to all forms of community-based adult education it is particularly true with this population. For many of these women, poverty, violence and other forms of abuse coupled with mental illness or addiction create deeply ingrained feelings of isolationism, fear and distrust. On the others side, we have, at best, an apathetic community which holds quite negative stereotypical views of the homeless/street-involved. Newspaper headlines often talk of ‘cleaning up the streets’ as if the women living there were bits of trash to be collected once a week. Being creative in public was perhaps the most risky and yet the most important thing these women could have done in terms of their own sense of belonging, self image but also, the images they presented to the community. Like the phoenix itself, these women rose from the individual broken shards of pottery to collectively soar in the public eye. If arts-based adult education is to be truly emancipatory and empowering, then participating in the collective creation of artworks is perhaps the most powerful act of civic engagement. Our data and observations clearly showed that the collective public voice produced the strongest sense of agency as political activist artists. But we must always keep in mind what Young refers to “social collectiveness – one which allows us to see [women] as a collective without identifying common attributes...or implying that all women have a common identity” (in Butterwick and Selman, 2006, p.43). Confidence and pride come from being a unique, individual artist alongside the persona of collective, aesthetic, social actor.

We saw an interesting aesthetic dimension to what feminist adult educators refer to as really useful knowledge (i.e. Thompson, 1997). Within this dimension, what counts for or is valued as knowledge is the imagination and creativity. The women were valued not simply for ‘what’ they knew but how they creatively produced that knowledge through symbol, metaphor, and imagery. This brings us back to Thompson’s (1995) concept of bread and roses. Basic rights of all human beings are opportunities for skills training and employment. This project did enhance artistic and other types of skills the women will be able to use in terms of future economic endeavours. But the ‘roses’ are vital to happiness, identity, meaning and empowerment. While many members of society have the opportunity (or at least have the option) to engage in artistic and cultural activities, homeless/street-involved women are expected to forgo this in favour of getting their problems ‘fixed’ and obtaining marketable skills. There is something to be said about arts for arts sake and what Hayes calls “education for its own sake” (2007, p.28). What this project offered was a space simply to be creative, to learn and to have fun because “we must never forget that essence of absolute joy, unjustified by any reason other than its existence” (Wyman, 2004, p.14). Through paint, tile mosaic, fabric and laughter it offered a path to a greater sense of humanness in the women’s own and those of others.

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The Street Health Report 2007: Community-based research on the health, health care access and daily lives of homeless people in Toronto

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In winter 2006/2007, Street Health surveyed 368 homeless adults in Toronto about their health status. The study found that homeless people have significantly worse health than the general population and cannot access the health care they urgently need.

Homelessness in Toronto

Homelessness is a devastating social problem that affects a large number of people in Toronto. Although the exact number of homeless people living in the city is unknown, approximately 32,000 different people slept in a Toronto homeless shelter in 2002 (City of Toronto, 2003). In 2006, about 6,500 individuals stayed in a shelter on any given night (Shapcott, 2006).

It is widely recognized that homeless people have much poorer health than the general population. Canadian research and literature reviews confirm that homeless people experience a disproportionate burden of chronic and multiple health issues (Hwang, 2001; Frankish, Hwang, & Quantz, 2005) and that mortality rates for homeless people are significantly higher than for the general population (Hwang, 2000; Cheung & Hwang, 2004; Roy, Boivin, Haley, & Lemire, 1998). Other studies have found that people living in poverty are more likely to die from certain diseases, including cancer, diabetes and respiratory diseases, and particularly cardiovascular disease (Raphael, 2002).

Canadian Research on Homeless People’s Health

Homeless people are largely excluded from broad-based government health and census surveys, which often depend on people having an address or telephone number. Even when these surveys reach homeless people, they do not address the unique circumstances and needs of this group. As a result, there is a serious lack of comprehensive information on the health status and needs of homeless people.

Fifteen years ago, Street Health, a community-based health agency serving homeless people, decided to conduct a study to explore the health status of homeless people and their ability to access the health care system. In 1992, we published The Street Health Report (Ambrosio, Baker, Crowe, & Hardill, 1992), a resource on homeless people’s health. It was the first of its kind in North America and continues to be used today.

In the 15 years since the 1992 Street Health Report was published, homelessness and housing insecurity has increased in Toronto. The nightly count of people sleeping in homeless shelters has more than tripled, from about 1,900 in 1990 (Golden, Currie, Grieses, & Latimer, 1999), to about 6,500 in 2006 (Shapcott, 2006). This increase in homelessness is a reflection of a steady round of funding and program cuts at the federal and provincial levels, coupled with the downloading of responsibility for social programs to the provincial and city levels. These cuts and this downloading have had massive negative impacts on key social policies and programs. To name just a few changes since 1992: social assistance rates are much lower, rents are higher, and dramatically less social housing is being built. These social policy changes have had a disproportionate impact on low-income people, and have contributed to homelessness. In addition to the important social and political changes that have occurred since The Street Health Report was released in 1992, important new health issues such as tuberculosis and Hepatitis C have emerged in the homeless community.
About The Street Health Report 2007

In the winter of 2006/2007, we conducted a survey of 368 homeless adults in downtown Toronto about their health status and access to services, with funding from United Way of Greater Toronto, The Wellesley Institute, and the Metcalf Foundation. The project involved extensive collaboration with community, academic and institutional partners, as well as employing a team of peer researchers with lived experience of homelessness.

_The Street Health Report 2007_ (Khandor & Mason, 2007) presents the results of this study, including findings on the nature of homelessness in Toronto and its root causes, the daily living conditions of homeless people, the physical and mental health status of homeless people, how they use health care services, and the barriers homeless people face when using these services. Based on these findings, we present an action plan consisting of realistic solutions to immediately improve the health of homeless people and to ultimately end homelessness.

**Key Findings on Homeless People’s Daily Lives**

Our study found that for most, homelessness is not a short-term, temporary crisis. Homeless people we interviewed had been homeless an average of 4.7 years, and 78% had been homeless for at least 1 year. Homeless people become homeless and stay homeless largely because of poverty and the lack of affordable and supportive housing. Thirty-six percent (36%) of the people we interviewed had a monthly income of $200 or less, and 78% named their economic circumstances as one of the two most important reasons they were homeless. Thirty-three percent (33%) said they became homeless because they could not afford the rent, and 33% said their physical or mental health conditions were preventing them from finding and keeping housing.

Homeless people’s daily lives are harsh, difficult and extremely dangerous. Thirty-five percent (35%) of people we interviewed had been physically assaulted, and 12% of all respondents had been physically assaulted by police in the past year. Twenty-one percent (21%) of homeless women we interviewed reported being sexually assaulted in the past year. These high rates of experiencing violence have not changed significantly in the past 15 years. Our study also found that homeless people also have great difficulty meeting their basic survival needs of shelter and food. Thirty-nine percent (39%) of all homeless people in our survey were unable to get a shelter bed at least once last winter, and 69% said that they went hungry at least one day a week.

**Key findings on Homeless People’s Health and Access to Health Care**

Homeless people’s mental, physical and general health is much worse than the general population and worse than it was 15 years ago.

Homeless people experience high levels of stress, isolation and mental health conditions. One in ten people we interviewed had attempted suicide in the past year, and 37% said they had no one to help them in an emotional crisis. Fifty-six percent (56%) said they had experienced serious depression in the past year, and 55% had experienced serious anxiety. Sadly, rates of suicidal ideation and attempted suicide among homeless people have not changed substantially since 1992, and remain very high.

The physical health of homeless people is very poor. Seventy-four percent (74%) of people we interviewed had at least one chronic or ongoing physical health condition, and 52% had two or more. Fifty-four percent (54%) of survey respondents reported living with extreme fatigue, and 14% said they were usually in severe pain. The homeless population carries a disproportionate burden of many serious physical health conditions compared to the general population. For example, homeless people in our survey were: 29 times as likely to have hepatitis C, 20 times as likely to have epilepsy, 5 times as likely to have heart disease, 4 times as likely to have cancer, 3 ½ times as likely to have asthma, 3 times as likely to have arthritis or rheumatism and twice as likely to have diabetes. Overall, the health status of homeless people has not improved in the past 15 years. While the prevalence of some health conditions has remained unchanged, many serious physical health conditions have become even more common, including diabetes, which is 3 times as high, and arthritis and high blood pressure, which are also significantly higher.

Despite their poor health, homeless people cannot access the health care they urgently need. Fifty-nine percent (59%) of homeless people we interviewed did not have a family doctor, compared to only 9% of the general population in Toronto. In the past year, 28% were refused health care in the past year because they did not have a health card and 40% experienced discrimination from a health care provider. Homeless people’s access to family doctors, and their experiences of being refused health care, is significantly worse than it was 15 years ago.
The Street Health Action Plan

Based on our study findings, *The Street Health Report 2007* outlines an action plan consisting of targeted, feasible solutions to improve the health of homeless people and address the root causes of homelessness. These recommendations are directed to all levels of government, as well as other institutions such as hospitals and the police, and fall under four areas:

- To address the poverty and inequality that underlies homelessness;
- To improve access to affordable and appropriate housing;
- To improve immediate living conditions for homeless people; and
- To improve access to health care and support for homeless people

For example, our action plan includes recommendations for increases to the minimum wage and social assistance rates, new investment in affordable and supportive housing, increased funding for accessible primary health care models, and improvements to the shelter and meal program system in Toronto.

Dissemination and Advocacy

We conducted this study because we wanted to create an up-to-date, solid base of sound evidence to strengthen our advocacy efforts and those of other community groups addressing poverty and homelessness. For this reason, broad dissemination of, and advocacy on, our findings and recommendations are a central goal of the study.

Prior to and since the release of our report, we have broadly disseminated and advocated on the report findings and key messages to a wide range of community members, community organizations, coalitions, politicians, policy-makers and the general public, through a variety of methods. Our report release was a public event that drew a diverse crowd of over 300 community members, media outlets, non-profit and government representatives, and politicians including the Ontario Minister of Health and Long-term Care and the leader of the federal New Democratic Party. We have distributed over 800 copies of the report so far, to academics, politicians and policy makers at all levels of government and community partners, as well as having the report and summary available on our website for downloading and in several libraries.

We have made many presentations to community groups and organizations, faith groups, hospitals, government staff and managers, university classes and at academic conferences and public forums. We have met with several key politicians and senior policy makers working in health and homelessness at the provincial, municipal and local (i.e. local health integration network) levels, as well as senior hospital managers, to discuss the study findings and its implications for their policy and program areas, and have many more such meetings planned.

The findings from our study have reached the general public through broad coverage by a variety of media outlets. Prior to the public release of the report, select findings were used in several articles and opinion pieces published in the Toronto Star. The Toronto Star also covered the report findings and recommendations with a major front-page article on September 19, 2007 (Henry, 2007), followed by an editorial (Toronto Star, 2007) and several letters to the editor. CBC radio news covered the report release, as did several CBC radio programs through live interviews with study researchers and partners. The Globe and Mail published two articles, including one on their front page, focused on our findings on homeless people’s substance use and access to treatment and services (Reinhart, 2007a; Reinhart, 2007b). A short film entitled *Street Health Stories*, produced by the National Film Board of Canada, which weaves together personal stories of health and homelessness with statistics from the report, aired on CBC television a few days after the launch of our report. Our findings were also covered by 24 Hours, several community newsletters and several community radio stations.

In addition to informing and supporting our own advocacy work, *The Street Health Report 2007* has been used extensively by other community advocates, and to contribute to a broader strategy to address poverty. Prior to our report release, our appalling findings on homeless people’s experiences of violence and assault, as well as their lack of access to shelter beds and low incomes, were used by several organizations in Toronto to do media advocacy responding to current events in the news. We timed the release of our report to coincide with advocacy initiatives aiming to make poverty a key issue in the October 2007 Ontario provincial election, liaising with groups organizing all-party debates and demonstrations on poverty issues. Since our report was released, several academics, community activists and health care providers have already cited the report findings in their writing, presentations and media work on poverty and homelessness issues.

As we move forward, we will continue to try to engage politicians and policy-makers, and to follow up with those we have already reached, to continue to advocate for changes that will address homelessness and improve homeless people’s lives. We also hope that other advocates will continue to use our report as a tool to conduct their own advocacy on homelessness and poverty issues.
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Connecting the Global to the Local in Community-University Partnerships

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This paper will share the author’s experience of participating in a strategic planning meeting to developing multilateral, collaborative international partnerships.

In the 21st century, social work has much to offer in debates about, and contributions to, addressing major global and international issues, including problems of human rights and social justice. Many social problems are rooted in international dynamics which transcend local and cultural boundaries (Razack 2002). Larson and Allen (2006) note that there is an emerging awareness of a ‘global neighbourhood’ which recognizes that social crises are not constrained by political boundaries, and that there is a significant impact of economic globalization for marginalized people in all contexts. As borders become more permeable through technology and with constant movement of peoples across the globe, cross-cultural understandings from international perspectives are crucial in the work (Razack 2002). And yet, internationalism is rooted in colonialism and imperialism: this is especially clear when we consider that the production of knowledge and other academic gains flow from North to South (Razack 2002). Counter-hegemonic practices must be designed in our pedagogy, practice, education and in our attempts at globalization. Mendez and Wolf (2007) discuss globalization’s challenge to research methods, as it disrupts underlying assumptions of what constitutes a society, traditionally defined as the confines of a nation-state, and destabilizes embedded notions of “place” and “community” and “the local.” Midgley (1997) states it is vital that social workers, social administrators, and policy makers develop new knowledge, skills, and attitudes, to better adapt to the demands and opportunities of globalization.

This paper will report on the findings of a strategic planning meeting that brought together academics, researchers, community members and specialists and institutional members in order to expand community-university partnerships from bilateral to multilateral agreements.

Building upon pre-existing institutional agreements and memorandums of understanding between Madras Christian College (India) and the following universities: Thompson Rivers University (Kamloops, BC, Canada), University of South Australia (UniSA), Flinders University of South Australia, Chang Jung Christian University in Taiwan, and Appalachian State University in the United States; partnerships founded on bilateral agreements were transformed into a multilateral research network through the creation of the Centre for International Social Work.

The Centre for International Social Work (CISW) aims “to promote cross-cultural learning that enhances knowledge, skills and research ensuring professional social work theories are relevant to major global events and local practice through multilateral, collaborative international partnerships. We value equity, social justice, human rights, peace and diversity, leading to global leadership as agents of social change” (CISW, 2007).

Social problems are affected by international events and solutions increasingly depend upon international cooperation. Many Schools of Social Work recognize the growing importance of social work’s involvement in international problem solving and policy development. A global perspective on human needs, social policy, and practice interventions must replace the traditional dichotomy between domestic and international social concerns. While broadly focused on international knowledge related to social work and social development, international social workers emphasizes the application of a global perspective to social work practice in their own communities and internationally.

Academics and community practitioners alike encourage global perspectives and internationally related curriculum content in social work courses and in field practicum learning; facilitating faculty research and publication on international issues; encouraging student, faculty and practitioner participation in international seminars, courses, exchanges and
other international activities; promoting cross-cultural competence; entering into exchange and linkage arrangements with schools of social work in other countries and with international organizations to further these purposes.

Social work practice and social policy development can be strengthened when international experiences about social programs are shared between professionals in different countries. Professionals in social work, social administration, and social policy can benefit by learning from the experiences of their international colleagues. Students, community members and faculty in Canada will gain a better understanding of how research by and with international partners can and should be organized in social work programs. In building research capacity all participants and researchers will explore their location in the project, which will support a better understanding of the relationships between the various international partners.

According to Samuel (2006), Madras Christian College will engage in collaborative research projects of local, regional and international relevance; coordinate a range of programs to provide cross cultural/international experiences to professionals and students from other countries; ensure that there is full documentation of the Centre’s activities in the form of published articles, conference and discussion papers; and develop an online academic journal.

Potential outcomes of the research include: the creation of new knowledge from village practices that can be applied locally and internationally, and the development of innovative, evidence-based approaches and leadership in international social work and its contributions to global issues. The CISW supports the development of research partnerships through culturally relevant and grounded research training workshops for key participants and student researchers that will sustain the knowledge and capacity for leadership from and within the rural social work practice community.

A research proposal titled “Rebuilding Lives Post-Tsunami: The Long-term Social, Economic and Gender Implications in Tamil Nadu, India” was conceptualized and developed as a result of the formation of the Centre for International Social Work that includes universities in Canada, India, Australia, Taiwan, the Netherlands and the United States. A strategic planning meeting brought together researchers, community development specialists and institutional members with Indian non-governmental organizations, and identified an urgent need to collaborate on this study. The research team includes Deans and Directors of Madras Christian College in India, Appalachian State University in the USA, and Thompson Rivers University in Canada. Faculty members from Thompson Rivers University, University of South Australia, and Flinders University of South Australia further contribute to its’ strength by bringing expertise in community development, public health, rural social work, international social work and human rights. The DOORS community mental health project is listed as a partner organizations, as they are actively providing mental health services in post-tsunami villages and would like to be involved in the study.

The international participants from the Asia-Pacific region offer their expertise and knowledge because of a recognition that sharing information internationally has the potential to discover new and potentially more effective interventions. Social work practice and policy development is strengthened when international experiences are shared between professionals in different countries. All of the partners in the research network expect to benefit by learning from the experiences of their international colleagues. Thompson Rivers University is well-situated to participate in the collaboration, as it continues to expand international opportunities and research collaborations for students, staff and faculty (TRU Strategic Plan, 2007).

This project will offer a significant training component for student researchers, community members, social work students and faculty. The staffing plan involves a research advisory committee composed of students, community members and faculty, to guide the research process and identify critical issues for investigation; a research team composed of international participants, including students; and a research coordinator, three research assistants and a transcription assistant to facilitate data collection and analysis.

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Community-University Partnerships: A Co-operative Approach

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From its beginning in 2000, BCICS has engaged in research with community partners. This paper explores various dimensions of the community/university partnerships that BCICS has adopted, what has been challenging and what has been central to our approach.

Established in 2000 as an education and research institute at the University of Victoria, the mandate of the B.C. Institute for Co-operative Studies (BCICS) is to understand how the co-operative model functions within different communities and economic contexts. The dual purpose of BCICS is to develop and promote Co-operative Studies as a recognized academic field while, at the same time, serving the needs of the broader co-operative movement. In this respect, BCICS is located within the academy but is grounded in the everyday economic and social challenges of co-operators and connected to the broader political and social issues that the co-operative movement engages.

In many aspects of our work, BCICS seeks to build partnerships between researchers and practitioners, thus reinforcing the relationship between theory and practice. BCICS projects are implemented through a collaborative approach involving associates within various departments at the University of Victoria and other post-secondary institutions, partners within the co-op sector, individuals, and community players. In our research we work at the local, provincial, national, and international level.

In this paper, I explore the university/community partnerships that characterize the work of BCICS. First, I provide examples of the research projects and activities we engage in, then, I examine various dimensions of the relationship such as: the roles that both community partners and BCICS adopt, problematic areas, differences in communities, and finally a summary of what we have learned about the importance of maintaining this vital working relationships.

Overview of BCICS-Community Partnerships

Shortly after BCICS was founded, efforts were begun to map all co-operatives in British Columbia and begin the process of developing detailed profiles on as many co-ops as possible. Based on this information, arrangements were made for a team of researchers (many of them trained student researchers) to visit eight B.C. communities, interview co-operators and prepare a series of case studies. This foundational research formed the basis for sketching an historical overview of the development of co-operatives in the province, provided us with a wealth of information about challenges and success factors co-ops face, supplied us with many contacts in the co-operatives community, and introduced co-operators in B.C. to a new source of information and support.

In 2003, BCICS was able to build on this earlier work, undertaking a four-year longitudinal study of co-operatives in two rural B.C. communities exploring how they were impacted by, and responded to, expanding globalization in the market place, changes in government polices, and increased use of information technology. This work took us on several visits to Malcolm Island (a small fishing community on an island off the northern tip of Vancouver Island) and to the Nelson region of the Kootenays. On these occasions, our co-op partners worked closely with us, ensuring we had access to relevant information and ample opportunities to document their experiences.

Over the years, we have worked with members of the co-operative movement in Victoria to co-host community events (both on and off campus); encourage and support the move toward closer working relations among local co-operatives; sponsor a community radio show (often featuring local co-operatives); and, at present, develop a research/education project that will involve academics, the B.C. Co-op Association, and local co-operators in the formation of regional co-
op councils. Our staff are also personally involved in local co-ops. These initiatives provide us with a strong footing in the local co-op sector. BCICS is a resource for local co-operators – answering specific questions, at times acting as a link to the broader co-op movement, creating opportunities to nurture leadership within the sector, through our research providing a lens for them to examine their challenges and positioning, and creating resources and tools that may directly assist them.

On the national level, a recent research project involved BCICS with a team of partners who are co-operative developers (like business consultants but their focus is on co-operatives). The developers were research subjects, contributors, and advisors to the project. The focus of the project was to identify and document the insights of Canada’s experienced co-op developers on the most effective practices for starting co-operatives. The co-op sector and co-operators in communities throughout Canada benefited from this project through the generation of a variety of resources (publications, web resources, and an educational DVD) that might ensure new co-ops are more successful and function in a more effective manner. On an academic front, the research provided insights on organizational development, effective business practices, appropriate governance of collective institutions, and a deeper theoretical understanding of the life cycle of co-operative organizations.

Different Roles within Community/University Partnerships

From the above described research and project activities BCICS has undertaken in the past eight years, we find that both community partners and BCICS adopt a variety of roles in the partnering relationship.

Community Partners as Research Participants: The primary target groups, and the audiences for, our research are people who are interested or involved in co-operatives. Thus far the community-based research we have undertaken has involved individuals living in communities where co-operatives are located, members (including board, staff, and management) of co-ops and credit unions, and people involved in the movement in a variety of capacities, such as co-op developers and members of various co-op associations. This could be described as the lowest level of involvement of community partners but it still requires their full co-operation.

Community Partners as Co-directors/Advisors: On an informal level, members of co-operatives from around the province can be viewed as having an influence on the work that BCICS undertakes and how the work is carried out. BCICS fields many requests and inquiries (by phone, email, and directly) from co-operators around the province. They have questions, inspiring ideas and suggestions, and are in need of certain resources. BCICS is always “listening” to constituents of our broader community and drawing on this information to discern our research direction and fine tune our project activities. For example: co-operators have requested information and research on co-op legislation; they frequently look for information that highlights key elements of co-ops within various sectors, such as alternative energy, housing, forestry, fishing; the cases studies and web resources we offer are often directed by their interests and by their example; although we do not directly lobby governments or funding agents, our close ties with the B.C. Co-operative Association supplies them with useful research-based information they can then employ.

On a more formal level as partners and advisors in BCICS research and project activities, community partners have included: community based organizations (such as the Sointula Museum and Historical Society), co-op developers, co-op associations provincially and nationally, credit union associations, local co-op leaders, and academics from other co-op institutes who have an expertise in the field of Co-operative Studies.

In the project on effective practices in starting co-operatives, co-op developers provided direct feedback on the work plan, they had input on a questionnaire we used to interview their colleges, they had a voice in identifying the relevant content and orientation of the tools that came out of the project, they were a sounding board for the project as various shifts and changes happened, and they are presently involved in the promotion of project outcomes.

Community Partners as Co-investigators: The primary example of community partners as co-investigators is a project currently underway that involves documenting and supporting the development of regional co-op councils in British Columbia. BCICS has partnered with the B.C. Co-operative Association for this project. Partnering in this context has involved identifying both areas of collaboration and a division of roles based on areas of expertise and the mandates of each organization. On Malcolm Island, we assisted the community association in receiving a grant to do a community plan, they had input on a questionnaire we used to interview their colleges, they had a voice in identifying the relevant content and orientation of the tools that came out of the project, they were a sounding board for the project as various shifts and changes happened, and they are presently involved in the promotion of project outcomes.

Community Partners as Co-beneficiaries: As mentioned, part of the mandate of BCICS is to serve the needs of the co-operative community; therefore, it is very important to our work that the outcomes of our research and projects have a practical and beneficial element. In this respect, a significant benefit for community level partners and for the co-op sector in general is that our research work has implications for funding programs, for favourable co-op policies and legislation, and for training programs and resources that support co-operators in their communities. BCICS can, and has been, a voice for co-operators – providing an avenue for their concerns and challenges to be heard.
Lack of Recognition in the Academy can be quite different than direct problem solving. We try to assist as best we can, but our specific purpose for being there is to share a common interest in the well-being and growth of the co-op movement. As the project progressed, we became aware that community partners may have their own agenda or identify relevant or preferred preferences in how the project proceeds. It can sometimes be difficult to mesh the requirements and particular directives of funders and the interests of community partners with the mandate of BCICS. An example of this is the current project we are partnering on with the provincial association. BCICS has become a guardian for important files documenting the co-operative movement in B.C.

BCICS Serves as a Repository for Information on Co-ops: Many co-ops around the province have entrusted BCICS with copies, and in some cases originals, of valuable historical and legal documents and newsletters on co-ops in their regions. BCICS has become a guardian for important files documenting the co-operative movement in B.C.

Problem Areas in Community/University Partnerships

Lack of clarity around the mandate of BCICS: Sometimes BCICS is viewed as a resource center for addressing any problems co-operators encounter. Although we try to assist, we do not always have the specific information or resources they require. While we have a strong interest in co-ops that are in the development stage, our mandate is not to develop co-ops. This can seem like a lack of interest on our part, but it would be a drain on our resources if we were to try and address all requests. Two years ago, following a gathering of local co-operatives on a particular topic, strong interest was voiced around the need for a variety of co-op activities. Many saw BCICS as the “champion” to take up this cause. However, not only was this outside our mandate, it would have put us in a conflict of interest position with the provincial co-op association. Many co-operators are not familiar with the array of resources available within the co-operative movement and commonly confuse BCICS with the provincial co-operative association whose mandate does include paying attention to the specific needs of co-operatives.

Unequal Funding: Similar to the above concern, co-operators may see BCICS as an organization positioned to provide services and products at low or no-cost. Common examples include: expectations that our publications should be free or available at reduced rates, that we are a source of funds for financing events, or that we can finance research specific to their co-op. It is understandable that many partners see BCICS as having deep pockets, our resources are more substantial than small co-ops or individuals; however, our funding is primarily project specific and must be accounted for with detailed precision. With a recent joint publication, one contributor raised questions about ownership of the results and protested that the publications should be available at no cost. This overlooked the fact that while project money would cover some costs of the publication, BCICS still had to contribute tens of thousands of dollars to fulfill project commitments.

Community Partners who wish to Re-direct the Project: In some instances, community partners may have their own agenda or identify relevant or preferred preferences in how the project proceeds. It can sometimes be difficult to mesh the requirements and particular directives of funders and the interests of community partners with the mandate of BCICS. An example of this is the current project we are partnering on with the provincial association. B.C.C.A. has very specific concerns and budget challenges of their own. It can be difficult to satisfy partners and ensure the project fulfills the requirements set out in the initial contract with funders.

Insider – Outsider - The Academic/Practitioner Divide: At times divisions arise from the perception of uncomplimentary roles between academics and practitioners. Suspicion can surface on both sides of the fence, even among well-meaning researchers and practitioners. In the recent project with co-op developers the BCICS team was at times in an awkward position as some of the developers were sensitive to what they perceived as an infringement of their “mandate” to serve the needs of new co-operatives. Working with these individuals required continual reassurance that their interests were being respected. In some ways we were held as “outsiders” – as we were not developers – yet we shared a common interest in the well-being and growth of the co-op movement. As the project progressed, we became more informed as to why they felt territorial and to some extent they came around and saw that we were there to give voice to their concerns rather than compete for funding and support.

False Hope: At times co-operators look to us as people who are able to fix the problems they are experiencing. In some respects this is another way that we have to be respectful of the ethical boundary around the insider-outside positioning. We enter their physical community for a short time and gather information, whereas, for them, this is their life and their livelihood we are talking about. We are not necessarily able to offer responses or tangible results that can change things in the immediate future – if at all. We try to assist as best we can, but our specific purpose for being there can be quite different than direct problem solving.

Lack of Recognition in the Academy: Unfortunately one of the things that negatively impacts the full success of our
programs is the lack of support and recognition for the field of Co-operative Studies as a valid and deserving academic discipline.

**Differences in Communities**

BCICS has undertaken research in northern B.C., in coastal communities and semi-isolated islands, in urban centers, and in the interior mountainous region of the province. Some of our work has also taken place in northern Inuit communities. Many of our resources – particularly on-line tools - are intended to be helpful to co-operators in communities throughout Canada and around the world.

One of the seven principles maintained by the International Co-operative Alliance that unites co-ops around the world is “co-operation among co-operatives.” In our experience, people like to talk about their co-op experiences. If people have had negative or challenging experiences they may hope that the research will draw attention and perhaps fix the problem. In communities outside major centers, co-operators have been particularly keen to have us visit their community and take a special interest in their affairs and challenges. Sometimes we are viewed as a bridge uniting them with resources both within the larger co-op movement and to assets outside their community.

**What We Have Learned**

First, it has been vital to the integrity of our research and the vitality of our institute to be grounded in the community life of our constituents. This relationship is the life blood of our institute and BCICS is an integral part of the co-operative community. As an academic educational and research institute embedded in the co-operative community, the fundamental orientation we have adopted can be summarized as: “thinking like a movement.” If we tried to separate our work into purely academic pursuits, we would be a house of cards with little of value to offer the co-operative community. The essential positioning of BCICS is not only to have researcher/community partnerships but to BE part of our community. Having staff who are involved personally in the co-operative community and who are passionate about their work affords us a more intimate connection with the community and provides an additional source of energy and insider knowledge for our work. Thinking like a movement means that we are engaged on many levels with the issues, concerns, celebrations and significant events that shape the sector.

Second, collaboration is key to our work not just because we are part of the movement but also because it puts into practice the foundational principle of co-operation among co-operatives. Collaboration involves give and take, continual refinement, listening, negotiating, and looking at the task from various angles and perspectives. It is not always easy but having a non-hierarchical approach demonstrates that we walk our talk and gains us the respect and confidence of our community partners. This is not done at the expense of our academic colleges or because no attention is given to process but it is a key practice of deep listening for valid concerns that advance the interests of all.

Third, we have learned that it is possible to find a meeting ground where both basic and applied research have a place. A lot of our work takes place in this inter-tidal zone where gaining a broader understanding of a subject can feed into specific and practical matters and/or the project activities have a pre-defined dimension meant to address particular needs of community partners. This interplay allows us to wed theory and practice in an alive, interactive manner with direct feedback loops in both directions.

Finally, when we look at the future of Co-operative Studies it is perhaps more difficult to foresee the future of the partnership on the academic side than on the community side. Co-operators are open and eager. They have real needs for resources, training, and for educated professionals who can support them in their endeavours through playing a variety of roles such as managers, legal assistants, accountants, on their boards, etc. The academy is not necessarily as open. There are pockets of support. BCICS endeavours to demonstrate the need, importance, and application of Co-operative Studies and the importance of grounding this work in the real life issues of the community. Both the academy and the co-operative movement will continue to exist; however, it is their mutual co-existence that enriches both parties.
Getting the Data: Ethics, Cooperation and Interaction in a University-Community Agency Collaboration

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All fieldwork has its challenges—yet some programs of research create unusual dilemmas. Based on the experience of conducting personal interviews with more than 50 men and group interviews with 50 men, all of whom who have been court-mandated to attend a batterers’ intervention program in the Northwest United States, this paper addresses some of these dilemmas.

All fieldwork has its challenges—yet some programs of research create unusual dilemmas. For many years, we have been attempting to understand the web of connections that permeate families of faith that are impacted by domestic violence. Not only have we sought to examine the experiences of victims and survivors, but also those within both religious and secular communities who have sought to assist them. More recently, we have turned our attention to the stories of violent religious men.

Working with men who have acted abusively has created four primary dilemmas for us as researchers: (1) feminist resistance to perpetrator-driven research; (2) religious resistance to framing domestic abuse as primarily male violence against women; (3) negotiating both the spirit and the letter of REB approval; and (4) employing a multidisciplinary framework crossing the academic/activist divide. Ultimately, these factors can only be overcome by contextualizing the work in ways that create support rather than dissonance for the various constituencies—theoretical as well as activist—with whom the research needs to communicate. We conclude with several strategies that have assisted us in developing cooperative, interactive university-community collaboration.

Feminist Resistance to Perpetrator-Driven Research

- Positioning the studies of men who act abusively within a broader program of domestic violence research;
- Collecting data in a cumulative fashion where new studies are responsive to data collected from past studies with women victims and survivors of domestic violence;
- Ensuring that the language used to communicate the research and the results is informed by the voices and lived experiences of those impacted by abuse;
- Negotiating the delicate terrain between academic researcher (what does this mean?) and social activist (what are we going to do about it?)

For more than fifteen years the Religion and Violence Research Team, affiliated with the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research at the University of New Brunswick, has conducted a variety of research studies related to violence in families of faith. These include a quantitative survey of 750 clergy members across Atlantic Canada; in-depth interviews with 150 of the clergy members who responded to that initial survey; focus group interviews with over 300 church women across Atlantic Canada; 94 in-depth interviews with church women; youth group studies and youth pastor interviews in New Brunswick; and community consultations throughout Atlantic Canada (across disciplines and perspectives). The inclusion of research on men who have acted abusively was the logical next step in fitting together the pieces of the puzzle related to violence in families of faith. The inclusion of men does meet resistance, however. When there is a limited amount of both funding and human resources available to address the myriad issues surrounding family violence, any positioning of resources involving perpetrators can be, and has been, viewed as not only unnecessary but also as detrimental to the best interests of women and children who have been
As demonstrated above, our research projects have built upon each other cumulatively by seeking out the voices and the experiences of various constituent groups impacted by family violence. Once the thoughts and experiences of clergy members were determined, the research team engaged with church women, both victim/survivors and women acting in supportive roles. Together this data began to paint a picture of the experiences of families of faith impacted by abuse and the responses of faith communities. This analysis led to the next phase of the research—the experiences of youths and youth pastors. Our understanding of experiences of abuse particular to the younger members of faith communities was enhanced by this study. Yet, one important constituency was clearly missing from the picture—that being male perpetrators of abuse. Our position is that men who have acted abusively are an integral part of any agenda seeking to understand family violence. We therefore began to consider how we might conduct research with a group of men of faith who had acted abusively. Their experiences and their stories were critical pieces of the puzzle necessary to inform the research agenda.

Our research with men began with a file analysis of more than 1100 closed case files provided by a faith-based batterer intervention program located in the Northwestern United States. That analysis highlighted some important demographic differences between men enrolled in a faith-based program and men enrolled in secular programs (Nason-Clark, Murphy, Fisher-Townsend & Ruff, 2004). It also elicited fragments of the voices of men—brief responses to questions on the agency intake questionnaire. The file data were intriguing, and we thus considered how we might examine more fully the experiences of men enrolled in batterers’ intervention. Following a period of reflection, an additional collaborating community agency was identified and approached, and we began a series of on-going visits to conduct both personal and focus group interviews with men enrolled in their program. With the addition of this data to our research base we have been able to move in a more informed manner toward blending theory and activism.

As academic researchers our focus has been to fit together, clearly and accurately, the important puzzle pieces related to the enormous social problem of violence within the family context, and to disseminate our findings in an accessible manner. Yet we have taken that focus one step further. Our action research strategy, the RAVE (Religion and Violence e-Learning) Project, involves the development of web-based resources for faith communities dealing with issues of domestic abuse (www.theraveproject.org). This research-based website broadens the research agenda through the provision of resources and training—an initiative exemplifying public sociology by responding to data-identified issues with best practices for informed responses to abuse.

Religious Resistance to Framing Domestic Abuse as Primarily Male Violence Against Women

- Positioning the studies of men who act abusively within a broader program of domestic violence research amongst families of faith;
- Collecting data in a cumulative fashion where new studies are responsive to data collected from both religious leaders and the congregations they serve;
- Ensuring that the language used to communicate the research and the results is informed by the voices and lived experiences of people of faith;
- Balancing both the theoretical and practical challenges and opportunities presented to faith communities as they respond to violence.

The same dilemmas identified as issues of feminist resistance apply when discussing religious resistance. It stands to reason that faith-oriented interest in and response to domestic violence exists within the context of faith communities and beliefs. The program of research conducted by the Religion and Violence Research Team and the RAVE team has thus attempted to distinguish between secular and sacred experiences and responses to violence in the family context. There are tensions and distrust existing between the “steeple and the shelter”—those with a secular perspective and those with a faith-oriented approach. Our research has identified in a cumulative fashion the specific experiences of people of faith who are impacted by abuse, distinguishing our analysis from those with a secular perspective. But bringing commonalities to the surface and building bridges are integral to effective collaborations to end violence.

Following analysis of the large volume of statistical data collected through survey research of clergy members in Atlantic Canada, new questions emerged. These questions were subsequently addressed in more depth through personal interviews with many of the clergy who had responded to that survey. Questions were asked about their experiences of counseling family members impacted by abuse, their preparedness to deal with these issues, their education/knowledge regarding family violence within their congregations and outside their faith community, about addressing this difficult issue from the pulpit, about referring congregants to community agencies when necessary, and a variety of other issues relevant to the research.
we also conducted interviews in Canada and the United States with both faith-based and secular therapeutic staff; protocols and procedures we drew on a plethora of previous research projects to inform our study. Importantly, perspective to the diversity of work on family violence conducted in a variety of contexts. In designing our research Building on earlier studies conducted by the Religion and Violence Research Team, this project brings another

Employing a Multi-Disciplinary Framework Crossing the Academic/Activist Divide

- Ensuring that the research protocols and methods of data collection incorporate how various disciplines understand the experience of men who act abusively;
- Responding to the multi-disciplinary constituencies with regard to disseminating research results (criminal justice system, therapeutic community, religious community and domestic violence advocacy community);
- Attempting to bridge the academic/activist divide by responding to both those we have studied and the various stake-holders that inform the research (survivors and abusers);
- Disseminating our results orally, in print and through the web in academic, community, activist and religious contexts.

Building on earlier studies conducted by the Religion and Violence Research Team, this project brings another perspective to the diversity of work on family violence conducted in a variety of contexts. In designing our research protocols and procedures we drew on a plethora of previous research projects to inform our study. Importantly, we also conducted interviews in Canada and the United States with both faith-based and secular therapeutic staff;
with judges and probation and parole officers; with clergy members; with the Executive Directors of four therapeutic treatment agencies; with staff members in both faith-based and secular agencies; with board members; and with community advocates. This variety of voices has allowed us to frame and inform our research and its results within a multidisciplinary perspective.

We have also taken a multidisciplinary approach in the dissemination of our research results, based on audience. This has entailed numerous research oriented articles published in academic journals and edited collections; several book manuscripts that speak to those from a variety of perspectives—including academic, faith-oriented, victim/survivor, and advocacy (Kroeger & Nason-Clark, 2001; Nason-Clark & Kroeger, 2004; Kroeger, Nason-Clark & Fisher-Townsend, 2008); and numerous articles in community publications. The results of our research continue to be delivered orally in a variety of venues. For example, we presented a story-based synopsis of our research to two groups of men enrolled in the collaborating agency and separately to the therapeutic and administrative staff in that same agency. We gathered a group of advocates, therapists, probation and parole officers, and court workers together in Calgary for two presentations on our data and our social action project. Nancy has spoken at several seminaries, Barbara has spoken at faith-oriented community events, we both have made numerous presentations to both academic and community conferences and groups. Each month there are several speaking engagements organized in a variety of settings in Canada and the United States—all of them offering the opportunity to discuss what we have learned and to receive comment and feedback.

Four strategies that have assisted us in developing cooperation and interaction in a university community collaboration:

1. Recognizing the importance of developing individual university-community relationships prior to the research enterprise;
2. Focusing on the primacy of benefits to the research enterprise for all participants;
3. Developing ongoing interaction with respect to all aspects of the research enterprise;
4. Ensuring that the university partners took full responsibility for the funding, logistics and collection of the data.

The first key strategy in the development of our successful community-university collaboration was allowing sufficient time for the development of an interpersonal relationship, based on mutual respect and trust, prior to engaging in the research project. Over the period of several years prior to commencing the research collaboration we, the research team, and the agency Executive Director and staff, got to know each other. We met informally, we sat around a table with staff and discussed issues of importance, we met staff members individually, we introduced ourselves and our research agenda and we learned about them and their hopes and dreams. It was only after that introductory period that we came together to discuss the idea of collaborative research.

An important part of our discussion when entering into the research process related to the primacy of identifying benefits for each collaborator. For us as academics the important question was “what does this mean?” but for the community agency the main focus was “what are we going to do about it?” We hoped to learn as much as possible by incorporating the voices and experiences of men who had acted abusively into our research analysis, while the therapeutic agenda of the agency sought to utilize some of our findings to enrich their approach to intervention.

Another successful interaction strategy for us has been the sharing of food. Each visit to the agency has given us the opportunity to thank the staff in a small way by providing lunch. These have become lunch and learn sessions with us reporting on our continuing findings and the staff offering their perspectives and opinions. It has offered the opportunity to reinforce the valuable work of agency staff and to receive reinforcement for our ongoing work. These interactions have provided important insights for us as we work toward framing our analysis.

A further strategy that was successful in our project was ensuring that the academic team leader, Nancy Nason-Clark, took full responsibility for seeking project funding (including travel, transcription, administration, supplies, honoraria, food). As well we undertook the project particulars: development of the research protocols, detailing the administrative requirements and interview logistics, and collecting all of the data through interviews, focus groups and file analysis.

All of these strategies have ensured an on-going research process that has been so beneficial to both collaborators that we are currently in the process of discussing a further project.

References


*(Portions of this paper will appear in Chapter 2 of Abusive Men: Stories of Hope and Change, currently in preparation.)*
Crossing the threshold: Developing a foundation for university-community partnership

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Several sets of partnership principles have been developed; however, none address the partnership development processes. This study surveyed participants in active partnerships. Results show trust, respect, communication, and mutual understanding form the foundation of partnerships, and predict successful partnership progress.

Principles of University-Community Partnerships

There have been several attempts by different scholars to define the characteristics of university-community partnerships: Holland, 2004; Israel, Schulz, Parker and Becker, 1998; Lasker, Weiss, and Miller, 2001; Roussos and Fawcett, 2000; Seifer and Maurana, 2000. These five models reflect comprehensive attempts to define the concepts of partnerships. One thing missing from the models is consistency. While there is generally some overlap, not all of the models include the same concepts across the board. For example, Holland (2004) and Seifer and Maurana (2000) discuss communication and trust explicitly, Lasker et al. (2001) does not explicitly address communication, while Israel et al. (1998) discussed neither. Israel et al. (1998) state that partnerships are cyclical and iterative, while Seifer and Maurana (2000) describe a feedback process between partners. Other models do not touch on the cyclical nature of partnerships. Although several of the models discuss dissemination and mutually rewarding outcomes, it is not clear if these are related. Roussos and Fawcett (2000) tie the two together with their concept of making outcomes matter. Seifer and Maurana (2000) link feedback to outcomes of the partnership, but do not relate outcomes to resources. Thus, the flow and linkages between dimensions of a university-community partnership differs depending on the model.

The primary focus of this paper is to look at the essential dimensions of university-community partnerships. A new model will be proposed, integrating in more detail the dimensions of the existing models. Finally, after the presentation of the new model, the initial, or threshold, stage in the partnership model will be assessed.

New Model of University-Community Partnerships

Figure 1 presents a new, theoretical model of university-community partnerships. The new model takes dimensions of the five sets of principles
discussed in the previous section and creates linkages between them, producing a process through which partnerships develop, encounter, and potentially resolve issues at different stages. It is proposed that in order to be successful, partnerships will address the dimensions in the order outlined, before moving on to the next stage. Thus, there is a hierarchy to the process.

After the partners have gotten to know one another and have agreed upon a community issue to address, the partners then address the threshold dimensions of trust, respect, communication, and mutual understanding of assets and deficits. These dimensions are proposed to be inherent in successful partnerships and are non-negotiable. An individual or organization cannot mutually decide if or how to trust or respect another person or organization. Assets and deficits are present; they cannot be created through negotiation.

The threshold dimensions are not tangible constructs. A decision is not made to communicate with a partner, or trust partner. These are processes that are inherent in any relationship. Trust and respect can increase through the actions of other partners or through communication. Communication is not negotiated or planned like an evaluation or budget. What a partner says and how they say it impacts the partnership. Through honest communication, partners learn about one another, about their respective organizations, and make the decision to move forward.

The purpose of proposing this model is to build upon the work of Maurana, Israel, Lasker, Holland and others, who have attempted to identify the necessary dimensions of university-community partnerships. Their work is the foundation of this model. The Campus Compact group has issued a challenge to experts in the field to develop indicators of partnership success (Campus Compact, 2004). Other’s point out that traditional assessment tools and methodologies do not adequately measure partnerships (Weiss, Anderson, and Lasker, 2002). Thus, I proposed a plan that empirically tested the new model of partnership.

The goal of this research project is to answer the question: is there a universal series of stages through which university and community partners proceed, as these entities work together to create a partnership? To determine if the proposed model of university-community partnership is a valid representation of the partnership process, it must be determined what dimensions are present in university-community partnerships? The literature and proposed model provide a template, but only through empirical evaluation will a set of dimensions be developed. To allow for a more detailed description of analyses and results, only the relationship between the threshold dimensions and the next phase of the model, the Partnership Agreement Dimensions, will be discussed in this paper.

Methods

Participants

A total of 23 partnerships were awarded grants by a statewide community-health foundation in 2004. There were a total of 28 faculty, with seven of the 28 participating in two partnerships. The seven faculty listed in multiple partnerships were asked to complete a survey for each partnership in which they were involved, bringing the number of potential faculty surveys to 35. For the community partners, there were a total of 87 people that participated in funded partnerships. Three of 87 participated in two partnerships. The three community partners listed in multiple partnerships were asked to complete a survey for each project in which they participated, bringing the maximum number of completed surveys to 90.

Survey Data Collection

A survey was developed as a quantitative tool to assess the extent that participant’s perceive that partnership dimensions are present in their partnership. A total of 125 surveys were mailed to faculty and community partners. Community partners completed 42 surveys, accounting for 47% of the community partner population, while faculty completed 23 surveys, accounting for 66% of the population.

Regression Analyses

A series of logistic regressions were performed to test the relationships between the threshold dimensions and partnership agreement dimensions, as proposed in the partnership model. In the first series of logistic regressions, the variables representing the threshold dimensions were individually regressed upon each of variables associated with the partnership agreement dimensions, to assess the unique variance for each independent variable. In addition, all of the independent threshold dimensions variables were entered into a regression model simultaneously, and regressed upon the dependent partnership agreement variables to assess the overall variance accounted for by the threshold dimensions as a whole. In the partnership model, it is proposed that the threshold dimensions of trust, respect, communication, and mutual understanding of assets and deficits are to be addressed before the participating university and community organizations can proceed to formally commit to partnership through the partnership agreement. Goals and mission, governance, resources, partnership assessment and sustainability plan represent the partnership
agreement dimensions. Thus, the purpose of this regression analysis is to investigate how much the threshold dimensions actually contribute to the partnership achieving the partnership agreement dimensions. This analysis also assumes that the threshold dimensions are the starting point of the model partnership.

For this research project, p<.10 was labeled statistically significant. The maximum sample size for community partners is 42 and for faculty, the maximum sample size is 23. Considering the lack of statistical power between these two samples, achieving the standard significance level needed to reject the null hypothesis of p<.05 will be difficult. Thus, the use of p<.10 will allow for the discussion of differences that may be substantial when looking at contributions of variance and beta scores in a regression analysis, but lack the statistical power to show statistically significant results. This study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

**Results**

Independently, Trust and Respect (Exp(B)=5.61, p<.05), Common Language (Exp(B)=3.49, p<.10) and Community Awareness (Exp(B)=8.87, p<.05) contribute statistically significant variance to the dependent variable Partnership Mission for a total of Pseudo-R²=.183. When all of the variables were simultaneously entered into a logistic regression model, only two variables were statistically significant, Trust and Respect (Exp(B)=5.67, p<.10) and Community Awareness (Exp(B)=9.92, p<.10) for a total of Pseudo-R²=.163. The statistical significance shown by Common Language when regressed upon the dependent variable independently is gone. It is possible that Community Awareness mediates the process of communicating in a clear an understandable way among the partners, as it related to Partnership mission, such that, the communication among the partners serves to educate the partners about the needs and assets of the target population.

The next dependent variable is Partnership Rules. Four independent variables contributed unique variance: Trust and Respect (Exp(B)=9.78, p<.01), Outside Communication (Exp(B)=8.70, p<.01), Common Language (Exp(B)=9.78, p<.01), and Partner Assessment (Exp(B)=3.93, p<.10) for a total of Pseudo-R²=.535. However, when the variables are entered simultaneously, Trust and Respect and Partner Assessment are no longer statistically significant. Also, a large reduction in overall variance is found, from Pseudo-R²=.535 to Pseudo-R²=.306. In addition, the significance shown by Common Language (Exp(B)=4.96, p<.10) decreases. When all of the variables are regressed together, Outside Communication (Exp(B)=8.98, p<.05) becomes the strongest predictor of Partnership Rules.

The third dependent variable is Partnership Influence. Only one independent variable, Partner Assessment (Exp(B)=2.91, p<.10), had a statistically significant relationship with Partnership Influence for a total of Pseudo-R²=.041. When all of the variables are entered into the logistic regression model, the results change drastically. In this case, two independent variables, Outside Communication (Exp(B)=0.26, p<.05) and Understanding Capacity (Exp(B)=3.23, p<.10) had a statistically significant relationship with Partnership Influence with the entire model showing a total of R²=.141.

The next dependent variable is Budget Process. One independent variable had a statistically significant relationship with Budget Process, that being Understanding Capacity (Exp(B)=2.64, p<.10). When all of the independent variables were entered into the logistic regression model, two variables showed statistically significant results: Understanding Capacity (Exp(B)=4.52, p<.05) and Common Language (Exp(B)=17.33, p<.05).

No independent variable had a significant relationship with Funding Sufficiency.

Partnership Assessment is the next partnership agreement dimension to serve as a dependent variable. Three independent variables had statistically significant relationships with Partnership Assessment: Trust and Respect (Exp(B)=4.76, p<.05), Outside Communication (Exp(B)=3.57, p<.05), and Common Language (Exp(B)=11.92, p<.01) accounted for a large portion of total variance, Pseudo-R²=.310, when assessed independently. When all of the threshold dimension variables are entered into a logistic regression model, both Trust and Respect and Outside Communication are no longer statistically significant. Only Common Language (Exp(B)=11.06, p<.05), maintains a statistically significant odds ratio. Also, there is a large decrease in the total amount of variance accounted for in the model, Pseudo-R²=.208.

No independent variable had a statistically significant relationship with the final dependent variable, Sustainability Plan.

**Discussion**

To review the concepts behind the threshold dimensions, it is theorized that these dimensions are addressed at the point of formation by the organizations considering partnership. Before the participating organizations agree to formally create a partnership, issues of trust and respect, open, honest, and understandable communication with the other organizations, understanding the community in which the partnership will work, and understanding of the capacity of all of the organizations in the partnership form the bedrock of the partnership model. The term threshold was carefully selected to reflect the nature of these dimensions. Threshold means the minimum level or amount required to produce
perception or acknowledgement of a stimuli. In this case, the stimuli are perceptions of partnership dimensions discussed above. Thus, if a partnership participant perceives acceptable minimum levels of trust and respect, open and honest communication, and has an understanding of the community, and the abilities of the other partners, it is proposed that the partnership will move forward in making the partnership official, and developing such dimensions as governance structure, mission and goals, activities in the community, and budgets, on the foundation of the threshold dimensions.

In terms of the model, all of the variables that operationalize the threshold dimensions had a statistically significant relationship with at least one of the partnership agreement dimensions, which served as dependent variables. Thus, a conclusion can be made that, according to this proposed model, the concept of threshold dimensions serving as the bedrock, or foundation, of the partnership, has merit. The results are summarized in Table 1.

There were many statistically significant relationships between the threshold dimensions and the partnership agreement dimensions. This was expected considering where the partnerships were in their lifecycle at the time data was collected. The partnerships should have already addressed the threshold dimensions and partnership agreement dimensions. Thus, with some certainty, it can be concluded that the threshold dimensions, and their placement in the model, is theoretically and practically appropriate, and validates the decision to structure the model in this fashion, prior to data collection. It should be noted that levels of trust, feeling respected or disrespected, communication, and organizational capacity can fluctuate throughout the life of the partnership. The actions of one partner may cause another to lose trust, while the capacity of organizations varies with staff turnover or funding changes. However, for the partnership to advance, threshold levels of these partnership dimensions are required before the partnership can proceed.

Conclusion

This study is not the definitive conclusion on the process of partnership; it is just the beginning. This study showed that there is a discrete set of dimensions, or issues, which partnerships encounter as the relationship develops. Concepts such as trust, communication, organizational capacity, and assessment of strengths and weaknesses are the foundation of developing a partnership mission and governance structure, creating a budget, and establishing an assessment protocol to check on the progress of the partnership. Again, these findings are only the beginning. Taking this knowledge an applying it to future research studies, using it practically to help those working in partnerships to better manage the process, and providing feedback to funders will ensure that the partnership model will evolve, as our understanding of university-community partnerships continues to grow.

Table 1: Relationships Between Threshold Dimensions and Partnership Agreement Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables: Threshold Dimensions</th>
<th>Dependent Variables: Partnership Agreement Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships with high levels of trust and respect lead to...</td>
<td>… the development of clear goals, clear rules for partnership decision making, and partnership progress assessments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships that communicate with stakeholders and constituents will have...</td>
<td>… clear rules for partnership decision making, having an influence in decision-making, partnership progress assessments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners that communicate well with each other will have...</td>
<td>… the development of clear goals, clear rules for partnership decision making, a fair budget development process and partnership progress assessments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of community needs and assets will lead to...</td>
<td>… clear goals and mission for the partnership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing partner’s strengths and weaknesses will lead to...</td>
<td>… clear rules for partnership decision making and having an influence in decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners that understanding the strengths and weaknesses of their organization will have...</td>
<td>… influence in partnership decision-making and a fair budget development.</td>
</tr>
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References


Creating Community-University Research Partnerships to facilitate Social Change: Increasing Campus Recreation and Athletics Opportunities for University Students with Disabilities

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This paper explores the process of how a Participatory Action Research approach created community-university research partnerships to increase campus recreation and athletic opportunities for university students with disabilities.

Background/Introduction

Recent provincial and federal anti-discrimination legislation has resulted in Canadian universities increasingly recruiting and accepting persons with disabilities (Duquette, 2000; Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 2004). Although the presence of students with disabilities on campus is steadily increasing, their total integration and inclusion into campus life has not been as successful (Promis, Erevelles, & Matthews, 2001). Canadian students with disabilities continue to be marginalized within universities mainly because a framework for inclusion has not been firmly established (Promis et al., 2001). Universities endeavour to support the success of these students by providing various on-campus support services; however, they typically focus on academics while other facets of university life are not fully addressed (Promis et al., 2001). Extra-curricular recreational and athletic activities should not be considered trivial, as research has clearly indicated that they have many benefits and can enhance a person’s experiences and quality of life at university (Ashton-Shaeffer et al., 2001; Promis et al., 2001).

In order to address this gap, a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach was utilized to unite key university stakeholders in order to examine issues around accessibility and inclusion and to develop a planning framework on how universities can better address the recreational/athletic needs of students with disabilities. The purpose of this paper is to explore the process of how a PAR approach created community-university research partnerships to increase campus recreation and athletic opportunities for university students with disabilities. The paper will explore: a) PAR as a strategy for conducting collaborative research with persons with and without disabilities; b) the methodological and logistical process by which this PAR took place; c) the benefits of utilizing a PAR approach, and d) the challenges and solutions that were identified. The project is still on-going but the process of this learning experience has been well documented and this paper will illustrate the role university-community research partnerships can play in bringing together members to “act in pursuit of their shared aim” (Stone, Whelan, & Murin, 2000, p. 197).

PAR: A Strategy to Conduct Collaborative Research

Participatory Action Research (PAR) involves a process where the community and the research team work together to “develop goals and methods, participate in the gathering and analysis of data, and implement the results in a way that will raise critical consciousness and promote change in the lives of those involved” (Kidd & Karl, 2005, p. 187). PAR is useful when creating community-university research partnerships because it challenges institutional knowledge and power dynamics, and it closes the gap between we-them approaches by raising consciousness, generating knowledge, and creating action (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2006). It also involves a critical reflection about how things are, how it became that way, and how research can be used to facilitate change (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). One of the main trademarks of PAR is that it links research to action and, as such, these projects are purposeful and useful to the everyday lives of those involved in the research. Research is participatory when it involves the production (and valuing) of collective group knowledge and is based on the principles of inclusion, reflection, empowerment, shared learning, democratized
knowledge and social change (O’Neil, Woods, & Webster, 2005). PAR is a form of research where research participants, as a community, work together to create social justice and change (Kidd & Kral, 2005).

This strategy of inquiry was selected for this project because it allowed for the inclusion and involvement of various members of the university and greater community. The insights, perspectives, and priorities of all partners contributed towards research that would help inform university policy regarding campus athletics, ultimately improving the quality of life for university students with disabilities (Reason, 2006). The PAR approach enabled the team to take a critical stance and challenge university policies and practices which are oppressive and discriminatory towards students with disabilities. This approach enabled the team to work together and acknowledge the various circumstances faced by persons within varying levels of the university milieu and provide workable solutions. This relates to Laurel Richardson’s ‘crystallization’ metaphor, where each participant sheds light on an issue from a different perspective which ultimately enables the issue to be viewed more clearly and comprehensively (Richardson, 1994).

**The Methodological and Logistical Process by which this PAR took place**

**Step 1: Identifying the issue and developing a plan**

A PAR project will typically take place once a problem or issue has been identified by a marginalized community or group. In regard to this project, I committed to explore this topic after speaking with several students with disabilities about the role campus recreation and leisure plays in their lives and about their frustration with inaccessible and non-inclusive campus recreation opportunities. In order to further ensure that the study was grounded in the perspectives of persons with disabilities, various alumni with disabilities served as consultants throughout the conception phase of this project.

Although the contributions of all partners are of equal value, it is important to identify a champion responsible for pushing the project forward and developing the initial plan (Dupuis & Gillies, 2008). In this project, I was the champion or ‘radical planner’ helping the group to identify institutional constraints and providing skills and knowledge necessary to develop practical solutions (Beard, 2003). Radical planners are personally committed to social change on their own behalf, they use a bottom up approach to rethinking society, and they amalgamate “theory, strategy, vision, and action” which “inform each other in social learning” (Beard, 2003, p. 17). Although I took the lead to unite relevant partners, it was my hope that they would continue to connect and discuss issues of accessibility and inclusion upon completion of the study.

**Step two: Selecting a Study Site**

I selected one university as the study site because it enabled me to explore it in-depth and generate dialogue between its key members. It was anticipated that the dialogue stemming from the project would enable the university members to communicate needs with one another in future. It was also important to select a university at the forefront of providing equitable athletic opportunities to students with disabilities since they would have an initial framework for inclusion in place and they would likely be open to new ideas which would strengthen their services. I therefore selected a university in south-western Ontario whose official website advertised a variety of athletic opportunities for students with disabilities. Their DA works in conjunction with their CSD and encompasses a Lifestyle Fitness Program. The university also offers an innovative Recreation Equity on Campus Club (REC Club) which is run by the university’s CSD, the DA, and student volunteers. The program was developed eight years ago by a student with a disability and it involves the partnering of a person with a disability with a qualified student volunteer who provides assistance, guidance, and training in various recreational settings and activities. Although the university continues to experience challenges, they are vigilant in providing services that meet student needs and are committed to addressing challenges as they work to increase equity by improving their current services and programs.

**Step 3: Creating a Research Team**

When developing a PAR team, it is crucial to unite a diverse group of individuals who are committed to the issue at hand, ensuring priority is given to persons who are marginalized or directly affected by the issue. A research team brings together members of a community who have convergent interests and objectives that can be effectively achieved through a joint effort (Kaufman, 2003). The goal is to have a synergetic partnership, where the results of the group working together will exceed the results of individual efforts (Murray Alzheimer Research and Education Program Working Group, 2008), since “a programme, howsoever desirable it may be, will not produce the intended result if it is planned and executed in isolation from other related activities” (Prasad, 1988, p. 106).

It was my intention to develop a research team with individuals with varying abilities and viewpoints from different levels within the university and the community. The goal was to initiate, and expand the lines of communication between, these members while facilitating an in-depth understanding of each other’s perspectives (Kaufman, 2003). This dialogue is essential in order to generate ideas on how the rights of students with disabilities can be upheld within the university milieu. In order to connect the team, I first met with a representative from the CSD who works directly with students registered with the centre. He recruited an upper year student with a disability who participates in campus athletics
and is the coordinator for the REC Club. I recruited a member from the university’s DA who is the coordinator for the university’s Lifestyle and Fitness program and is on the Athletic Advisory Council. She was involved in the creation of the REC Club and works with the CSD to help offer recreation and athletic opportunities for students with disabilities. I also recruited two university alumni; one was a former varsity alumnus who is legally blind and utilized the CSD services as a student, and the second was an alumni with a disability who was not as actively involved in campus recreation and athletics. They all demonstrated an interest in the study and agreed to join the research team.

Step 4: Determining Expectations, Roles and Responsibilities

Not all partners will participate in the same capacity and so it is most effective when the skills, abilities, and preferences of each person are utilized and the contributions of all members are equally valued. In this study, each member of the research team contributed differently in terms of assisting with participant recruitment, reading transcripts and provided insights on analysis, dissemination of findings, organizing the meetings, and reviewing and providing insights on the final framework. What was important is that all partners communicated their expectations with one another early on. In order to achieve this, it was helpful to hold an initial meeting where the team: a) was introduced to one another and the project; b) collectively determined goals, expectations, roles and responsibilities; c) determined policies or procedures that would serve to govern the partnership and the decision making processes, and d) how the group would create a safe space inclusive for all participants. Subsequent meetings delved deeper to determine the methods and data analysis procedures. The meetings were a time to touch base, make decisions, assign tasks, reflect on outcomes, and debrief after completed tasks. It was necessary to keep everyone informed and updated on the progress of the study through emails, monthly meetings, and/or phone calls.

Benefits of Adopting a PAR Approach

Benefits for the Researcher

PAR enables a researcher to holistically view an issue and collectively determine innovative solutions. It also connects the researcher to a group of individuals interested in learning about the topic and participating in the research. Another benefit is that the researcher becomes connected with the inside community which is helpful for gaining access to participants and for understanding the culture within which he/she is working. Increasing the involvement of persons on a research team will increase the avenues for which the research can be disseminated. Team members willing to share the results of the study through informal dialogue with others will also help disseminate the research findings.

Benefits for the study site/community

Utilizing a PAR approach within a university helped increase communication and enhance relationships both within and outside the university. This was achieved by having the various university and community partners come together to work directly with one another towards a common goal. Moreover, interview participants typically became more cognizant of the services and programs offered by the university which helped enhance communication and awareness on campus. The community was also involved in developing a framework that will meet their specific needs. This is important because it enables the persons most affected by the issue to develop solutions with one another, as opposed to a researcher creating solutions for a community. This approach ensures that solutions are relevant to the specific needs and preferences of the group and setting. Involving university and community members within a PAR approach also enables the community to develop the skills necessary to conduct such projects in future in order to sustain a culture of learning, sharing, and growth. The purpose of the study was not only to identify oppression, but to help create positive societal change. Although the process is on-going, research indicated that positive social change was achieved not only through the development of the planning framework, but also through the mere involvement in the study both as research participants and as members of the research team. For example, several individual members were empowered to create innovative solutions which enhanced the development of the framework. The study also generated a sense of empowerment by actively including individuals in creating social change that will directly involve their community.

Challenges and Solutions

Accommodating and adapting to all

It is crucial that researchers are adaptable and accommodating when working in a research partnership, particularly when it involves persons with differing abilities. It is best to ask partners up-front how they prefer to communicate and receive information. In regard to this study, all documents were read orally at meetings and during interviews involving partners with visual impairments. All locations for meetings and interviews were physically accessible and individual preferences and needs were identified and taken into account.
It was often difficult to coordinate meetings with the entire research team because of geographic and transportation challenges as well as scheduling conflicts. This challenge was overcome by including a teleconference option which enabled out-of-town partners to participate. I also met individually with partners unable to attend a meeting to ensure their perspectives were included. Meetings minutes were recorded and shared with all partners for feedback.

Maintaining motivation
Group members will have varying reasons for becoming a partner and so maintaining momentum and motivation with all team members may be challenging. During the early stages of the project, it works best to involve partners in the project as quickly as possible. Motivation can also be enhanced by sharing ‘progress reports’ with all members, particularly those who have not necessarily been involved in a certain aspect of the project. Participants can also be encouraged to participate in new phases of the project. Completing tasks in a timely manner and regularly sharing positive outcomes or successes with the group were important in keeping momentum of the project.

Adopting the participatory approach
Researchers may be hesitant to adopt the PAR approach since they will have to relinquish control, distribute responsibilities amongst the team, and become reliant on others. This can be particularly troubling for researchers on a tight schedule since PAR projects typically take longer because: a) decision making is a collective effort and it takes time to schedule meetings, discuss an issue, recognize and incorporate different view points, and reach a consensus; b) information has to be shared with all members of the research team at all stages of the project; c) these projects are typically complex; and d) some partners may be absent, out of contact, or prefer to be less involved in certain stages. I combated this challenge by reconceptualising my role as a researcher. In this regard, I curbed my impulse to maintain control, work independently, and focus on timelines and progress, and I allowed myself to embrace the knowledge, expertise, and insights that others have to offer. I focused on the benefits of the partnership approach and refrained from focusing solely on the outcome by embracing this project as a learning process. I also gave myself permission to define our partnership in a way that suits our needs, as opposed to expecting it to resemble partnership approaches portrayed in the literature.

Conclusion
This paper explored the process of how a PAR approach created community-university research partnerships to increase campus recreation and athletic opportunities for university students with disabilities. It highlighted some of the challenges of such an approach, but most importantly it identified the benefits. PAR was used to unite university and community members to actively enhance equality on campus for students with disabilities, and as Kaufman (2003) states, “By working to transform the structures of the institutions we are part of, we make those institutions serve the needs of everyone, and we stop oppressive dynamics from being reproduced” (p. 297).

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Education Partnerships: Working in the Boundary Zone

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Malaspina University-College

This cultural analysis of post-secondary partnership is based on a multi-site ethnography. During partnership negotiations between two Canadian colleges and a First Nations organization, normalizing assumptions and practices affected politicized boundary encounters within and between organizations.

Partnership, participation, and collaboration are buzzwords of our time. Popular rhetoric represents partnership as a panacea for organizational and social difficulties, and academic literature is dominated by a pragmatic approach emphasizing individual agency. Critical scholars have exposed hollow promises of educational partnership, redefining it as an instrument of neoliberal policy that reproduces relations of inequality (Lieberman, 1992; Lister, 2000).

It is not surprising that partnership work is represented in contradictory ways. Partnerships are situated in a boundary zone where the formal boundaries of organizations overlap with informal and invisible intersections of social structures and cultural understandings. By definition they involve at least two distinct organizational entities engaged in some kind of formal agreement. Partnership development mobilizes multiple interests, expectations, accountabilities, identities, and resources, which overlap with social intersections of race, ethnicity, class and gender.

My multisite ethnography focussed on the development of a post-secondary education partnership. Data was collected through participant-observation, interviews, and document analysis during two years of negotiations between two Canadian colleges and a community-based First Nations organization. I found that organizational assumptions and practices were as salient to the success of the process as shared goals and interests, and that partnership processes could strategically transform relationships between non-aboriginal and First Nations organizations. This paper focuses on my cultural analysis of post-secondary partnership practices, which have so far received little attention in the partnership and planning literatures.

The partnership story began some years ago in British Columbia, when South College received government funding to create and evaluate an online “Virtual Campus.” South College is a comprehensive publicly funded institution located in the urban south of British Columbia. (South College is a pseudonym, as are all other individual and organization names in this paper.)

The South College Virtual Campus objectives were to provide courses and support remote aboriginal learners facing significant barriers to learning. The funding agency required a partnership agreement with at least one other organization, and South College staff undertook partnership negotiations with North College and Northern Nations’ Education Society (NNES), both located in Hopetown.

North College is a small publicly funded institution based in a rural northern region of British Columbia. Its mission emphasizes local community service, and its multiple campuses serve a large region with a small dispersed population. Almost half of their students are of aboriginal descent. The lengthy series of negotiations between South and North College did not result in a Virtual Campus or any online courses. Instead South College negotiated and constructed a formal arrangement with NNES, a non-profit organization that operates a high school and adult education program. Its purpose is to provide training and education for individual members of several affiliated First Nations, and at the same time support their Nations’ self-determination and survival. Its programs are open to any interested student, whether aboriginal or non-aboriginal. My data collection period concluded when the Virtual Campus was ready for implementation in a NNES and South College partnership.
Post Secondary Practices

All three organizations shared many practices common to post-secondary institutions: The longstanding patterns, repeated actions and routines that faculty and administrators undertake to get their jobs done. Engaging in practice involves both doing and knowing, and involves implicit relations, tacit conventions, subtle cues and rules of thumb, sensitivities and intuitions that are taken for granted and usually left unsaid. Practice is visible in regularly used language, documents, well-defined roles, procedures, and regulations (Bourdieu, 1977; Wenger, 1998).

Common practices were critical in supporting the partnership development. Every participant spoke about the importance of flexibility and webs of personal relationships, trust and respect that Brown and Ashman (1996) empirically documented as essential for successful partnerships. Partnership negotiations began when South College staff drew upon longstanding personal relationships at North College and NNES.

The two colleges relied upon “partnership champions.” All partnerships require a broker or convener to bring potential partners together, but complex partnerships require strong champions to continuously promote the relationship and to run interference by overcoming institutional barriers (Brinkerhoff, 2002; Harper, 1996). At South College, the role was assigned to Continuing Education planner Dina. She struggled to construct the project in an institution lacking the necessary resources and processes, adding partnership negotiations to her regular workload despite the long hours and extra effort required.

Samuel (South College): Anything [the project] did achieve was essentially on Dina’s back. I mean, if it didn’t have her kind of drive and impetus, and involvement, it doesn’t happen.

At North College, no one assumed responsibility for the partnership. Individuals came and went from key staff positions, and the negotiations had no consistent advocate.

Elizabeth (North College): [the project) needed a champion to make it work. Someone to push it through, like a dog with a bone.”

The role of champion makes sense in an academic environment that values and rewards individual accomplishment. But reliance on a champion to overcome internal as well as external obstacles raises questions about the sustainability of partnership activities.

Differing practices

Despite the two colleges’ shared interests in constructing a Virtual Campus in the Hopetown area, their partnership process was further complicated by contradictory practices within the institutions. South College and North College both follow an academic model, in which the academic departments and faculty hold higher status than the non-academic continuing education departments. The academic faculty status was linked with a disciplinary knowledge base, base funding and considerable control over program and curriculum decisions. Continuing education staff offered short term courses outside the academic stream. Both were concerned about attracting and serving students, but they differed in their specific objectives, motivations, and measures of success.

Dina: [South College academic faculties'] reality is very different from ours[continuing education]. And, when you try to mesh the two, you do hit a number of challenges.

Though academic and continuing education departments worked informally with other colleges on a range of projects, they relied upon different bureaucratic procedures. Both made use of a “Memorandum of Agreement” signed by college executives for relations between organizations, but continuing education had more expertise working with businesses and non-profit community groups and made frequent use of service contracts and rental agreements, which could be signed by a project manager, to formalize arrangements.

North College faculty were uncomfortable with what one called “an aggressive continuing education model.” Though the first North College partnership negotiator was a continuing educator, faculty intervened to dismiss her arrangements in favour of a Memorandum, their preferred bureaucratic practice. When they rejected a continuing education service agreement, it was interpreted by South College as a rejection of the entire partnership initiative, rather than a conflict between two sets of practices. Without a North College partnership champion to support it, the project was shelved.

South College negotiators pragmatically “muddled through” in response to changing circumstances, seeking new partners and adjusting to new players, objectives and procedures while working with limited resources and time.

Dina(South College): And it was like, OK what opportunity exists? How am I going to pull this together? And it was actually to a degree, a challenge to have a comprehensive plan, because I didn’t know what was around the corner? What we did, was we just covered it and scrambled.
This approach has been called *satisficing*: making do in constrained contexts with courses of action that are satisfactory rather than optimal (Cervero & Wilson, 1994). Planning this partnership became a form of crisis management, requiring frequent small steps and changes to address problems as they arose, while fulfilling the requirements of the funding agency. Unlike the colleges, NNES was a much smaller organization with a horizontal structure. Its small core staff were regularly assigned responsibility and resources to convene partnerships.

**Partnership practices and assumptions**

Organizational practices intersected with three distinct approaches to partnership practice: collaboration, cooperation, and business arrangements. Collaboration is based on sharing power among participants and organizations, and sometimes challenges social inequality through strategic inclusion and shared decision-making. At both colleges, faculty participants were explicitly committed to collaboration, which they linked to concerns about local First Nations self-determination.

Gary (North College): *I understand the importance of the power sharing needed to create a successful program. So, community members should be the driving force behind anything that gets delivered through education.*

Despite North College’s position, NNES responded to their overtures with a cooperative approach, working towards common goals rather than sharing power.

Ethel (NNES): *And we’ve been in partnership with them [North College], for a lot of things also. We kind of scratch each others’ back a lot of time, we let them use our facility, then they let us use their facility.*

The original South College grant proposal outlined collaborative practices that would support equality and democracy in their partnering relationships. But during partnership negotiations, collaborative practices were effectively superseded by practices of cooperation and business arrangements. Working under pressure to meet short-term obligations and external funding deadlines, the continuing education planner Dina at South College satisficed by working in dyads to make quick decisions, rather than taking part in the unwieldy group and time-consuming group processes required for collaboration. This partnership was constructed within a business framework, in which partners bargain to achieve their own interests using terms like contracts, trade-offs, exchange, cost-benefit, and providing services. Each partner’s contributions can be measured, with a mutual sharing of costs and benefits.

Dina (South College): *With NNES, it’s problem-solve together. You’re going through the pains, the challenges, the good times, you’re both contributing towards it. And the contributions are, if you had to measure it out, probably are close to fifty-fifty.*

NNES administrators preferred business arrangements for partnership through service agreements, in which the staff signatories agree to provide specific services or materials. Dina was ambivalent about whether the relationship with NNES would be considered a partnership in the eyes of the South College executive.

Dina (South College): *It’s actually more of a contract. And it says, NNES will do this, and South College will do this . . . If we were to ask the executive, they would see it more as a service agreement. So, they wouldn’t see it necessarily as a partnership.*

But NNES planners felt differently, and had no doubts about the status of the relationship.

Ethel (NNES): *We’re definitely a partnership. And, we can say collaboration also, because NNES has always had control [in partnerships]. We purchase curriculum, but we have control of everything.*

NNES negotiators regularly created partnerships through contracts, which gave them control during the development and writing of a partnership contract, and included some degree of involvement in decision-making afterwards in specific domains, particularly in program delivery.

Critical analysts in higher education have questioned the political implications of partnerships constructed using business practices, arguing that they reproduce social inequalities and offer aboriginal and other minority organizations few benefits to justify the high material and political costs (Barnsley, 1995). The South College partnership with NNES could be seen as a veneer disguising a donor-receiver relationship. But the coexistence of multiple partnership practices in this project suggests an alternative interpretation. By strategically positioning itself as a partner with the colleges, NNES is claiming a stronger bargaining position than it would have as a client or mere consumer of educational services. All partnerships benefit from association with the broad ideological assumption that partnership is a good thing. Even though NNES partnerships were constructed through business arrangements, simply being a partner had symbolic value and implied a relationship more substantial than a simple business transaction. This symbolic value provided leverage to maintain partnering relationships after a particular project ended.
Core and Periphery: A Discourse of Power

The central role of the educational institution and the peripheral role of its community partners and students were assumed from the outset of this project, in the funding proposal’s key phrase, “remote First Nations communities.” A core-periphery discourse reinforced unequal relations between the urban south and a peripheral rural northern hinterland; a publicly funded academic institution and a lower status non-profit education society; and dominant Canadian society and a subordinate aboriginal group.

No one at South College explicitly questioned these assumptions. In the initial stages of the project, South College controlled all development work on the virtual campus. There were no community partners to take issue with South College’s centralized control, as they were either awaiting funding approval or negotiating their roles with South College.

At North College, participants clearly articulated the power implications of this discourse.

Barb (North College): I just thought that they [South College] were expanding their borders and saw an opportunity. Or what they thought would be an opportunity, and it could have been, except we don’t fit the picture. North College staff felt vulnerable to domination and “poaching” by outside institutions, and were determined to resist by claiming strength in their marginal position. After shelving the South College negotiations, they developed an alternative version of the project based on their own needs assessment practices.

NNES participants took up a core-periphery discourse in a different way. Their cultural politics represented another world view, which constructed a landscape of many cultural cores. The Hopetown region is their Nation’s centre, the homeland for their people and their aspirations for self-government. NNES staff perceived themselves in a position of equality with planners in an institution central to another social domain. Despite South College’s integral role in an education system that has long dominated and oppressed northern First Nations, it offered programs and certification that would serve NNES’ own goals. The First Nations students could gain access to alternative forms of knowledge, and the credentials necessary to challenge provincial and federal government hiring and policy. NNES did not resist South College activities, but welcomed its involvement in their own project.

Boundary Maintenance Practices

The partnership literature argues that much of the competition and defensiveness between organizations derives from resource dependence, and that a careful approach to financing may avoid these issues (Brinkerhoff, 2002). Competition for resources was an issue in the north, where funding sources were limited and students were recruited from a small local population. But in this project, material concerns were inextricably linked with political relations and boundary keeping.

North College explicitly maintained boundaries with South College as a political act, resisting domination by a similar yet more powerful institution through a decentring strategy. Friction was also present between North College and NNES. North College often attempted to collaborate in planning programs with NNES, but was consistently rebuffed despite friendly personal relationships.

Ethel (NNES): We’re friends with people up there [at North College]. I don’t know competition, but there’s a competitiveness . . . It’s not been negative, that’s for sure. But we are the only two post-secondary facilities in this community.

North College wanted to collaborate and share decisions, but NNES maintained a clear and visible separation between them. Other partnership studies have found that community-based organizations may become distanced from their own communities, by shifting their priorities and activities to align with larger institutional partners (Brinkerhoff, 2002). Much like the cautious defensive patrols in a national border zone, NNES maintained its boundaries to guard its independence and to support an explicit political purpose of self-determination in relation to a dominant Canadian society. NNES participants did not view themselves as subordinate to other educational organizations, and were willing to work with mainstream organizations towards their own ends. They occasionally cooperated with the local college campus while regularly entering into partnership agreements, framed through business practices, with more distant colleges.

Practising Partnership

Partnership practices are shaped by ideas of what is right and proper. The likelihood of forming a partnership is critically affected by intersecting assumptions and practices such as boundary maintenance. These findings suggest that instead of focusing exclusively on mutual goals and interests, potential partners should be aware and respectful of boundary issues, and work with difference instead of against it. Resistance and defensiveness may not be immoveable barriers to partnership, but boundary practices that require attention and understanding. This awareness is
particularly meaningful in relations between Canadian education systems and aboriginal organizations, where a legacy of disrespect associated with colonialism and ethnocentrism has long been used to justify intervention in the lives of aboriginal peoples.

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The Houston Community Health Worker Survey: Unanticipated Effects of Certification

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We share in this paper the results of an evaluation of community health worker (CHW) utilization in Houston, Texas from May to August 2007. We present the state of the field in a diverse city; identify challenges, including certification; and discuss community-based solutions.

Background and Significance
Promotores, or community health workers (CHWs), are trained lay persons who share ethnicity, language, experience, and/or socioeconomic status with the community to which they provide health-related services. Research has shown that CHWs can help overcome healthcare barriers and inefficiencies. CHWs can assist members of medically underserved communities navigate the healthcare system (Swider 2002; Reinschmidt et al., 2006), increase disease screening (Hunter et al., 2004) and preventive care (Nguyen et al., 2006), improve disease management (Norris, 2006), and reduce the overall cost of care (Whitley, Everhart, & Wright, 2006).

CHWs primarily work with people who are marginalized from the mainstream healthcare system, often by poverty, age, or cultural tradition. They provide services that range from interpretation to health education to community advocacy. The roles that CHWs fulfill are likely to expand in the future, due to demographic trends, such as an aging population and increasing immigration; the growth of care management technology that will broaden what can be done by paraprofessionals in patients’ homes; and increasing demands for cost-effective interventions.

Studies such as the Community Health Workers National Workforce Study (2007) have provided a comprehensive overview of the state of the field in the United States. This research project is designed to complement those studies through a case study of Houston, Texas, a diverse city in a state that has been in the vanguard of the CHW movement. As a mature model of CHWs’ integration into the healthcare system, Houston can be viewed as a bellwether for the profession in the United States as a whole. This paper reports one of our results: the challenges and opportunities that credentialing has presented for Houston’s CHWs and the organizations that employ them.

CHW Demographics and Reimbursement
In Texas, the CHW workforce is 68% Hispanic/Latino(a), 18.5% Non-Hispanic White, and 10.7% Black/African-American (Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), 2007). Texas mirrors the nation in that CHWs are mostly female between the ages of 30 and 50 (ibid). Approximately two-thirds (67%) of U.S. CHWs are in paid positions (HRSA, 2007). Of those who are paid, experience is the biggest predictor of pay (ibid).

CHW Credentialing in the United States
The lack of standards for the education, training, and certification of CHWs has been cited as limiting CHWs’ ability to receive payment for their services (Kash, May, & Tai-Seale, 2007). Without such standards, it is argued, employers, insurers, funders, third-party payers, and community members cannot evaluate the competence of CHWs and the value of their services (Dower, Knox, Lindler, & O’Neil, 2006).

Currently, only Alaska, Ohio, Indiana, and Texas have state-required certification, although several states are moving in that direction (Kash, May, Tai-Seale, 2007). Of these states, only Texas and Ohio certify “generalist” CHWs. Alaska and
Indiana certifies only “specialist” CHWs, who are highly skilled and serve targeted populations. Alaska’s certified health aides (CHAs) serve the state’s Native population; the program has evolved over more than 50 years and partners with federal agencies and tribal governments. Alaska’s CHAs receive Medicaid reimbursement (ibid). Indiana certifies CHWs working for maternal and child health programs. They also have been able to secure Medicaid reimbursement. Ohio implemented its state certification program, administered through the Board of Nursing, in 2004.

**CHW Credentialing in Texas**

Texas’ certification and training program is the result of a process that was based upon the principles of community-based participatory research, and which is a good example of community-campus partnership.

**History.** In 1999, a committee was formed to explore certification of CHWs in Texas. The committee’s 15 members were two CHWs, two members of the public, two employees of the Department of Health, seven representatives of higher education, one representative of the Workforce Commission, and one representative of a border-health advocacy group. The committee’s charge included program evaluation and the issue of Medicaid reimbursement for CHW services (HB 1864, 1999).

The committee met monthly for two years. They reviewed existing curricula and training programs and visited 30 Texas programs that, together, employed over 300 CHWs. To ensure that the proposed certification curriculum was realistic and representative of CHWs’ work, community meetings were held in four towns around the state. More than 150 people commented at the meetings, most of whom were CHWs. Other stakeholders who participated were from higher education, government, and community advocacy groups (Nichols, 2005).

**Certification requirements.** In 2001, legislation was passed based on the committee’s recommendations (Texas Department of State Health Services, 2001). Certification was required for all CHWs who receive compensation for their services, and state health and human services agencies were directed to attempt to use certified CHWs for patients who receive medical assistance (SB 751, 2001; SB 1051, 2001).

Texas’ certification program is administered by a nine-member advisory committee that is composed of four certified CHWs; two citizens; one instructor who has trained CHWs; and two professionals who work with CHWs in a community setting (Nichols, 2005). State-certified training programs must follow guidelines that are intended to provide portable skills, a common base of knowledge, and certain basic skills. Coursework consists of 160 hours, with a focus on eight competencies and minimum objectives in each competency: Advocacy, Interpersonal Relations, Capacity Building, Communication, Knowledge, Organization, Teaching, and Service coordination (Nichols, 2005).

Grandfather provisions require >1000 hours of experience over 12 months. The special needs of adult learners who may not be legal citizens are considered when certifying training programs, and precedence is given to settings with a history of working with CHWs, where they are more likely to feel safe, comfortable, valued, and respected (Nichols, 2005). Recertification is biannual, and requires 20 hours of continuing education credit. There is no application fee for certification, and the state conducted several promotional workshops to distribute applications and information about the certification process.

**State of certification.** As of November 2007, 13 training programs are certified (originally 14; one program has elected not to recertify). Over 500 CHWs have completed certification. Harris County has by far the most certified CHWs (Texas Office of Primary Care, 2007). However, as of December 2005, only 52% of CHWs who were due for re-certification had re-certified, and the numbers of recertifications and certifications have been falling (CHW Advisory Committee, 2005).

**Purpose**

We conducted a systematic evaluation of CHW utilization in Houston, Texas from May to August 2007. The purpose of the semi-structured interview study was to identify the organizations that support CHWs; the purpose and scope of the work conducted by CHWs; and the operational support of CHW programs, including funding, program evaluation methods, “best practices,” and barriers to service delivery. This article focuses upon an unexpected finding from the study. We were surprised to discover that many practicing CHWs have experienced Texas’ credentialing program as a burden, rather than a benefit.

**Methods**

The research methodology for this project was qualitative, consisting of semi-structured interviews. The interviews were held in accordance with The Methodist Hospital Institutional Review Board guidelines. We conducted 32 interviews, representing 11 organizations—8 nonprofit and 2 governmental. Twelve of the respondents were program managers. The rest of the interviewees were practicing CHWs. All but one of the interviewees was female.

The study followed a non-probability, snowball sampling procedure for identifying the organizations and the interviewees. The sample was derived from lists provided by individuals within organizations that trained CHWs for state
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certification. Those contacted were asked if they could refer us to another organization that supported CHWs.

In-person interviews were arranged through phone or email communication with program coordinators and CHWs. Interviews were conducted at the organization or CHWs’ offices, and ranged from 30 to 60 minutes. Based on feedback and requests from participants, interviews were neither video nor audio recorded. Written notes were taken, including quotes when possible, and two (female) interviewers were present at almost all interviews to ensure the maximum accuracy in data recording.

Interview questions addressed CHWs’ goals, outreach methods, service topics, training status, funding, and evaluation. Additional questions aimed at CHWs’ motivations, barriers, and definition of community.

The limitations of this project included the compressed data collection period (a summer fellowship), which sometimes hampered scheduling interviews. A longer collection period would have allowed for the inclusion of interviews with CHWs who were unable to participate during the study period. Secondly, the lack of consistency in naming CHWs was a barrier to identifying potential participants. Most organizations that employed staff members who fit the definition of a CHW did not refer to them as CHWs, so there was no job title that could be asked for when calling an organization in which the researchers did not know the name of a CHW. This may have introduced bias into the sample, perhaps skewing it toward state-certified CHWs.

Results

This paper focuses upon the issue of certification. Certification was repeatedly raised as a perceived barrier, both by CHWs and by program directors. Six of the organizations interviewed employ a mix of certified CHWs and uncertified CHWs. The two government agencies have fully certified CHW staffs. However, all of the organizations provide internal training for CHWs that focus on program-specific skills, as well as requiring continuing education.

Two of the organizations studied were certification-granting institutions, as well as CHW employers. Both program directors cited two requirements as onerous. Training programs must create their own curricula, and must revise their curricula every two years. “People view their community as too unique… [there’s] a problem with lack of sharing,” states a director. A trainer suggests that, “[We] could make use of the expertise of each organization. Instead of [us] organizing everything, [we] should make use of the resources and infrastructure that is already there.” Both directors said that collaborative learning of organizations should be the focus in strengthening the CHW curriculum and certification efficacy.

Barriers cited by the CHWs themselves included limited class availability, cost of courses, and literacy issues. The two-year recertification requirement was viewed as daunting by some CHWs, while others found that the continuing education classes available were not challenging or interesting, given the level of training they already received through their organizations. Language was also viewed as a barrier in the certification process. There is limited bilingual access to the training classes. And, if a training program provides a bilingual translator, the language is almost always Spanish.

Another barrier is the requirement that CHWs must apply for recertification before their current certificate expires. This became a problem for one of the organizations interviewed. A newly hired director of a program that was being revived wanted to employ certified CHWs from the community but was unsuccessful because those who had previously been certified had forgone the opportunity to apply for recertification. As a CHW states, every time new CHWs are hired because previous ones lost their certification, CHWs “need to reestablish a level of trust with the community.”

The majority of interviewees agree that there are benefits to certification. They cited heightened credibility, quality, recognition and acceptance as potential benefits. But the steps for institutions, instructors, and CHWs to obtain and maintain certification were also cited as drawbacks. Most CHWs interviewed linked the challenge of certification to the lack of job opportunities and stability. They did not see a financial benefit to certification.

Discussion and Conclusions

The development of Texas’ CHW certification process was community-based and respectful of the tension that CHWs’ feel as members of communities who are also interested in acceptance and reimbursement by the healthcare system (Dower et al., 2006). In many ways, it is an exemplary example of a community-campus partnership. However, in practice, it appears to be failing to meet the needs of the people whom it was intended to serve.

Most importantly, certification does not appear to increase pay. The national workforce study found that experience, not certification, was the biggest predictor of pay in Texas (HRSA, 2007). Texas’ original legislation mandated exploration of Medicaid reimbursement for CHWs. That initiative appears to have lost momentum. In addition, the state requirement that paid CHWs be certified has no enforcement associated with it, and so has not had much impact outside of state agencies.

The shift from employer, program-specific, and community-based training to a broader, uniform approach to CHW education seems to have created challenges for CHWs. This study found that certification results in cost-shifting to
individual CHWs, who traditionally come from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds. It is clear from our interviews that certification’s costs in both time and money are perceived as barriers by CHWs.

The dynamics of the Advisory Committee are also a consideration. The Advisory Committee is heavily weighted toward professional and academic representatives. It may be difficult to get a truly representative and participatory experience from the group because of its uneven power dynamics. Possible ways of making the committee more participatory include holding the meetings in communities, rather than in the state capitol, and making the work less policy-level and academic. Perhaps a presentation from a successful group of CHWs at each meeting that solicits their practical feedback would be helpful.

The training requirements for certification are long and somewhat undefined. Elements such as service coordination, advocacy, and communication are very important, but it is not clear that it is appropriate for every community to spend so much time on each of them. Texas deliberately has no curriculum model, in order to remain open to individual community experience. However, this means that the curriculum has to be rewritten by every instructor. The weakness of this approach is that there is no source of best practices available and no statewide organization where CHW instructors or program directors can learn from one another. While every community is different, a great deal can also be learned from others’ experiences.

Finally, recertification was cited by our respondents as a barrier. The Advisory Committee has responded to this barrier by providing extensions. Unfortunately, this option is not well-publicized; the authors were unable to find it on their website (which is in English). In addition, recertification is a challenge for CHWs because there are a limited number of CHW instructors and very few organizations offering continuing education. This is especially difficult for CHWs in rural areas. Even in Houston, a large urban area, there is only one organization that offers continuing education, and that only on an occasional basis.

Houston provides insights into the lived experience of Texas’ CHW certification process. As other states consider certification, this study can serve both as an exemplar of a community-based partnership between academia and grassroots healthcare providers and as a source of insights into the difficulty of creating a system that is responsive to the needs of all the stakeholders involved in CHW credentialing.

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Nature Arts in the Park: Participatory Research *in situ*,
from Home to Community to University and Back Again

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This paper identifies the progress and setbacks for the undisciplined, postmenopausal scholar and activist. Why and how to infiltrate academia, consider new paradigms and work cooperatively with community and university enlivens this grandmother grad student’s review of literature and life.

At Home

My studies began four years ago in my urban home garden with two old women—my auntie and me. The purpose of this paper is to present an alternative narrative for the construction of local knowledges through lifelong, leisure learning (LL³). This paper will show that opportunities exist in community and university with the “feminisation of age” (Voland, 2005). These opportunities require an attentive reinterpretation of community-university parameters to include women’s work that has been ignored. This narrative follows my path from home, to town, to campus and back home again in a medium-sized, university town in California, U.S.A.

Extending Families

My auntie and I were the marginals; by default we became co-dependents. Auntie Esther was diagnosed with dementia and lymphoma. I was at my peak of menopausal moments. Both of us were living below poverty level on social security income. After living alone for 40 years, Esther’s need for care and my financial dependence on my oldest son created a familiar but recently forgotten model for an intergenerational family and household. My grandson was often in my care as well. Doctors anticipated three months of hospice care for Esther; her place in our household enriched 29 remarkable months of learning and unlearning.

Our best times were wandering and wondering in the garden. Esther tolerated my presence planting and creating a place for learning garden arts and ecologies. Sometimes, children were present learning to see and draw. Sometimes, older people visited us. In the daytime, Esther’s aggressive behaviour and anxiety diminished when I brought her a stem of flowering rosemary. She was comforted in the garden and recognised me as her mother or her sister from another place and time. Through the remnants of her senses and sensibility she was unlearning and finding safety in an embedded memory. I too had early memories of my grandmothers’ gardens. I have found that our experiences in the garden were not unique. I use them in this paper to provide a commonality accessible across culture and class diversity.

Aunties and Grandmas

I haven’t changed much, over the years. I use fewer adjectives, now, and have a kinder heart, perhaps. (Carter, 1992, n.p.)

Aunties, grandmothers and other old women, while ubiquitous, are also invisible. Finding old crones in the literature is different than finding feminist threads on the edge of the tangle. (Not to be confused with finding aging feminists in the literature.) Old women come through as the rough thick woolly blankets inside the quilt; they are the loft that keeps us warm on home-sick-from-school days. The seams are fraying and the batting works its way out if I poke at it.
Cultural Heritage without History

During long nights with Esther, I read my own cultural heritage for the first time in volume after volume of women in the garden. Sarah Fenimore Cooper, Buffalobird Woman, Delfina Cuero, Mabel Osgood Wright, Lester Rowntree, Ruth Stout, Mirabel Osler, Sarah Stein, and Judith Lowry are a few that became my literary and cultural mentors. Western women had been allowed and encouraged to know, write and even publish from the garden. This was a heritage without history for me. Their texts were rich narrative of more than gardens. My home library grew. I paid a small annual fee and received access and lending privileges at the university library. My son, a permanent employee at the university, unlocked access to the library’s indexes and journal databases for me. If the university do nothing else for LL3, as “serious leisure” (Hazen, 2007), they should expand community access to their library with a research skills programme. The literature on therapeutic horticulture was just emerging. The scientific ecological analysis of gardens and gardeners’ methods was non-existent. One team at an Austrian ecological institute were doing ethnographic studies on homegardens (Vogl-Lukasser, 2004). Virginia Nazarea (2005) identified the biocultural importance of home gardens. The Internet was my only access to information while care for Esther continued 24/7. The connection to intellectual accomplishment and dialogue fed my curiosity and quieted my sorrow.

Garden Clubs and Good Works

While Esther lived and diminished, I watched and read. My experimental garden became more inclusive and chaotic. I joined the local garden club. At fifty-something, I was youngest amongst predominantly female garden and floral design experts. They accepted my ecofeminist inquiries much easier than they accepted my status as an independent female. Many of them had primary responsibility for the care of an aging spouse or parent. Many took on additional responsibilities for the care of grandchildren. I met Emilie White at the garden club. She led me to other local environmental organisations. She has created a manageable refuge for plants, animals and people that teaches the accessibility and importance of conservation in the most intimate venue, her own backyard. Her garden was both work of science and work of art.

Eckart Voland (2005) editor of a recent anthology titled, Grandmotherhood, the Evolutionary Significance of the Second Half of Female Life, startled me to attention with the “feminization of age” that is already taking place in the world. “At the present time [2005], two-thirds of all persons over sixty and three-fourths of those over seventy are women. At present, postmenopausal women represent 15 percent of the world population” (p. vii).

Esther, my garden club friends and I suddenly became significant to global demographic perspectives. Grandmothers and aunts were assuming knowledge bearer roles as master gardeners, specialized growers and environmental stewards, yet no one seemed to notice all the knowing activity of old women going on around town. Beautification projects enlivened downtown planters. School gardens acquired seeds, tools and dollars. A native plant garden was tended by a dedicated handful of women. Women over 50 adopted a park trail and maintained it. More than half of those attending an environmental impact report workshop were women over 50. Old women were at every commission and council meeting. An invisible, unrecorded underculture was providing community moments and spaces of wellbeing and caregiving.

In Town

I went to my club meetings and began networking with local NGOs hoping to establish a venue for sharing garden ecology and arts, local knowledge, and a growing list of expert grandmother gardeners, artists and naturalists. The organisations I met with wanted community gardens, school gardens, nature programmes, and environmental education (EE) for all ages but they were locked into a community model that provided no resources for new programmes. Their organisations were aging; fewer and fewer new members under the age of 50 were joining or participating. Board members and activists had maintained their roles for decades. The same challenges were addressed at every board meeting.

Wellness, Competence and Contribution

Women in the community had been giving and supporting the needs of our town for so long, people were insulted and alarmed when I presented true costs and budgets for new programmes. It was as if they had suddenly recognized the true costs of householding a community and didn’t want to recognize that the gratis contributors were growing older.

What does it mean if our community stewardship of parks and culture is maintained by elderly women with little or no economic or social structure to mentor upcoming stewards, cultural knowledge bearers or advocates? The purpose and venues for my intended programmes for environmental and arts education became more complicated. Dynamics of age became apparent as well as the biases of class and ethnicity. I stepped back from my community involvement and looked to the university for resources and reason.
Grandmotherhood, peri- and post menopausal, is described as a poorly understood medical dysfunction of the aging. Little attention is paid to the fact that women’s average life expectancy will continue to exceed men’s by at least ten years and might well be above 90 by the year 2030 (Voland, 2005: p. vii). The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) offers a profile of women in November 2004 (2005, webpage). They identified that 79 percent of women over 55 were “likely to vote” compared to 35 percent of women 18-34 years old (PPIC, 2005). In the same month, PPIC portrayed the diversity of women in the state. More than 50 percent are not white with Latinas at 38 percent of women in the state, an ethnic majority of the majority. Thirty-one percent of Californian women have college educations, with 37 percent living in households with incomes under $40,000 and 32 percent living in households of $80,000 or more (PPIC, 2005).

I could find no studies that examined the decades-long efforts of the women in my community. No one has surveyed the wellness, competence and contribution of these women.

Looking for Social “New-Work” and Subversive Paradigms

As significant as the demographic portraits are, research and investigation into the advantages, both biological and cultural, of grandmotherhood’s contribution are almost non-existent. As in other health and social studies, tragic need and dysfunction often motivate study and funding. Well-being and advantage of an invisible population of old women are unfundable topics of research even if they do manage and operate the majority of good works in your town.

The mystery and marvel of why human females are the only species on earth to live one-third of their lives post-reproductively has been quietly controversial. Most of us never noticed. Jamison et al (2005) determined that the reality of “being grandmother” decreases the chances of death in a given year by more than 40 percent (italics mine) (p. 102). They identify more variables of grandmotherhood than all the health studies I’d found and included environmental variables and ages of grandchildren. Modestly they admitted,

Two control variables come close to reaching significance…the larger the household and the longer the household has been in existence, the less likely a woman is to die in a given year (Jamison et al, 2005, p. 104).

Subversion as the Grandmotherly Advantage

The “grandmotherly advantage” that Jamison et al identify benefits three generations; her own, her daughters’ and her granddaughters’. Linking mtDNA to longevity of “grandmotherliness” must be the ultimate insult to Western academia and the accepted canons of human knowing. However, these interpretations do offer a biocultural foundation for what I was seeing in my community.

We argue that there is a biocultural positive feedback relationship between grandmotherhood and post-reproductive longevity: if there is a genetic basis for longevity in women that also behave in “grandmotherly” ways, they will be valued members of the community…and more likely to live longer, even longer than if they would if they did not behave “grandmotherly” (Jamison et al, 2005 p. 111)."

Place-based Learning

Contrary to the popular and much scholarly opinions in Western intellectual circles, aesthetics are not extraneous to politics (Allen, 1989, p.3).

I moved my attention from the garden to our underdeveloped, much abused, municipal park and watershed. I met women there who had created independent NGOs in advocacy of one issue or another. Older women were the dominant support for local long-lived NGOs such as the nature centre and youth advocacy organizations, as well as environmental organisations. By their volunteer work and/or donations they were ubiquitous in every community-based activity including nature hikes, park walk fundraisers, endangered species faires and wildflower festivals.

On Campus

When Esther died, I wondered at the freedom to pursue scholarship. The garden had provided therapeutic, intellectual and nutritive refuge for Esther and me. My studies of garden ecology had become interwoven with identifying the relationships between old women and community heritage in public parkland. Community-based organizations referenced women’s roles in conservation and serious lifelong, leisure learning. My son suggested that since I was doing so much on my own; why not earn a graduate degree for the effort? Shortly after, I was accepted into graduate school as a self-prescribed interdisciplinary student of ethnoecology.
Lost Ecologies

On campus things were difficult. While gardens and parks are as ubiquitous as old women, the relationships between women, gardens and parks has been excluded from academic endeavours except by a few anthropologists (Nazarea, 2005, Vogl-Lukasser, 2004) and their feminist peers in human geography (Knigge and Cope, 2004; McLafferty, 2002). In my ecology coursework, gardens were unspoken; the ecologies of parks and people were denied. Restoring imagined landscapes of native flora without people appeared to be the predominant aspiration of ecologists. Graduate students were expected to work in obedient servitude to mentor professors on their projects, subordinating their own creative inquiries. I grew uncomfortable and lonely.

Summer in the City

I spent the summer at the San Francisco Botanical Garden and the Helen Crocker Russell Library of Horticulture (endowed by a old woman in the early 20th century). Golden Gate Park offered an overview and details of 100 years of women’s work in urban parks. Volunteers and donors were predominantly older women. I spent time at the California Academy of Sciences archives reading the papers of Alice Eastwood (1859-1953), one more old women who had spent her later life stewarding the botanical collections at the Academy and instigating efforts for environmental education through garden clubs across the state using her own resources.

Place-based Learning

Back on campus, place-based learning became my focus in anthropology and museum studies (Davidson-Hunt et al, 2007; Galbraith, 2003; Russell-Ciardi, 2006). My work between university and community became more complex and unmanageable. Professors wanted to add projects or readings of their choosing to my workload. I did my best to combine projects into an intergenerational EE programme, Nature Arts in the Park (NAP). NAP’s purpose is to connect urban families with familiar, accessible outdoor environments through place-based learning. Local organisations and professors showed interest. They encouraged me to go forward without resources or commitment from them. They were generous in their compliments on my hard work so far. On field trips I collected dug plants from vernal pools and brought them home to pots.

Subsistence and resistance

As carriers of their tribes’ traditions, all these women elders are powerful; they are fierce in the best sense. Their deep knowledge and reverence makes them poets of life and great storytellers.

Even sitting within the potency of their silence, much is transmitted. (Schaefer, 2006, p. 11)

Around this time, I met Dr. Clover in my review of the literature on adult environmental and arts education (Clover & Hill, 2003; Clover, 2006; Gruenewald, 2003). While giving me confidence that I was on the right track, it became apparent that I would have to form my own independent NGO in order to create long-term, well-managed support for emergent EE programmes in my town. I also met the only other feminist on campus.

I had discovered the “every dot-org for itself” attitudes on campus and in the community. Coalitions and cooperative agreements were rarely in evidence except as a cover when mutual grant dollars were at stake. Many organisations had EE programme goals and included EE in their mission statements. None had established organizational or community needs assessments. There were no outcomes-based criteria for evaluating past or current EE programmes. School EE programmes had been completely defunded at state and local levels. The only workable economic strategy for my studies and for my graduate research project was to research, design and then subcontract EE programmes to environmental and cultural organisations, literally, create a customer base of organisations that could not manage or support EE programmes themselves. I would have to write the grants for them to pay for the programmes I would provide. I wandered and wondered out into the garden. I was exhausted by my first year back to school. The new NGO, Greencraft Conservatory, added goals for educating organisations about EE programme development and fund development, fee-based services and marketing strategies.

At Home Again

Community-based participatory research and activism inform my graduate studies while an ecofeminist ethic and philosophy bias my arts and works. Creating an environmental education NGO, Greencraft Conservatory, is the current step in my scholarship and praxis. Ironically, in recruiting board members over the last year, those who are making the commitment are not as I expected members of university or established community-based agencies. Women most interested in environmental and cultural heritage education are those much like myself, economically and socially marginal. They are concerned with how they will spend the next 30 to 35 years of their lives beyond paid work, isolated and invisible from the community at-large.
This summer I will step back and start again with Nature Arts in the Garden workshops in garden ecology and arts. Greencraft was created in order to acquire resources, identity and credibility in an environment where women's work at home and in community is invisible, isolated and disregarded. The untangling of community and university resources and politics led me to CUExpo 2008. The university in my town is not ready to negotiate resources and paradigm shifts with their communities. The current recession and state budget crisis might be just the opportunity for old crones to make suggestions. It might be just the time to suggest the benefits of community-university scholarship with crones that have another 30 years to contribute.

**Selected References**


Integrated Learning and Skills for Offenders: Evaluating the Inmates’ Perspective

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Liz Cunningham, University of Brighton
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This paper examines the impact of vocational education for offenders in two prisons, one category D, open prison and the other a category B, secure prison. It draws upon a small evaluation study (Cunningham and Hillier, 2007) which examined how experiences of offenders through a series of one to one interviews and two focus groups. Data includes individual diagrams of offenders’ learning journeys, a metaphor originally used by Ward (2002). The paper concludes that such programmes set within the wider context that offenders face when released are a necessary, but not sufficient, component in action which prevents re-offending.

Introduction

Work-based learning is a key component of meeting the UK government’s skills agenda (Leitch 2006). At the same time, it is vital to engage people who have not fully benefited from compulsory education and who find it difficult to find employment which requires higher levels of technical skill. There are a number of marginalised groups which continue not to share in the work-based learning agenda, either because they are currently not in employment, or because they hold lower level roles which are less likely to benefit from employer support in training and development. One such group, because of the nature of their situation, are naturally excluded from learning in the workplace, i.e. offenders. However, there has been a long history of encouraging offenders to participate in learning programmes with the primary aim of enabling them to gain employment once released and to prevent re-offending (Crow, 2006; DfES, 2005, 2006).

Resettlement of offenders

A survey of prisoners nearing release in 2002 identified that factors linked to better chances of employment on release included having stable accommodation, qualifications, not having a drug problem and receiving help and advice with finding work (Niven and Olagundaye, 2002). NACRO (National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders) has long concerned itself with the resettlement of prisoners and has argued that measures adopted to improve resettlement of prisoners in the UK apply to most prison systems globally. They campaign for released prisoners to have rights to work, housing, social security and to freedom from interference with family life set out in Articles 12, 23 and 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Resettlement means to ‘settle again in a new or former place (Crow, 200). Such resettlement involves practical arrangements but also implies a process which occurs over time and therefore is more aligned with the notion of rehabilitation and reintegration.

In his review of the literature on resettling prisoners, Crow acknowledges the suggestion by Maruna (2004) that ‘current reintegration practices seem to be operating in a theoretical vacuum with no clear explanation for how the process is supposed to work (page 8). This can be contrasted with the ‘what works?’ approach to government initiatives which had moved on from the ‘nothing works’ ethos of prison life before the end of the twentieth century. There is evidence that simply offering education in prison will be insufficient in ensuring prisoners will improve their employment prospects (see for example, Harper and Chitty, 2004, McGuire, 2002).

Current initiatives within the context of encouraging all adults to have the necessary skills and knowledge to contribute to the economy and society (Leitch 2006) include action to enable prisoners to gain employment on release and to reduce the likelihood of offending, very much within the ‘what works’ approach noted above. European Social Funds
(ESF) can be used to work with marginalised groups to counter their exclusion from the mainstream benefits of society (i.e. work, housing) and our research arose from one such project which combined ESF funding with Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funding to provide additional vocational courses for offenders and to examine if there were increased uptake of employment on release and a reduction in re-offending as a result.

**Project rationale, aims and objectives**

The project intended to build capacity and joint working arrangements of providers to create a ‘learning journey’ from custody to community supervision into mainstream training and employment. There were three strands to the project: co-ordinated delivery of information, advice and guidance (IAG), provision of intensive learning support and the development of progressive vocational training programmes for offenders in custody and the community.

We were approached to evaluate the ‘soft’ outputs in terms of ‘distance travelled’ by the beneficiaries through their learning journey. We decided to draw upon the learning journey approach used by Jane Ward (2004, 2005) when she worked with practitioners examining learning achieved by literacy students. Learning as a journey is a powerful metaphor which is particularly appropriate as it generates ‘a shared language and conceptual framework for research interviews’ and supports learners in ‘reflecting on their learning and progress’ (Ward, 2005:44).

**Method**

Four individual interviews and a group interview were conducted in two prisons. A total of 8 individual interviews were conducted and two focus groups. All participants were informed of the purpose of the interviews and at the open prison, signed a consent form. Verbal consent was given for participants at the category B-prison. Only one inmate chose to withdraw from the group interview.

The semi-structured interviews comprised questions concerning background information about age, previous education and work experiences, about learning and skills completed during sentences and experiences of these courses, and future aspirations for learning whilst in prison and on release. Inmates normally evaluate vocational training by focusing on what as been learnt and how. In this research, we asked participants to rate their motivation, confidence and hopes for the future using a one – five Likert scale.

**Group interviews**

To gain further insight into inmates’ experiences on vocational courses, the group interviews used the metaphor of a journey to help elicit experiences of learning and to put these into context for individuals throughout their lives. Each participant was asked to draw a personal learning journey following an example provided by the facilitator. These were displayed around the room. Individuals then explained their drawings to the rest of the group and general discussion followed. In both groups, the drawing helped some participants relax and be more forthcoming with their views although in a couple of cases, particularly at Lewes, there was reluctance to discuss previous experiences.

As the researchers needed to be supervised at all times by the education staff, the inmates were aware that their views were being heard by the staff responsible for delivery of these programmes. However, in all cases, both in individual interviews and in group interviews, the education and training provision was rated highly and it is unlikely that the responses were unduly influenced by the presence of the education staff. In the Category B prison, however, the interviews did include comments made by education office and the discussion was both influenced and changed as a result of his interventions.

**Findings**

In most cases participants had voluntarily left or been expelled from school at an early age with only a few achieving some kind of qualification. Any learning experiences since then tended to be on-the-job training, so these participants have a very practical view of learning which is a recurring theme in their responses. We asked participants how they were made aware of the courses, why they chose to do these particular courses, what their experience of the courses was and how they felt the courses affected prospects for work outside of prison.

It seemed more likely that prisoners heard about courses from other prisoners, than from Prison Officers or information posted around the prison. As a result perceptions about the courses, including information about getting a place were not always correct.

> I found it difficult to find out about the courses. I talked to a fellow con and he told me (Prisoner 7)

> We hear about them through word of mouth, there’s no special Education Officer in prison, just Prison Officers (Prisoner 11)
Selection of courses

For most participants, the main reason to choose a course was to give them an opportunity to learn something and that this learning would be useful for employment in some way. A secondary aim was to be active in some way in prison as boredom creates apathy, which is a constraint to motivation to learn and change.

*I did health and safety cos it was a good eye opener to safety in the work place and home environment. I did it as my motivation is to find work* (Prisoner 5)

Expectations and Prospects

Participants were very positive about their learning experiences, but few had any clear expectations of what the courses would involve. There was clear evidence that expectations for outcomes related primarily to improvements in chances of employment rather than being of use while in prison.

*When I did that BICSs course, I wasn’t expecting to take over the world. It’s opened up the door to me now. It wasn’t intentional. It was a gateway.* (Prisoner 7)

For some, this was their first experience of gaining qualifications and this was described as both a personal gain and a skills gain to help with employment.

*It means I can put letters after my name and it helps with my goal. I want to start a cleaning business. I can show my BICSs and Health and Safety and it will be another feather in my cap* (Prisoner 7)

Motivation, confidence, hope for the future

Overall, during the interviews prisoners felt very motivated. Some felt they were motivated generally but acknowledged a change due to both the courses offered combined with other support,

*I am feeling good considering what I was like. Everyone else noticed, family friends. I am back to what I used to be* (Prisoner 2)

There were more varied responses regarding confidence with only half feeling positive about confidence levels. Overall, feeling confident was linked to feeling positive or negative about finding employment on release.

*Securing a job where I’d use these skills. I know it’ll be hard, but if you’ve got good people around, you can do it* (Prisoner 3)

The lack of confidence in their ability to find work was mainly due to the difficulty of being accepted while having a criminal record.

Responses were more positive when thinking about their hopes for the future as this was tied to feeling they had learnt some useful skills and learnt more about themselves.

*I’d think things through using what I learnt here, I know there’s a way round everything* (Prisoner 3)

We asked how prisoners would encourage others to take the courses offered and they all had fed back positively to others when asked, but felt prisoners could do more to publicise courses, perhaps with one person per wing being a representative to ask about courses. Alternatively, prisoners could record experiences on tape or video to show to others as part of an induction process.

*I would tell them it is well worth doing. Every achievement is a bonus. You’re here 24/7 so you may as well do something, otherwise you would drive yourself mad. Once you start achieving you feel better about yourself.* (Prisoner 2)

*If they’re interested, I’d let them know it was good, have a go! I’d say here is the route, but find out what they want to do, work out how to go about it and say just keep using your skills* (Prisoner 3)

*There was only nine people on my course, but after we’d done it we said it was a laugh and on the next course 40-50 people signed up!* (Prisoner 14)

Discussion and Conclusions

We found that although the existing programme is valued additional courses which are perceived to have value such as plumbing and welding indicate the awareness of the exchange value of qualifications and experience gained whilst in prison. Work experience (as opposed to courses) is highly valued and desired by all participants but the limitations of access to work experience are in the areas most valued. The interruption of learning is problematic. If it were possible to delay transfer until a course is finished, inmates would be more likely to participate and complete an accredited course.

The issues affecting inmates’ ability to gain vocational skills and knowledge to enable them to successfully gain work on
release are not confined to the development of vocational knowledge alone. We suggest that provision is an essential but not sufficient component in effective rehabilitation for offenders. We argue that offenders need information which is obtained from peers as well as from officers and education staff. The equivalent of the successful union learning reps is worth establishing, whereby employees are encouraged to participate in learning through the advocacy of their union representatives. This would be more easily achieved for longer term prisoners given the transient nature of much of the prison population.

None of the vocational provision can override the problem of release into the community when offenders have no housing and no hopes of employment. Some employers are willing to provide interviews for offenders. If sheltered work environments and accommodation could be provided in the first few weeks of release, there may be more likelihood of successful rehabilitation. As Crow forcefully reminds us

It may seem self-evident to suggest that it is no good addressing someone’s lack of employment if they have nowhere to live, or that making progress on any front is more difficult if someone is addicted to drugs (Crow, 2006:38).

In the UK today, we have one of the highest prison populations in Europe. Our resettlement problem is by definition also large. Crow has argued that not only must there be an integrated and multi-modal approach to ensure continuity of engagement, there must also be a change to the ways in which communities accept returning prisoners. Our work suggests that without such integration and acceptance, simply providing vocational programmes in prison will not work. Yet, without it, one important factor in prisoner resettlement will be lost.

References
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“Where Do They Bury Jane Doe’s?”
Bearing Witness to Action Research and the Sex Trade

Debb Hurlock, and Connie Barlow
University of Calgary, Faculty of Social Work, and United Way of Calgary and Area

This paper explores the interrelated aspects of knowledge and ethics in a community-based research study that uses photo-voice to understand the lived experiences of women who have left the sex trade.

So, the Story Began
In June 2007, a group of five women who have left the sex trade, combined with five other women from the Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary, and United Way of Calgary, and AIDS Calgary came together to “make sense” of the “dash.”¹ This lush combination of community agencies, academia, and ex-sex trade workers was embedded within the principles of community based research (CBR); a process continually chiseled through the reflective action of interpretation (Gadamer, 1989) and iteratively informed by our individual situatedness, our “finite existence in time, history, and culture” (Heaney, 2000, p.105).

Photo-voice was the core method in which the stories emerged out of and around, as the women captured, reflected, and re-created images that brought to life the particulars of their lived experience of sex trade. Also, the women used

¹ This study is partnership between Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary, United Way of Calgary and Area, and five women who have left the sex trade. The peer researchers for this study are Tammy, Nicole, Viki, Holly and Candace. The team is also made up community practitioners and academics: Lori Villebrun, Justine Moreau, and Kathleen Sitter (United Way of Calgary and Area) and Roseline Carter (AIDS Calgary Awareness Association).
their photos to create personal digital stories, testimonies of their wounds and growth, insights into the caverns and cadences of their lives. We met twice a month at United Way; gathering around food from a local Mediterranean eatery, our bodies tucked snugly around a stout oak table, the familiar hum of the florescent lights, the quiet pale of the walls. We belly-laughed wildly, we cried with a primalness that is refreshing, we held womb-like clumsy silences, the kind that can only give way to deeper conversations and crossings of knowing one another.

It is now March 2008, and our study continues. However, this paper is not about outcomes, or artistic products of photo voice; rather it is about the ambiguity, and the ethical messiness that tethers and evolves the process of CBR. CBR is like a spider’s web; it is generative, and spins from the interpretive and diverse family of approaches that is the spirit of CBR, such as feminist theory, and phenomenology (Reason, 2006; Haraway, 1988; Gadamer, 1989 ). In doing this, we privilege the knowledge of lived experience, which was our starting point. CBR (re)constitutes the subjugated knowledge and experiences of women, who have been buried by patriarchy, and a traditional society that has positioned them as “sub-human.”

It is important to note then, that when we refer to the knowledge created in this action-oriented approach, that we recognize various forms of knowledge. Primarily, we work within a feminist interpretive paradigm (Harding, 1997; Lather, 1991; Haraway, 1988;), thereby yielding a relational and reflective knowledge. “Relational knowledge comes from connecting and leads to further connecting. It is reciprocal” (Park, 2000, p.88). But, this CBR study does not only rest within co-creation of knowledge, but rather sees the process of engaging in the co-creation of new knowledge as action; or feminist praxis (Lather, 1991). In CBR, “we are faced with problem of not only what we can know but also of what we are to do” (Caputo, 1987, p.236).

There are many beginnings that arise out of long histories, constituted and contested in the reality of social inequities. Often it is difficult to discern where good CBR begins and ends. It is like a spider’s web…[w]hen the web is pulled askew, hooked up at the edge, torn in the middle, one remembers that these webs are spun in mid air by incorporeal creatures, but are the work of suffering human beings, and are attached to grossly material things, like health, and the houses we live in (Woolf, 1993, pp. 43-44). CBR begins in the midst of something; sometimes in the midst of personal or professional relationships, sometimes in the midst of the practice. Often it begins because we are struck by a social inequity, and are moved by the desire for social change, and good. In these moments we read ourselves into CBR, for “research is grounded in autobiography, even if unacknowledged” (Heaney, 2000, p.11).

In Our Action, is Our Knowing

The practice of CBR is continually re-constituted through reflection, self-understanding, and the transformation that occurs dialogically in relationships with others. CBR is a multifaceted endeavor as it calls forth a “family” of methodological approaches (Reason, 2006). CBR is a hybrid process that is centrally concerned with attending to social inequities, and in doing so, attempts a natality of knowledge within the inherited scientific traditions, and our emancipation from colonized methodologies. In this way, aspects of knowledge and ethics in CBR are inextricably coupled and compelled, disrupting the history of the privileged ways of knowing that arise from class, gender, education, financial wealth, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. In this study, the group of women, some of aboriginal decent and some Caucasian, have lived many years in a position and in a society that devalues them. We started with a belief that their knowledge is valuable. It took time for us to create a space in which the women trusted that their knowledge was equally valued.

To do this requires a marginalizing of our own privileged knowledge, often the kind that constitute privilege, in this case, being middle-class white, highly educated women. We continually ask ourselves, are we privileging one-person’s knowledge more than the other? We try and remain attuned to how knowledge is being co-created, as well as recognizing the perceived power differential. We also abandoned the notion of “expert” and followed the hermeneutic assertion of being experienced rather than an ‘expert.’ CBR, in its truest shape requires that it be grounded in the experiences of those it claims to explain (Heaney, 2000).

The Particulars of Ethics

Our study involves multiple voices and mediums of datum: we are utilizing photo-voice, creating digital stories, conversations, and text. With the completion of the first transcript, it was circulated amongst the team. Nicole, one the peer researchers, looked to the language of the transcription and challenged us as a team and our claiming to attend to “equity.” She emphatically drew attention to the language of the transcript and how team members were separated and identified by “participant” and “researcher.” Nicole asserted at the end of the meeting: “You know, I just had to say, you guys are like the “researchers” and there’s that fucking word, “participant”. No equality there.” If they are to be truly peer researchers, then this was not reflected in the language of the transcripts.

One of the researchers apologized and said, “that is an excellent point, thank you”, and the conversation quickly turned to the check out ritual that the group had created. The remaining transcripts were then identified by the individual person speaking, or just “researcher”. Nicole’s noticing of the language signified her comfort in challenging other researchers in
the room, and interrupted our slippage into the traditional and hierarchical forms of research. She unsettles this, and left us with a deeper recognition and reminder of the power of language in creating equity. The conversational nature of CBR does not mean there is an absence of conflict. Heaney describes conversation as moving from “one frame of reference to another, from knower to knower, being modified, amended, revised, abridged, contradicted, focused, and broadened in cross-disciplinary reinterpretation. It is heterogenetic, yielding many truths” (Heaney, 2000, p.115). Like a family that routinely knows one another habits, the conversation easily flowed from Nicole’s assertions, to other discussions.

When Does Ethics Oppress and When Does it Protect?

CBR, because it is contingent, ambiguous, complex, paradoxical, and relational also means that in the traditional view of academia, it is a rife landscape of ethics. The institutional ethical systems have been established to ensure maximum safety and minimum risk for research participants. CBR requires us to not be detached researchers, and to read ourselves into the work; all of which, in the eyes of institutional ethics, may be seen as ways of not maintaining the safety of participants. In time, we hope that with more CBR showing up and as the pods of CBR find other another, that this will shape and influence the institutional ethics process to consider the ethics of CBR, and the relational investment that this approach calls for.

Nicole created a twelve-minute digital story, “Imprints on my soul.” In fact, if you watch the digital story closely, the text, interspersed like dropped threads through her digital story, when combined, create a powerful poem; an inter-textual subjectivity of her lived experience. She begins with the image of her one and half year old baby, a close up on his feet, because she says, “I have to kiss them everyday. I love feet…I just think feet have been everywhere.” Her story begins with baby’s feet, and ends with the image of herself, walking in the annual Take Back the Night March. She bears a hand painted sign that reads, “No matter if I walk it, or work it, I have a right to be safe.”

In the midst of Nicole’s digital story, she placed an image of a man. The image was taken when she and Tammy (fellow peer-researcher, and friend) were taking pictures for the study, and a John had approached them. A man, neatly dressed, mid-fifties, loosely tucked golf shirt, stepped out from his red Mercedes and asked them for a date. Laughingly, Tammy and Nicole both said they were not working anymore, and he growled back with some mumbling about them being too old anyway. While walking away, returning to his emblem, they snapped pictures of him. The “Consent to be Photographed Form” that we use to photograph someone just did not seem appropriate in this moment. In Nicole’s digital story, she had included this image of the John. While wanting to maintain the integrity of Nicole’s work, and balancing my own professional ethics and commitment to my institutional ethics board, I expressed our dilemma that we did not have his consent to use his photograph. And, although taken from behind, it was discernable enough to be recognizable. I asked Nicole what she would like to do, and if she had any thoughts of how to handle this. I acknowledged that I thought we were protecting the John and not protecting Nicole in this particular situation. Nicole, in her wisdom and creativity, kept the image, in her digital story, but placed a black box over the John, with the text: “I don’t have ethical permission to use this John’s photo, so I had to cover him up.”

“Since I’ve received the Camera”: The Ethics of What Gets Opened Up

“….what I’ve recognized in the last few weeks since I’ve received the camera is that…like I have gone from one extreme to the other with my emotions right…I’ve done therapy, I’ve done counseling, I’ve done the steps, I’ve done this and I really thought that I was at a place in my life where I had acceptance regarding the lifestyle that I had, and through some of the experiences and some of the situations and stuff – I suffer from terminal uniqueness and I feel like nobody can fucking understand what I have gone through right? And like the sheer terror – I don’t want to say terror but for lack of a better word – that I feel…like it baffles me that I have been out of the sex trade for six years and I am still brought to tears and to the point of anxiety when I think about it…And that’s what I struggle with.” (Tammy, Peer Researcher, 2007)

Through this process we are learning that recovering from the sex trade is a life long process. We are learning that there are many women trapped in the sex trade, and there is a lack of resources to support them. We are learning that they are trapped within a society that is renders these women silenced, violated, and invisible. The group of peer researchers has been out of the sex trade for various amounts times, ranging from one year to seven years. In this process, and in particular, utilizing photo-voice, has asked this group of women to return to some of the places they lived, to some of the places that still haunt them. As Tammy told, us, “I have quit this study seven times since I’ve started.” But something shifts for her on a personal level, learning and healing from the process and then she recommits. As researchers engaging in CBR, what ethical and moral responsibility do we have when things are opened, or, when there are “triggers?” Or, that in letting others see into their lives, the women did not realize that they had experienced and suffered unimaginable crimes. Viki V, in particular was triggered through the process, and she weaved it into the photovoice: “It doesn’t seem as bad until you get someone from the outside looking in and they’re horrified
and shocked and disgusted. So that's a trigger.”

“And, It Wasn’t Based on Being Saved…”

this gentleness we learn
from what we can’t heal.
(Wallace, 1985, p.77)

In his Keynote address for the Community-Based Research Network Symposium, Randy Toeker, spoke of how “CBR is partnering with those who have been wounded, “not incapacitated” (2004). CBR is about process, and about ‘what happens’, yet it is also a teacher and an archaeologist, for when we tear at the spider’s web, we discover, what Nicole writes as the “imprints on her soul”; the sometimes brutal tracings of social inequity.

At one of our last research meetings, the women spoke of how, they surprisingly, experienced healing from the study. So, we continue our journey together, learning, and holding the new knowledge of the gentleness that we learn when we accept our wounds, some that will never heal, and some that will:

Nicole: ….it was so healing and therapeutic, and it was probably easier and more pertinent and quicker to do it this way then it was to lie on a couch…doing therapy...

Viki: Yup me too. I think it was because we were focused on something else, and it was like, a side-effect, of it, like I didn’t come in here to be healed, we came in to do some work, and it was side-benefit, and if it ever shifted to “Come in and have a benefit” it would be like…(they all laugh and gesture a flipping a finger).

Nicole: But the way it was done for me was, it was a process of empowerment, in that way that in the end there will a result, an exhibit and things like that, and we were paid well, and that helped too. But there was no shame in it, it was based on doing something for your community, giving back…for me it was part of my living amends, that’s just for me, so that maybe I can help someone who sees my picture. That’s what attracted me to it, and then all the other stuff as well. It was well rounded, it involved community on a topic that I feel absolutely passionate about, I know other sex trade workers that are retired or still working, who feel the same way. It was really well rounded, and it wasn’t based on being saved.

Engaging in CBR is about all the good things we already know, such as community-university collaborations, social action, programmatic changes, and influences on policy. It is also about recognizing the wounds of those we work with, as well as our own. When we speak from and hear with our wounds, we find a place of simplistic humanity, seasoned in our bones. It means discovering and meeting at points of interstices and junctures that can only be met by people of difference coming together. Perhaps that is why we are compelled by CBR; driven by a belief in social justice, combined with a conviction of the need for untold stories to be voiced, to be heard, and perhaps, quite simply, to have someone bear witness to our “stubborn particulars of grace” (Wallace, 1987, p.1).

References


Risky Business: Plato for the Poor?

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The nature of university-community collaborations in three Canadian radical humanities are examined for their levels of commitment and community engagement and their preparedness to be changed by their encounter with the radical humanities. Do these programmes really enact social justice?

The living humanities still have the same possibilities that produced the marvel of politics in Athens, only now in a radical way as an instrument of justice for the poor.

Shorris, 2000, p. 111

Programme of Radical Humanities

In 1997, journalist and social critic Earl Shorris published Riches for the Poor: The Clemente Course in the Humanities, which outlined his research into the nature and scope of poverty across the United States and his proposed solution to interrupt the cycle of poverty. “Perhaps no better definition can be made for poverty in contemporary America,” Shorris asserts, “than to say it is the life of necessity, with all the violence the Greeks found in that word. To live in poverty, then, is to live according to the rules of force, which push people out of the free space of public life into the private concerns of mere survival” (2000, p. 32). To help people move from the impoverished and constrained space of mere survival entails addressing significant power differentials within society that regulate relative poverty and affluence and providing students the reflective space and tools necessary to become fully engaged citizens, to join the viva activa (the active life), a life based on action and choice. For Shorris, the humanities provide the answer. Built on the notion of Socratic or maieutic dialogue, in which the teacher acts as a “midwife of the mind,” Shorris’ programme would remain vital and responsive, grounded in its social context: “As Socrates would have it, nothing about the operation of the course is fixed, dead; its exists in dialogue, which begins with the idea that the poor are human and that the proper celebration of their humanity is in the public world, as citizens” (Shorris 2000, p. 11).

Shorris’s programm, the Clemente Course, was named after the Roberto Clemente family guidance centre in lower Manhattan, a facility that provides counselling to poor people in their own language and in their own community. A number of iterations of the Clemente Course, all individually developed and named, but based on Shorris’ principles, have been established in Canada, Mexico, Australia and the United States through a diverse range of partnerships among community agencies; post-secondary institutions; churches; and government organizations. Each programme reflects not only its social context but also the nature and values of its constituent people and organizations. This paper examines the various levels of commitment and community engagement the partner universities undertake as well as their preparedness to be changed by their encounter with the radical humanities—much riskier business than initially imagined.

Three Canadian Programmes

We focus on three Canadian programmes, based on research conducted as part of a two year, mixed methods research project, Providing Access to Transformational Learning for Non-Traditional Adult Learners: A Study of the Clemente Programme as a Model for Lifelong Learning. Utilizing case study methodology, we examine radical humanities programmes across Canada that offer entry-level liberal arts university courses to non-traditional learners and interrogate the nature of their conceptualizations of community-university partnerships. After a brief description of each programme, we explore the assumptions and values underlying each programme; resulting practical decisions; and the role of the university as a site of social justice.
Storefront 101 Calgary, AB established in September 2003

Storefront 101 is a community-based collaborative initiated by city community worker Claire Dorian-Chapman in response to positive reports about Vancouver’s Humanities 101, Canada’s first Clemente type programme. Representatives from a range of agencies and institutions brought their expertise to the planning table: The City of Calgary Community & Neighbourhood Services; Alberta Human Resources & Employment; Athabasca University; St. Mary’s University College; Calgary Community Adult Learning Association; The University of Calgary; and The Mustard Seed street agency. Initial pilot programme funding was provided by Calgary Community Adult Learning Association while the Calgary Foundation Community Grants Programme funded the following year. 13 week courses run each fall and winter term, with subjects including: Histories of the Prairie West, Human Behaviour, English Literature, Fine Art, Philosophy, and Creative Writing and Eastern Religions. Instructors come from several Alberta public and private post-secondary institutions and the courses are accredited through St. Mary’s University College. Students receive classroom instruction three hours weekly at Ambrose University College and two and a half hours weekly of small group tutorial at The Mustard Seed. Storefront 101 is the only Canadian programme in which students are able to receive academic credit for the coursework.

Discovery University, Ottawa ON established in March 2005

Rev. Deborah Dempsey, minister of First Baptist Church in downtown Ottawa, read about the success of Shorris’ New York course for the homeless and thought it met the church’s mission to be socially active in Ottawa’s downtown core. With Marg Eisner, a member of First Baptist’s congregation and Chair of its Service Commission, Deborah presented the idea to the congregation and quickly formed community links. The first course of Discovery University, drawing heavily on the planning documents and processes of Calgary’s Storefront 101, was piloted in March 2005 on a no-cost basis, supported by in-kind donations. The University of Ottawa and Saint Paul University are academic partners, with community support coming from The Ottawa Mission for Men; St. Joe’s Women’s Centre; Cornerstone/Le Piler; Centre 454; The Well; and Shepherds of Good Hope. Subsequent courses have been supported by various foundations but funding remains temporary. Discovering Fiction, the initial course, was followed by courses in critical thinking, literature and composition, and ethics. Non-credit courses run for ten weeks, with weekly two hour classes at the University of Ottawa and hour and a half tutorials at First Baptist Church.

Humanities 101, Thunder Bay, ON Established August 2005

Inspired by a Reader’s Digest article about the Vancouver programme, Christina van Barneveld of the Faculty of Education at Lakehead University spearheaded the idea of creating a Clemente style programme. Van Barneveld’s enthusiasm for the project quickly spread and, with the support of the Dean of Education, she convened an operational planning committee. She invited professors from across the university and community representatives, “anyone who was interested potentially in trying to develop a programme like this or even think about it” (C. van Barneveld, interview, September 12, 2007). John Anthony, a masters social work student, conducted a needs assessment that formed the basis of the operational plan. The first course was offered in the fall of 2005 and uses an “inclusive and community-driven approach” (van Barneveld 2007, p. 2). Humanities 101 offers a non-credit, twelve week course each fall on the campus of Lakehead University with a variety of modules in the Humanities and Social Sciences taught by a number of volunteer instructors. Classes are three hours a week with no tutorials.

Community-University Collaboration: Assumptions and Values

Each of the programmes has a mission to provide access to university-level courses by recognizing and removing both internal and external barriers to learning. Material barriers are countered through the provision of free tuition, course texts and materials, childcare, transportation costs, and meals or snacks. Non-material barriers are more challenging to determine and try to ameliorate, but are addressed in the programmes’ goals. For instance, Humanities 101 attempts to “remove barriers – like poverty – that would allow community members to participate in a university-level educational experience” (Humanities 101: A Community University Initiative at Lakehead University Operation Plan, 2004). Underlying each of the programmes is a belief in the power of education to create a reflective space in which students can develop critical thinking capacities. Discovery University aims “to provide opportunity for persons experiencing homelessness or living on low-income to develop critical thinking skills and to enhance self-awareness, competency, and autonomy. By providing an opportunity for these individuals who might otherwise not be able to access university, the programme enables students to learn new ideas, and in the process to learn more about themselves” (Tutor Handbook). The Storefront 101 programme has as a central philosophy the need to empower and help realize “our potential as individuals and our role in society” through the study of the humanities because the “study of these disciplines is powerful and liberating.” Furthermore, the programme seeks to “question the inequitable distribution of knowledge and culture” in society. As part of its mission, Storefront 101 will “make its students rich in understanding” (Storefront 101 Working Committee Notes, 2004)
Nature of the University Involvement

Both the community partners and the universities involved in each of the three radical humanities programmes implicitly or overtly support a view of education as potentially liberatory and transformative. However, each community or academic body is animated by a unique configuration of values, assumptions, missions and practices that imbue the radical humanities programmes in particular, but often ignored, ways. We were curious about how the constituent academic partners viewed their roles; levels of engagement with the community; decision-making processes; and response to their involvement in the programme. Further, because addressing the inequitable distribution of power is a central tenet in Shorris’ vision, we also wondered if and how the three programmes queried their part in social power relations.

Of the three programmes, *Humanities 101* is the most clear about the academic-community relationship. The programme will “acquaint students with the potential benefits of higher education experience” and will “introduce students to the excitement and interest that accompanies the discovery and creation of knowledge.” The programme is housed through Lakehead University’s Faculty of Education, van Barneveld liaises directly with potential faculty at her institution, and syllabi are developed in-house. The Programme Director attends every class and provides feedback to the instructors regarding the material presented. Less important than subject content is the quality of instruction: van Barneveld seeks out the instructors with the highest reputations for teaching excellence and asks them to volunteer in the programme. All readings and texts are distributed during class and optional assignments are offered. While Lakehead University retains control over the academic domain of the programme, community agencies provide essential contextual information, support, and insight into potential students. They also shaped initial programme planning decisions through their integral involvement in the needs assessment. Several agency representatives continue to sit on the planning committee to provide ongoing evaluation and resources. The respective roles of the academic and community partners are clear: the university relies on the agencies to screen prospective students and refer appropriately; once the students are in the programme, the agency continues to support the non-academic aspects of the students’ lives while the university teaches the academic content.

At *Discovery University*, though the agencies involved are those in the inner city who serve the most challenging aspects of homelessness, poverty, and disability in Ottawa, the programme remains focused solely on its educational aims, though it does gather detailed background on students and their involvement with social agencies. Applications must include references from social agencies, which are followed up by programme staff. However, interest or intervention in students’ lives is firmly discouraged as the focus of the programme is education. The University of Ottawa and Saint Paul University alternate select and cover the cost of instructors; instructors develop course outlines in consultation with the working committee. Classes are held at The University of Ottawa and tutorials at First Baptist Church. Students are given a binder of readings at the beginning of the term and are expected to prepare for each class. Instructors present the material during their Friday afternoon lectures and tutors follow up with more detailed discussion the following Wednesday evening. Both tutors and instructors have a place at the working committee, where academic matters are decided. However, there is little communal dialogue about course development or classroom support.

The academic involvement at *Storefront 101* has been more fluid than in the other programmes, reflecting the shifting nature of its partnerships. St. Mary’s University College was invited in the early stages to be the accrediting academic body for the programme and all course outlines and instructor decisions passed through its Academic Council for approval. Because students in the programme are registered as St. Mary’s students, they receive an official transcript upon completion of the course, with either an audit notation or a letter grade. This necessitates attention to the academic rigor of each course and adherence to standards around contact hours, readings, and assignments. If students want credits, they need to receive passing grades in assignments. However, following the first year of the programme, focus groups with students revealed a concern with the non-academic needs of students, the material and non-material barriers surrounding them. The committee recommended that “these barriers would be more effectively addressed if the programme was housed in a community organization that provide comprehensive learners supports [sic]” (*Support and Evaluation of Storefront 101, 2004*). Already involved in the working committee, The Mustard Seed, a humanitarian agency serving the homeless of Calgary, was the obvious choice: its range of resources including emergency shelter, education programmes, counselling services, and addiction support met the material barriers students identified. The Mustard Seed became the fiscal agent for the programme and then its organizational housing. Over the next few years, decision-making for all aspects of the programme, including course development, gradually shifted until decisions were made internally at The Mustard Seed and brought to the working committee for information only. The need for more academic power in the decision-making was noted when a problematic course outline was submitted to St. Mary’s for approval, with no prior consultation. Since then, determining the roles of the respective partners in the programme has become a contested space within the programme, largely circulating around unarticulated notions of the programme’s mission as primarily academic or social.
“The university itself must not be overlooked as a site of praxis”

All of these programmes are predicated on the idea that education can change people—that exposure to ideas found within the humanities (and in *Humanities 101*’s case the social sciences) can help form a reflective space within which students can begin to resituate themselves in relation to their environment: to become more fully engaged citizens. When we first began the research project, we had also assumed a common desire for social justice among the programmes, based on their founding in the work of Shorris, which argues for the need to counter the forces oppressing the poor by creating new social structure, “one that interferes with the mirror of force at its inception” (Shorris 2000, p. 55). However, when we directly asked programme planners about their missions, a desire for social change was seldom articulated; rather, based on a belief that education should be available to all who desire it, programmes were most intent on providing access to the university setting. The notion of access was not problematized, nor was the role of the university or the community in changing social structures and power relations examined.

Yet, the discourse of social justice was operating in other ways, through the convictions of individuals involved in the project and their assumptions of the foundational aspect of social justice in Shorris’work or of the importance within their own professional and personal lives. For instance, Doug West, a political science instructor in *Humanities 101*, introduced notions of community development and modelled collaborative learning and decision-making as well as encouraged students to take part in local initiatives around sustainable food. In *Storefront 101*, a number of working committee members and tutors are local activists, involved in literacy and peace initiatives and brought practices born from these activities to the programme. The ethics course in *Discovery University*, taught by Eileen Kerwin-Jones, grounded philosophical debate in the contemporary issues of sex-trade trafficking and Canadian homelessness.

On a larger, institutional scale, the academic partners responded in a variety of ways to the possibility of social justice. Handel Wright argues that universities have the potential to be powerful sites for social justice. In particular, he speaks of their ability to breach dichotomies of academic/community; academic/non-academic work; theory/practice; and text/lived cultures: “the university itself must not be overlooked as a site of praxis, a site where issues of difference, representation, and social justice, and even what constitutes legitimate work are being contested” (2003, p. 808). Through their involvement in programmes of radical humanities, the universities signalled their troubling of notions of what constituted legitimate access, learning, and representation. They privileged collaborative processes and questioned the typical allocation of resources: instead of reserving Plato for the elite, they were offering him to the poor. But were they actually making any changes to social structures? In Edward Taylor’s terms, were we “willing to transform ourselves [and our institutions] in the process of helping our students transform” (2006, p. 92).

Contested Spaces/Risky Business

Individuals and institutions risked in various ways. Van Barneveld was a new, untenured faculty; her dedication to a radical humanities project was risky to her career trajectory. Because of their seniority and administrative positions, the academics supporting *Discovery University* were less exposed. While faculty at St. Mary’s supported the *Storefront 101* programme, as students graduated from the programme and joined St. Mary’s as full-time degree students, the institution was challenged in its commitment to social justice, as encoded in its foundational mission. What was social justice and how could it be realized? As a result, the university examined barriers within its structure and looked for ways to become more accessible. A food bank was established; issues around poverty and homelessness were raised in social justice meetings; attention was paid to how staff interacted with students with visible differences and deliberate attempts were made to offset restrictive practices. As well, three St. Mary’s faculty members, having taught within *Storefront 101*, changed some of their teaching practices to more deliberately build safe, reflective spaces. But was it enough? Believing with Wright that the university can exert a powerful praxis, St. Mary’s members on the *Storefront 101* working committee began to raise concerns about circulating discourses, hidden assumptions, and unexamined power relations that were subtly but effectively shifting the principles and the practices of the programme. As with any attempt to shift power relations, the work is ongoing. However, what the experience of all three programmes has shown is that even minimal change cannot occur without sustained attention to the nature of our discourses and practices; the assumptions underlying our partnerships; and the impact of our programmes. If we are not willing to face the risks and engage in the necessary conversations, at best the programmes will be ineffective; at worst, they will enact the very oppressions we claim to oppose.

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References


Community-University Engagement through Social Finance: How University Endowments Can Build Stronger Communities

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The building of momentum and scale in community-university engagement has been paralleled by the growth of capital pools in Canadian universities. Below-market program-related investments of endowment assets and market-rate economically targeted investments of pension funds can channel capital to affordable housing, green technologies and social enterprises that generate important community benefits.

Introduction

This paper examines the question of how university endowments can be mobilized to strengthen Canadian communities. This is a new question for both the advocates of community-university engagement and the stewards of university capital pools. As such, answering it fully will require both groups to devote time and effort to understand each other, find common ground, and embark on joint activities that meet their respective objectives and ways of working.

The Growth of Community-University Engagement

In recent years, advocates of community-university engagement (CUE) have been building scale and momentum across Canada. In fact, in Gladwell’s (2000) terms, CUE may be approaching a tipping point in this country. As competition for student and faculty recruitment has intensified, a growing number of universities are putting civic education and community service closer to the centre of their brands—betting that enhancing their reputations as socially responsible institutions will pay dividends in attracting and retaining their core “customers” and in the additional benefit of strengthening support from governments, the media and the general public. At the same time, faculty members and their community partners are expanding their networks. CUExpo, the new Community-Based Research Network, the Canadian Alliance for Community Service Learning and a new journal, Manifestation, are all gaining members and building their programs. And there is solid support for CUE among two granting councils—SSHRC and CIHR—as well as a number of foundations and, more slowly though, some governments (see, for example, Jackson, 2007a; Flicker and Savan, 2006; Fryer, 2007; Stein, 2007; Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, 2005).

The Need for Investment in Communities

Advocates of CUE in universities and communities are keenly aware that community-based organizations and municipal governments face major challenges but, by and large, are cash-strapped. For example, decades of chronic under-investment by the public and private sectors in affordable housing has left too many Canadians homeless and low-income families spending far too high a percentage of their income on housing. Another challenge relates to environmental and renewable energy technologies. We must move quickly from concept to testing to rollout in order to reduce pollution and greenhouse gases, clean up our rivers, reduce our reliance on oil, and increase the percentage of energy produced by renewable sources. These are just two areas in which the targeted investment of significant sums of capital would generate important benefits for citizens in every community across the country.

2 E-mail: edward_jackson@carleton.ca. The author is grateful for the advice, assistance and inspiration of Tim Brodhead, Jennifer De Bien, Tim Draimín, Jed Emerson, Al Etmanski, Karim Harji, Tessa Hebb, Michael Lewkowitz, Laurie Mook, Jack Quarter, Luther Ragin and Sonja Vanek.
The Growth of University Capital Pools

While community-university engagement has been growing, so have the capital pools of Canadian universities. Spurred by a number of factors—effective asset management, more professional and aggressive private fundraising, a substantial and ongoing inter-generational transfer of wealth that has yielded a rise in donations for scholarships, chairs and named buildings, and the accumulation of many years of pension contributions by Canada’s aging professoriate—university endowments and pension funds have expanded significantly over the past decade.

University Endowments

The combined assets of university endowments in Canada are estimated to be over $10 billion. The 15 largest university endowments account for about 80% of this total. These pools have become important sources of comparative advantage for post-secondary institutions, funding new facilities, programs and scholarships (Tam, 2007). Overall, they are managed professionally—and conservatively—by investment managers who are, in turn, overseen by investment committees and trustees. University endowments in Canada have seldom been the focus of divestment campaigns targeting specific companies or countries, at least to date.

Pension Funds

Pension funds have also grown dramatically at Canadian universities. The nine largest university and college pension plans manage $20 billion in assets. (This is not a large sum by sector standards, however; the top 100 pension funds in Canada manage nearly $600 billion; see Benefits Canada, 2006). Investment professionals manage these pools on a day to day basis, and are usually overseen by employer and employee trustees. Most of the funds’ assets are held in the shares of major corporations (almost 40%), bonds (30%), and cash, plus some in real estate and mortgage investments (5%), as well (Cakebread, 2006). Like all pension funds, university pension funds are regulated by the federal Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions. Some university pension funds have been targeted by campaigns for divestment of the shares of companies or countries associated with human rights abuses and environmental degradation (Berthiaume, 2007).

The Emergence of Social Finance

Along with the growth of both community-university engagement and university capital pools, a new approach to financing civil society has emerged in recent years: social finance. Social finance refers to the “space on the financial continuum between high financial value and no social value returns (eg. traditional financial investment vehicles) and no financial value but high social returns (eg. grants)” (Draimin, 2007). In the United States and the United Kingdom especially, and to some extent in Canada, private financial institutions, multi-sector bodies, community development corporations, credit unions, and other organizations are creating a range of new products in various asset classes that offer solid financial returns along with social and environmental benefits (see Emerson and Spitzer, 2007).

Social finance moves the concept of civil-society financing away from a reliance on government grants, which has typified the revenue strategies of non-profits and charities in Canada, to an approach that blends market tools with government support. However, the intent of those advocating for social finance in the foundation, non-profit and university sectors is not to give the state an excuse to reduce its support, or exit, the third sector. Rather, it is to expand the range of financial products and services that are available to organizations with a social mission in order to maximize third-sector sustainability and impact.

A recent survey has shown that while only about half of Canadian non-profit leaders have heard of the concept of social finance, fully three-quarters agree that “the most effective way of providing significant capital to the non-profit sector is by facilitating access to private finance as well as to broader capital markets” (van Bentum and Leithead, 2008: 3).

Program-Related Investments by Foundations

An important social-finance strategy for endowments and foundations is known as program-related investing, which involves the provision of loans, guarantees or equity to charities to advance their program mission. One example is a group of foundations that has pledged $1 million in financing to lever additional private sector capital to enable a non-profit, operating in a fast-paced and intense real estate market, to acquire land for projects to house the homeless. Program-related investments (PRIs) entail below-market rates of return and, frequently, reliance on government subsidies, guarantees and tax credits (see Hebb, 2008).

Among large entities, the Ford Foundation has been a leader in this field. A smaller institution, the Heron Foundation, has intentionally built a very large portfolio of PRIs across several asset classes. This includes loans to community development financial institutions for affordable housing, minority business and urban revitalization. Heron has also
Economically Targeted Investments by Pension Funds

“Economically targeted investments (ETIs) are market-rate investments which also provide long-term economic benefits to targeted communities and sectors” (Godeke, 2006: 49). In the United States, a wide range of state and municipal pension funds use ETIs to promote the collateral benefits of urban revitalization, affordable housing and minority business-development while prudently exercising their fiduciary duty (Hebb, 2008). ETIs are now on the agenda of some Canadian pension funds, but implementation here, so far, lags well behind that of the US experience.

For ETIs to be most successful in optimizing their impacts, pension funds need to work through intermediaries with specialized expertise. In the United States, the 40-year old Housing Investment Trust (HIT) of the AFL-CIO invests pension funds in housing and real estate projects built by union labour. With $3.7 billion in assets, HIT generates a wide range of collateral benefits for communities while it provides its investors with competitive rates of return. Among other activities, HIT has embarked on a $1-billion Gulf Coast Revitalization Program to rebuild housing and infrastructure in the wake of Hurricane Katrina (Housing Investment Trust, 2008).

In Canada, one notable example of an ETI intermediary is Concert Properties, a real estate company set up by a group of unions in British Columbia to mobilize pension fund investment with the aim of building affordable and mixed housing and other real estate projects, using union labour. Research indicates that Concert Properties and its financing arm, Mortgage One, generates substantial net benefits to local communities, workers and taxpayers in general (Carmichael, 2003).

As Hebb (2008) emphasizes, intermediaries need to engage with community partners, which can represent community interests in structuring ETI-funded projects. Moreover, community partners can access government subsidies that, ultimately, can provide a given project with acceptable rates of risk and return for pension investors. In Ottawa, the Carleton Centre for Community Innovation has worked with the Staff Pension Plan of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), Alterna Savings Credit Union and the Ottawa Community Loan Fund (OCLF) to develop a model that embeds such cooperation among a pension fund, a financial institution and a community-based non-profit. The PSAC fund has invested $2 million in a GIC held at Alterna. In turn, the credit union has pledged to make available an equivalent quantum of funds, on a revolving basis, for affordable housing projects in the Ottawa region. For its part, OCLF will animate the structuring of housing projects with a wide range of governmental and community organizations. This model allows the pension fund to exercise its fiduciary duty while stimulating collateral benefits for the community (Harji, 2008).

Conclusion

Community-university engagement is growing in Canada at the same time as new forms of social finance are emerging. And there are concrete examples of how university endowments and pension funds could invest in affordable housing, green technologies and social enterprise while still maintaining their fiduciary duty. In doing so, universities would enhance their brands, attract new students and faculty, and earn greater public support. There are many good reasons to intensify and broaden efforts to make this happen. Research, education and new intermediaries and products all will be key to success over the next decade. It’s time to get to work.
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Aligning Tenure and Promotion Procedures for Community-University Engagement: Dialogue for Action

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Introduction

One of the major challenges to the growing movement for community-university engagement is the nature of traditional academic tenure and promotion (T&P) procedures, which tends to reward disengagement. In Canada, it is time for a thorough discussion by those most affected by this barrier—university faculty members and their community allies—to examine the various dimensions of this challenge, and of potential ways forward.

Levering New Networks and Publications

For new and mid-career academics seeking tenure or promotion, it is helpful that there is an array of new academic networks that organize conferences and sponsor peer-reviewed publications on the substance of community-university engagement. The Community University Exposition (CUExpo), the Canadian Alliance for Community Service-Learning, the pan-Canadian Community-Based Research Network, the Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, Action Research and Manifestation offer engaged scholars and activists new collaborative, presentation and publishing opportunities.

Applying the Two-Track Approach

And, at the same time, some potential models exist already with regard to the T&P process per se. In some extension, medical and public-health schools in the United States, a two-track approach is employed: one for more traditional scholarly production and the other more attuned to community outreach activities and results (see, for example, Jones & Gold, 2001). More generally, in the professions—notably, health, education, law, and social work—engagement with external constituencies carries a higher value in T&P assessments. However, many disciplinary-based departments and faculties in the social sciences, as well as in the natural sciences and engineering, remain almost entirely driven by the more traditional T&P criteria of publications in what are deemed “high-quality” scholarly journals and book presses.

Re-conceptualizing Scholarship

At a more fundamental level, efforts are underway in some quarters to re-conceptualize scholarship itself. Boyer (1996; 1990) argues that scholarship entails four inter-related dimensions: discovery, integration, application and teaching. For its part, community-based learning integrates, rather than isolates, all four aspects (Ahmed et al, 2004). Likewise, community-based research is a collaborative, cross-disciplinary, integrating process (Maurana et al, 2001). In the field of public health, a new term—community-engaged scholarship—is being actively applied by some schools for T&P purposes. In fact, the Community-Campus Partnerships for Health initiative has published the Community Engaged Scholarship Tool Kit to guide universities in assessing academic performance that generates new knowledge, advances professional practice or achieves a balance between the two. Originality of thought and effective dissemination of knowledge are essential criteria in any assessment of these three streams of production. The Tool Kit helps faculty members to prepare a portfolio to showcase their service-engaged scholarship for promotion.
Broadening the Peer Review Process

In addition, new ways of broadening the peer-review process have been developed, again with the health field leading the way. Portland State University, for instance, requires the evaluation by peers—and validation through other credible sources of information—of all community-based activity outcomes presented by professors in the T&P process. Community participation in the peer review process is viewed as essential in judging the quality, productivity and impact of outputs from community engagement. Taking this issue to a higher level, the Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (2005) proposes that a national board be established in the US to facilitate a peer review process of community-engaged scholarship by faculty members seeking promotion. A similar recommendation has been advanced for Canada (Flicker and Savan, 2006).

Recognizing the Specificity of Institutional Contexts

Each institution has its own organizational model and culture, resulting in a unique set of challenges and opportunities in the recognition and valuation of community-engaged teaching, research and service. In the case of Carleton University, policy-document review and interviews with key actors in T&P processes indicate that the collective bargaining agreement is a central factor in faculty career advancement. While the Carleton approach provides for considerable flexibility for individuals in a range of disciplines to speak to their strengths in community-engaged performance, there are, nonetheless, concerns about how those efforts are evaluated by the relevant committees at the departmental, Faculty and university-wide levels. For example, community-service learning may be welcomed as a pedagogical innovation, but the extra time CSL requires can reduce the time available to the applicant to, say, produce peer-reviewed journal articles, which has been more highly valued by T&P committees. One solution to this would be to attach a higher value to CSL courses in evaluating a teaching dossier. However, excelling beyond a “baseline” of teaching performance does not necessarily help a candidate applying for tenure or promotion. Another option is to focus on the issue of workload. The collective agreement at Carleton already has an appendix that recognizes the added workload associated with teaching televised courses. This appendix could provide the framework for negotiations over the added workload involved in undertaking CSL.

Conclusion

There is much, therefore, to be done at the level of the individual institution (see Stein, 2007). An ongoing community of practice on community university engagement and tenure and promotion would enable faculty members and their community allies to learn from each other and disseminate effective innovations and practices. At the national level, many networks should be mobilized to examine possible solutions, including CACSL, CBRN, CUExpo, the Canadian Association of University Teachers, the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and others. The challenge of tenure and promotion procedures should not be permitted to unduly limit the growth of the movement for community-university engagement in Canada. A dialogue for action on this issue should be launched and sustained until this obstacle is permanently removed.

References


Developing a Multidimensional Measure of Family Work Demands and Resources for Women

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This paper reports on the process of developing a reliable and valid measure of women’s household demands and resources, integrating both qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

Background

A dominant focus of epidemiological research on women’s well-being has been on the potential health consequences of combining work and family roles. Early studies examining the relationship between women’s health and multiple social roles focused on role occupancy (Hibbard & Pope, 1991). Thus, while the number and combination of social roles held by women were taken into consideration, the specific characteristics of both family and paid work went largely unmeasured. The number of roles occupied turned out to be an inconsistent predictor of women’s health, and led to the search for more multi-faceted explanations to clarify the relationship between women’s roles and health, such as the nature and specific characteristics of the role(s) occupied (Hibbard & Pope, 1993) and the particular economic and social conditions in which women enacted those roles (Arber, 1997).

The shift in research focus from the quantity to the quality of social roles has been most evident in the domain of paid work. A number of conceptual models have been developed which highlight the importance of the psychosocial work environment in the health of employed adults, such as the Job Strain Model (Karasek & Theorell, 1990), and more recently, the Effort-Reward Imbalance Model (Siegrist, 1996). Although the early focus of this research was on men, our understanding of the qualities and characteristics of paid work which impact women’s health has increased greatly over the last two decades (Emslie, Hunt, & Macintyre, 1999a, 1999b).

In contrast to paid work, relatively little is known about the characteristics of family work (e.g. housework, childcare) which may influence well-being (Walters et al. 2002). This lack of research attention is likely the result of numerous factors, ranging from the view of family work as “women’s work” and therefore unimportant, to the many conceptual and measurement difficulties in attempting to accurately characterize such a complex role (Coltrane, 2000). While it is true that considerable progress has been made in documenting the nature and gendered allocation of unpaid family work in Canada over the last several decades, relatively few studies have addressed the potential consequences of household labour on well-being. These are important gaps in the research literature, given the thousands of hours that Canadians in general and women in particular will spend in housework and childcare over a life time (Marshall, 2005).

The limited research which does exist, however, suggests that the conditions of household work vary considerably among women and in ways which impact their mental health. For example, higher levels of depression and anxiety have been found among women reporting family work which is time pressured (Lennon, 1994; Schooler et al. 1984; Walters et al. 1996), highly routine (Lennon, 1994) and lacking in substantive complexity (ie., degree to which performance of the work requires thought and independent judgment) (Schooler et al. 1984). Control over work activities has been identified as particularly critical for promoting health and well-being in the paid work environment, and increasing evidence suggests its importance in the family work environment as well (Chandola et al. 2004; Griffin et al., 2002; Barnett & Shen, 1997). Research suggests that the type of family work task may be important when examining associations between family work and women’s health. For example, several studies have shown that husbands’ lack of participation in child care, but not housework, is related to greater distress among employed women (Rivieres-Pigeon et al. 2002).
emotional labour) has not been traditionally included in family work studies, increasing evidence suggests that more time spent in emotional work is associated with higher levels of depression among women in dual-earner families (Strazdins, 2000; Strazdins et al. 1997). How women perceive the household division of labour may be even more important to their well-being than the actual division of labour (Bird, 1999; Voydanoff and Donnelly, 1999).

However, a major impediment to advances in our understanding of how domestic labour may influence women's well-being is the lack of valid and reliable instruments available to measure the quality of family work. Canadian researchers have drawn attention to the absence of quality information on domestic characteristics contained in large scale government mental/physical health surveys, such as Statistics Canada’s National Population Health Surveys (NPHS) and the Canadian Community Health Surveys (CCHS; Walters et al. 2002). To a large extent, researchers interested in the quality of family work and health have had to rely on single-item measures (Griffin et al. 2002; Chandola et al. 2004) and/or superficial indicators of family work from secondary data sources, such as the number and ages of children in the household (Matthews & Power, 2002; Walters et al. 2002). To date, no comprehensive, multidimensional measure of family work quality is available which: 1) incorporates important family work constructs recently identified in the literature as impacting women’s health; and 2) meets the minimum standard psychometric requirements for validity and reliability.

Building on Karasek and Theorell’s (1990) concepts of workplace demands and control, and incorporating recent theory and research in the area of the household division of labour, gender and health, the objective of the present study is to systematically develop and validate a multidimensional measure of family work demands and resources for women.

Methodology

Following the data-based procedures recommended by Crocker and Algina (1986), three interrelated studies, described in more detail below, will be conducted to develop and gather validity evidence for an instrument designed to assess unpaid family work demands and resources for women. Development and validation of this new measure of family demands and resources will be based largely on the responses of 25-50 year old partnered women with children. We chose this group of women because they comprise a significant proportion of the Canadian female adult population and because these are the ages during which women are most actively involved in their multiple roles. We also chose to restrict the validation of our measure to women. We are aware of the research suggesting that men have increased their participation in family work to some degree over the last several decades (Marshall, 2005) and that men’s physical and mental well-being is influenced by their family roles (Barnett & Hyde, 2001). However, women continue to be largely responsible for the majority of family work in Canada (Marshall, 2005).

Study 1 – Delineation of Key Constructs and Specification of Scale Content

Content specifications will be defined and explicitly written to operationalize the family work demands and resource domains. The initial delineation of the domains will be based on Karasek’s and Theorell’s (1990) demand-control model of job strain.

Quantitative pilot study. As part of a separate telephone survey of family quality, work quality, and health by Dr. Janzen, a preliminary measure of family work demands and resources was developed. Factor analysis of these preliminary items suggested the presence of three factors: time pressure, skill discretion, and decision authority. The steps that follow (literature review and focus groups) will provide the information and substance from which specific items will be acquired and added to the preliminary measure to ensure that all domains relevant to family work demands and resources are best represented.

Literature review of relevant instruments. Based on a review of the literature, existing scales measuring the quality of family work will be examined and items to potentially augment our preliminary scale noted.

Focus groups. Four focus groups, each conducted with 6 to 12 partnered mothers (age 25-50 years of age), will be conducted to assist in further identifying and clarifying the family work demand and resource domains. Potential participants will be invited to take part in the study through several community sources, including advertisements in neighbourhood association newsletters, and posters in the YWCA, community recreation centres and neighbourhood public libraries.

Based on these three sources of information, items will be developed to represent, as much as possible, unidimensionality. To ensure that each of the subscales in the final version of the instrument is both representative of the construct domains and possesses an adequate level of internal consistency, at least 20 items per domain will initially be developed. It is anticipated that the final screening instrument will need to be comprised of 8 to 10 items for each of the three domains in order to achieve a minimum internal consistency of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978).
Study 2 – Preliminary Validation

Expert panel. To gather validity evidence for the instrument, the items will be independently reviewed for relevancy and representativeness by a panel of content experts. The panel of experts will consist of doctoral trained individuals in the area of women and gender studies, sociology, and social epidemiology. Experts who agree to participate in the process will be mailed a questionnaire package including instructions for the content analysis procedure. The task of the expert panel members will be to assess the degree of fit between the items and the domain characteristics to which the items are referenced. Each panel member will independently review the items using the following question: “Using a 5-point Likert-type rating scale anchored by the endpoints: 0 (no fit) to 4 (excellent fit), how well do you think the item reflects the domain specifications it was written to measure?” Throughout the item review process, panel members will be provided with the opportunity to modify, add, or delete items.

Technical quality review. Following item selection for the first empirical field test, the items will undergo a technical quality review by approximately 10 women. These reviewers will be recruited from several sources: 1) advertisements in neighbourhood association newsletters, and posters in the YWCA, community recreation centres and neighbourhood public libraries; and 2) female faculty and staff in the Colleges of Education, Nursing and Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan. The technical reviewers will evaluate the readability, clarity, and appropriateness of the item content and the overall acceptability of each item.

Study 3 – Empirical Validation

First empirical field test. The first empirical field test will consist of a telephone survey of approximately 500 women living in the Saskatoon area. To ensure a broad socioeconomic range of participants, telephone listings will be stratified by geographical area, and an equal number of participants will be randomly selected from each area. In addition to the family work items, sociodemographic information will be collected, including employment status, age, marital status, living arrangement, education, income, and the number and ages of children.

To examine the nature of the samples and identify potential differences among sub-groups of the samples, frequency distributions, correlations, measures of central tendency, and variability will be examined for all demographic and instrument items. To examine the homogeneity and quality of the items, item and scale analyses (including calculation and internal consistency) will be conducted using the LERTAP 5 (Nelson, 2001) computer program. The structure of the instrument will be assessed using exploratory factor analysis. To determine the stability of the factor analysis findings, the overall sample \( n = 500 \) will be randomly partitioned into two subsamples of participants \( n = 250 \) prior to conducting factor analysis. The second subsample will be retained blind for subsequent use in replicating the initial analysis. Furthermore, as an ultimate test of the final exploratory derived solution, confirmatory factor analysis will be conducted using the same overall sample \( n = 500 \) of participants.

Based on the results of the factor analyses and the expert panel review, the statistics for each item will be examined further to determine if the item should be deleted or moved to a more appropriate subscale. This iterative process will continue until the scale reliabilities and item content have stabilized. Additional item analyses will then be conducted to determine the number of items required per subscale while maintaining a minimal internal consistency value of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978).

Second empirical field test. Using the same procedure described above, an additional 500 women will be recruited to participate in the second empirical field test. A subsample of these participants \( n = 100 \) will also be asked to complete the same survey a second time, four weeks after initial administration to assess the stability of the instrument. In addition to the basic sociodemographic questions included in the first empirical test, other measures will be included to provide evidence of convergent and divergent validity.

Study Significance

By systematically developing a valid and reliable measure of family work quality, the proposed study will contribute to advancing our understanding of the complex reality of women’s family lives and the impact of those realities on women’s well-being. Toward this end, researchers can use this measure in combination with other role quality instruments in the areas of paid work, family, and community. In addition, as is the case with paid work quality, this instrument can be used in large scale, national surveys of mental and physical health determinants and outcomes, such as Statistics Canada’s NPHS and CCHS. We hope that the development of this measure will ultimately stimulate other researchers to study family work as a potential determinant of both women’s and men’s well-being, and that this measurement tool will continue to be used and improved upon in the future by us and by other researchers.
References


What Makes It Ours: Lessons Learned 
from the Our Place- Learning in Motion Initiative

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The Our Place- Learning in Motion research initiative used a participatory research approach to explore the barriers to participation and the strategies that promote social inclusion of children and families in the Better Beginnings Better Futures community of South-East Ottawa.

Introduction

Better Beginnings Better Futures is a program of the South-East Ottawa Centre for a Healthy Community (SEOCHC), one of 14 community health and resource centres in Ottawa. BBBF is a community-based program that provides supports and services for parents and caregivers with children 0 to 6 years of age and pregnant women living in the Heatherington/ Albion/ Ledbury/ Fairlea neighbourhoods of South-East Ottawa. BBBF places an emphasis on community development, parent and service provider collaboration, and inter-agency integration and coordination. The Our Place- Learning in Motion research initiative is funded by the Government of Canada's Social Development Partnerships Program.

The qualitative participatory study looked at how Better Beginnings Better Futures, a primary prevention program has contributed to social inclusion in a socially disadvantaged community. Using a participatory action research approach, the Project Coordinator/Researcher and Community Liaison Worker worked closely with the Better Beginnings Better Futures Steering Committee to determine the research questions, develop the methods of data collection, analyze the data, and recommend ways and means to implement strategies to remove barriers to inclusion. This paper will describe the barriers to inclusion that were identified and how this information was used to refine and change existing processes, structures and models of service delivery. Parents, staff and service providers all contributed their own knowledge of their experiences and furthered our understanding of what makes an inclusive community. We will share with you what we have learned about community involvement, access, ownership and strength during the research process.

Literature Review

Extensive research in Europe and in North America has produced a multitude of definitions of social exclusion and social inclusion. To understand one you must understand the other. According to John Pierson, the five components of social exclusion are: 1.Poverty and low income; 2. Lack of access to the job market; 3.Thin or non-existent social supports and networks; 4. The effect of the local area or neighbourhood; and 5. Exclusion from services. When these five components come together and reinforce one another they serve to exclude people from the norms and standards of wellbeing that the majority of people enjoy (Pierson, 2002). Social inclusion has been seen as a response or solution to social exclusion. Research on social inclusion shows that what characterizes inclusive communities is the participation of disadvantaged families in social and health programs and community life (Friendly & Lero, 2002; Social Planning Council, 2007; Watson, et al., 2005).

After a careful review of the literature, the Better Beginnings Better Futures Steering Committee adopted the following definition of social inclusion. For families with young children living in the Better Beginnings Better Futures community, social inclusion includes having access to child development and parental assistance programs. Social inclusion provides the opportunity to lead productive, secure lives while developing the skills and knowledge necessary to participate fully in the community (Villeneuve, 2006, p. 2).
Methods of Data Collection

As the title suggests we are learning in motion. The project used a Participatory Action Research Approach. PAR is defined as doing research with and for people, rather than doing research on them. The focus is on working with people to identify problems, implement solutions, monitor the changes, and assess the outcomes. Participatory methods, equality between researchers and participants, and reflection and action all contribute to both the process and the outcomes (Meyer, 2000). The first task of the Steering Committee and the Project Coordinator was to determine what approach would help us get the answers needed to encourage inclusion, identify the barriers and create strategies to eliminate those barriers that were within the BBBF mandate. The project used a multi-method research strategy. The methodology was made up of five parts: 1) individual interviews 2) focus groups 3) observations 4) archival research and 5) the collection of photographs. Early in the research process the decision was made that the South-East Ottawa Centre for a Healthy Community would establish its own Research Ethics Board (REB). With the assistance of the Research Ethics Coordinator at Carleton University an REB was created and was comprising of staff, volunteers, community members and local social service agency representatives.

The first round of interviews with the community members was completed by other community members. Interviewers who spoke multiple languages were recruited and trained. All other interviews were conducted by the Researcher. Focus groups were held with staff, volunteers and community members to disseminate information and to ask more specific questions. The results of the focus groups and interviews were compiled in a report entitled Our Place (Jenkins, 2008). The report summarizes identified barriers to participation in BBBF programs and services, the strategies implemented to reduce exclusion and suggested further strategies to increase the inclusion and participation of families and children in community life. A small working group composed of staff, participants and a social agency representative worked with the Researcher to analyze the data and present the results.

Participants. The participants in the study were drawn from the Better Beginnings Better Futures community. They included: Past and present participants of the BBBF programs; Staff of the BBBF programs; Members of the BBBF Steering Committee; and Volunteers. Both past and present participants of BBBF programs tended to be women with young children (0-6) who lived in families with a number of risk factors associated with child development (families living on low income or social assistance; new Canadians; and lone parent families). They had all lived or continue to live in the South-East Ottawa neighbourhoods of Heatherington, Albion, Ledbury and Fairlea. The staff of BBBF included the Family Visitors, Playgroup Staff, Program Managers, and Community House Staff. The BBBF Steering Committee is made up of BBBF staff members, volunteers, community members, SEOCHC committee members and local service providers. The volunteers consisted of present or former community members and program participants. Of the approximately 900 households that make up the BBBF community, we tried to draw on participants from all areas within our geographic boundaries and from a variety of language and cultural groups. In total, 83 individuals were interviewed and fifty-six individuals participated in the focus groups, with some participants participating on more than one occasion. Observations were conducted on over forty separate occasions in the community, at Playgroup and at the Community House.

Results: Barriers and Strategies

A barrier can be anything that prevents an individual or family from accessing programs or services at BBBF. Barriers can be attitudinal, administrative, architectural or programmatic. In this section we have included five major areas of concern and possible strategies to address the concerns.

Access to Information. Many participants cited a lack of access to information about services as a major barrier to participation. This was particularly true of individuals who could not speak English or French. A number of people commented on the lack of available staff or volunteers in the Community House who speak different languages, especially at the reception area. Participants often relied on friends to provide information and this information was not always complete or accurate. Newcomers to the community often did not know where to access reliable information. Participants expressed a need for more information on what services BBBF provides, who is eligible for services, that services are offered free of charge, and hours of operation. The suggested strategies to increase the flow of information included establishing welcoming committees for new residents and new immigrants, having more advertisements and flyers in different languages and having a web-site with program information available in different languages.

Confidentiality. During the initial interviews in the fall 2006, several participants expressed a concern that there was a lack of confidentiality at BBBF and that their personal information was being discussed with other people. The neighbourhoods within the BBBF community are made up of high density housing and living so closely together makes it difficult for residents to maintain privacy. The Community House is often crowded and staff must share work spaces. Finding a place to meet privately with other staff or participants can be challenging. Concerns centered on small groups of staff and residents discussing people and events in the kitchen area of the Community House. To protect their own privacy, some people are reluctant to participate in BBBF programs and services.
In response to these concerns, multilingual focus groups were held in the spring of 2007. The Researcher provided a brief review of the training that all staff and volunteers go through when beginning work at BBBF and SEOCHC. Participants were asked to share the information with their family and friends. While participants could not pinpoint specific times or situations when confidentiality was breached it was also suggested that BBBF should have information sheets available on the privacy policy and that the information should be available in various languages and easily accessible. It was recommended that all staff discuss the confidentiality policy with new clients and that the community should be reminded to be cautious about discussing personal information in public.

*Cultural Competency.* Initial research indicated that some participants perceived a lack of true understanding of cultural norms and practices on the part of staff and volunteers. It was noted that Ottawa receives the highest percentage of refugees and family-related immigration of any major Canadian centre and the number and variety of cultural communities in Ottawa is multiplying at a significant rate (City of Ottawa, 2004). Concerns were raised about what different cultural groups need or expect from an organization and that there are cultural barriers to accessing help. As SEOCHC and BBBF are committed to providing ongoing cultural sensitivity and knowledge training for all staff, a half-day workshop which included discussions on values, attributes and benefits of an inclusive organization was held during a staff retreat in May 2007. Another suggestion to deal with barriers included developing a volunteer recruitment strategy so that participants could receive culturally sensitive assistance in a variety of languages.

*Programmatic Barriers (Types of programs, delivery of programs).* In 2006, the lack of activities for men and their children was identified as a gap in service at BBBF. There was no programming at BBBF especially designed to meet the needs of men and their children and some fathers feel uncomfortable attending female dominated playgroups. In May 2007, after investigating other programs, Dads & Tots was launched. The drop-in program is designed for men and their children between the ages of 18 months and 5 years. The “men” can be fathers, uncles, grandfathers or any other male who plays a significant role in a child’s life. The planned activities encourage young children to learn through play, with a focus on gross motor and physical activity.

Several people stated that the staff/volunteers of the Extras Neighbourhood Food Cupboard did not treat them in a respectful manner by using either a harsh tone of voice or negative body language. Some people felt that when they refused food for cultural or religious beliefs they were made to feel like they were doing something wrong. Other concerns were raised over the process of choosing who gets served first at Food Cupboard. The lack of formal procedures led to a perception of preferential treatment. In response, a token system where individuals randomly select a number was implemented in October 2007. If people arrive at the Community House after the numbers have been handed out they are served on a first come first serve basis. In an attempt to further reduce the tension in the house a training session on *How to Deal with Difficult Situations* was offered to all staff and regular volunteers.

*Welcoming Practices.* The physical layout of the Community House poses some challenges in terms of welcoming people to our program. The Community House does not have a reception area in the traditional sense. The “office” is located in the kitchen, a traditionally private space in most homes and offices. To reach the office, visitors first must walk down a long hallway, past a lounge area. In an attempt to create a homelike environment staff and volunteers do not wear name tags and therefore are not readily identifiable. In some cases visitors were left wondering to whom they should address their inquiries. Some participants also stated that they felt they were treated differently because they came from a different culture or because they spoke a different language. Similar concerns were raised about Playgroup. It is often difficult for one of the two regular staff members to get to the front door and welcome everyone as they enter.

In response, welcoming practices were introduced. In the spring of 2007, the office staff and volunteers received information on welcoming behaviour. When someone enters the Community House a staff member or volunteer is to greet the person and inquire as to whether or not they need any assistance. The Community House has posted multilingual signs on both the front and back doors encouraging visitors to come in. At Playgroup the two regular staff members have tried to divide up the task of welcoming and saying goodbye to people.

*Discussion: Lessons Learned*

When this project began, there was a great deal of discussion and confusion about the concept of “social inclusion”. However when people started talking about their own definition of inclusion, almost all of the definitions spoke to some aspect of BBBF’s management approach and value system. Better Beginnings Better Futures operates from a “management from beside” approach which places an emphasis on the relationships between managers, staff, volunteers and community members. The characteristics of this management style include process orientation, people centeredness, hiring from within, democratic leadership, boundary diffusion and modelling. The BBBF program is also guided by a set of values and tenets. Individual and environmental enhancement, accessibility, non-stigmatizing, holistic, involvement of the family and the community and integration with current service agencies are some of the values that guide the day to day work at BBBF. In this final section, we will share with you what we have learned about...
community involvement, access, ownership and strength during the research process.

Inclusion involves making choices. What creates inclusion for some means exclusion for others. With the goal of creating a warm, home-like environment, there is limited use of signage at the Community House. "My friends describe the Community House as the ‘family home’ where there is love, family support, socialization and family feeling.” For others, the lack of a traditional office setting creates barriers. “I don’t know when it is a good time to come to the house. I am unsure of the hours and when different services are offered. If I am not greeted, I sometimes feel that I came at the wrong time or an inconvenient time.” (Translation from Arabic)

Inclusion requires both time and effort. BBBF strives to maintain a people-centered approach to their model of service delivery. Relationship building is central to all activities at BBBF. A number of the staff stated that finding a connection with the people they work with is essential to their being able to do their job effectively. “When I go to a home I see the client as an equal it’s not a question of me being the professional and the client has to just listen to what I suggest. My goal is to establish a relationship. It has its setbacks. It takes more time but in the long run it is worth it. I may not be as efficient but I may be more successful.”

Inclusion means taking the needs of all people into consideration. Nearly, everyone talked about the word “family” when referring to BBBF and inclusion. “(Family Visitor) was like a grandmother to us.” Obviously, the word “family” can have several different definitions, but what came out of the research was that inclusion, at least by BBBF, provides the same level, or depth, of comfort that a family does. The feeling that BBBF is like family refers to the idea that you can simply walk in the door, you need no introduction, and you are accepted and known (Villeneuve, 2006). While both staff and community have benefited from this closeness, the reality of caring for such a large “family” comes with a downside. “The impact of caring for others is that it burns us all and we forget to care for ourselves.”

Inclusion is about reciprocity. It involves BBBF creating opportunities for people to participate in decisions and processes that affect their lives. It also means waiting for people to let you in to their lives. Many staff, volunteers and community members expressed that together they felt they had created something special at BBBF. These final words, as expressed by a staff member, speak to the opportunity, time, trust and reciprocity needed to achieve true inclusion. “People are volunteering to be part of us (BBBF). They know they can come back at any time. There is a high comfort level. We have been with them through good and bad. We have learned from them. We became included in their lives. People allowed us in.”

Conclusion

Our Place- Learning in Motion is a snapshot of our community’s experiences. It provides an example of how BBBF has tried to involve community members and service providers in a holistic approach that supports families and children from the prenatal through the preschool years. We hope that other groups will be able to take ideas from our experiences and use them to support inclusion in their communities.

Selected References


From the Ivory Tower to another brick in the wall: 
Breaking down University-school district barriers using blended learning

Dr. Andrew Kitchenham
University of Northern British Columbia

This study examined the teacher supply and demand needs of teachers, administrators, and hiring personnel in the North. This paper will outline a blended learning model as a method of meeting the professional development needs of rural teachers, based on adult-learning principles.

Introduction

The purpose of this SSHRC-funded project was to investigate teacher supply and demand needs in the North. To this end, I and my two co-researchers, Drs. Colin Chasteauneuf and Willow Brown, secured partnerships in two provinces and two territories. Initially, we asked the teachers, administrators, and hiring personnel to complete an on-line questionnaire dealing with issues in the North. Broadly, they related to five areas: demographics, in- and out-migration, teaching outside of expertise, definitions of rurality, and professional development. The questionnaire was followed by a semi-structured interview the questions of which related to specific recruitment and retention strategies, professional development approaches, and professional development needs for the future. The preliminary results indicate that blended learning is a viable professional development method for meeting the demands of rural professionals.

This paper will outline the study findings on the needs of rural educators in relation to blended learning. It will demonstrate that the adopted model is grounded in adult-learning principles and is therefore a sound approach when working with professionals. It will also argue that faculties of education are the best places to present that learning model. I will outline the varying combinations of blended learning using adult-learning principles and how to bring the university classroom into the school classrooms through the use of the Internet with a minimal amount of hardware and software.

Community-University Partnerships

A thorough literature review is beyond the limits of this paper; however, to lay the foundation for the study, literature related to community-university partnerships will be outlined with the understanding that the blended learning professional literature will be embedded in the next section of this paper.

LeGates and Robinson (1998) argued that one of the key benefits of the community-university partnership was the empowerment of the co-opted partner. In particular, universities can offer neutrality, technical expertise, student idealism, innovation, and support for policy analysis. In turn, the universities become more responsive to community needs. The authors concluded their article with a key recommendation that the partnerships must be based on outreach and mutual respect rather than merely extracting data for the sake of research.

Rubin (2000) purported that there needs to be an emphasis on “the importance of trust, strong relationships, and social capital” in developing community-university relationships and advocated “ongoing, incremental, open-ended planning processes that stress continual learning” (p. 228). In other words, the relationship must be open, dynamic, and mutually beneficial to all partners.

Similarly, Cox (2000) reported on the key benefit of the community-university partnership is the production of new knowledge. As the partnership strengthens, each party gives the other access to new information which, in turn, can lead
to information that is useful to all parties which, ultimately, contributes to the applied and theoretical research in the field.

Baum (2000) cautioned that community-university partnerships cannot be based on fantasy whereby the expectation is that there will be fundamental change and clear “cross-pollination” (p. 235) but rather must be based on shared and commonly-understand goals and clearly-articulated strategies to attain those goals. In this way, the partnerships are reciprocal and therefore, more apt to last and to be stable.

We were aware of not only these benefits but also the potential pitfalls of the community-university partnership; that is, the possible danger of the co-opted partners losing their respective independence and the potential of merely studying the community rather than giving back. We considered and addressed these advantages and disadvantages of community-university partnerships as we design the larger study and, pertinent to this paper, the design of a blended learning professional development model.

The Study

The data sources in this study included one on-line questionnaire to be completed by the school personnel in the partner school districts, one to three face-to-face interviews, and one emailed survey on professional development models. In total, there were 113 participants from BC, Alberta, Northwest Territories and Yukon representing teachers, administrators, and human resources personnel.

The questionnaire involved demographic information on the teachers (e.g., gender; number of teachers; age range; retirement predictions), information on the areas of immediate shortage; information on areas of chronic shortage; and professional development services. A final item yielded information pertaining to teacher course load as related to their initial university preparation.

As part of the on-line Zoomerang survey, each respondent was asked which of seven models would best meet his or her professional development needs. Those seven models were bringing in prominent speakers, bringing university instructors with specific expertise, using local professionals with expertise, attending national and international conferences, connecting to video conferences (e.g., webcasts), action research projects, and a combination of on-line and face-to-face sessions (e.g., blended learning).

The interviews were 45 to 90 minutes in length and involved key questions related to the questionnaire data. As well, questions were presented from the literature so as to capture the tenor of previous research. As part of the interview process, questions were posed on the present incentive programs for recruitment and retention of teachers and on the professional development models currently used in the respective districts. In particular, each respondent was asked to provide an answer to the question, If you were to describe the benefits and drawbacks to a blended learning professional development model, what would you say?

The emailed questionnaire required that the respondents rank order four of the seven professional development models from the on-line questionnaire. These models were chosen as they represented the highest percentage of responses and included blended learning, bringing prominent speakers, using local personnel, and on-line professional development. Table 1 represents the overall percentage of respondents who chose each professional development model as well as individual results by stakeholder group.

| Table 1: Overall responses and individual stakeholder group responses (in percentage) |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Overall  | Teachers | Administrators | Human Resources |
| Blended learning | 24 | 25 | 38 | 100 |
| Prominent speakers | 15 | 13 | 38 | 100 |
| Local personnel | 22 | 22 | 38 | 100 |
| On-line | 13 | 12 | 31 | 100 |

Each respondent was given a scenario which involved a professional development speaker presenting strategies for aboriginal education using the four professional development models. The respondent ranked each one on three criteria: learning; transferability to the classroom or working environment, and cost efficiency. The scale range was 1 (highest and most-preferred model) to 4 (lowest and least-preferred model). For the purposes of this paper, the design of the blended learning model will be discussed.
The Blended Learning Model

In preparing the design of this e-professional development model, I consulted the key andragogical research studies (Cranton 1996; King 2002; Lawler & King 2003; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Moran, 2001) as well as blended learning models (Barnum & Paarmann 2002; Bersin 2003; Dougolis 2002; Kitchenham, 2005, 2006; Rossett, Douglis, & Frazee 2003; Valiathan 2002).

Rossett, Douglis, and Frazee (2003) present a blended learning model that appears to work particularly well with the professional development of rural educators as it incorporates key adult-learning principles. Their model involved 10 key salient attributes: (1) focus on the strategy; (2) deliver assets and guidance; (3) work cross functionally; (4) encourage independence and conviviality; (5) focus on flexible options; (6) put people in the middle of the blend; (7) communicate; (8) embrace redundancy; (9) take on key initiatives and measure results; and (10) share measured results with peers.

As we planned each professional development model to be sent to the respective stakeholders, we considered the professional literature germane to that specific model. In this paper, I will outline only the planning process for the blended learning model. For the purpose of brevity, the adult-learning principle will be presented parenthetically. A detailed discussion of how each of these attributes is grounded in adult-learning principles can be found elsewhere (Kitchenham, 2005). The blended learning scenario presented a world-renown expert on aboriginal education who had agreed to provide professional development to the local communities in Fort Vermilion, Alberta, Fort Nelson, BC, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, and Whitehorse, Yukon.

The presenter was focused on the strategy by contacting the liaison prior to arriving at the venue so that he could discover exactly what the participants would want. In this way, he could ensure that they received a variety of strategies (diverse methods), that they could use in their settings (immediate application) in a practical manner (practice-based methods).

He also ensured that he delivered assets and guidance as the participants provided feedback at the conclusion of the first face-to-face session and then were asked to post questions to the blog two (session two) and three (session three) weeks later. This allowance for further questions after the initial workshop allowed the participants to think carefully about what their respective needs were weeks after the initial strategies were presented (critical attitude).

Because the workshop presenter factored in working cross functionally, the wide interest levels and experiences of the participants were respected such that all would have an opportunity prior to the first session to voice their needs and, later, to provide further feedback vis-à-vis the blog. Inevitably, the workshop participants would be part of, or work towards, a professional learning community (group/cooperative learning).

By requesting the professional development needs of the participants prior to delivering the one-day face-to-face workshop and by using a blog (or webcams, where available) for answering questions, giving advice, and presenting resources in a discussion forum, the presenter encouraged independence and conviviality. Each participant would have ample opportunity to discuss the presenter’s and each other’s ideas through the discussion forum or webcams. This sense of independence and working with each other, despite disparate interests, backgrounds, and geographic locations, ensures that the participants feel in control of their own learning (empowerment).

Since the present allowed for follow-up sessions using a variety of media in synchronous and asynchronous environments, he is maintaining a focus on flexible options. This flexibility acknowledges that the participants have worthwhile contributions to make in a timely fashion (climate of respect).

When working with professionals, the presenter acknowledges that he must put people in the middle of the blend which is realized in this professional development model as it builds in mechanisms for all participants to contribute their ideas (active participation), to reflect on their learning at set intervals after the initial workshop (motivation), and to express their opinions and pose their questions to the renown expert (genuine feedback loop).

The central tenet of this professional development model is communication as the participants have ample opportunity before, during, and after the workshop to state their interests, experiences, and challenges through varied media. As blogs, email, and webcams allow for a range of anonymity, all participants can build on their own schemata (declaration of assumptions).

When working with professionals, it is imperative to embrace redundancy so the presenter ensured that he understood the various backgrounds of the participants and requested their needs prior to the workshop and after the workshop. In this way, he can augment their background strategies related to aboriginal education (build on past experiences).

A corollary to the communication methods after the first session, is for the participants take on key initiatives and measure results in the sense that they try the strategies and report their feedback vis-à-vis the workshop blog or
emailing the presenter directly. This blended learning attribute allows for each participant to use whatever information he or she deems necessary to his or her individual situation and to work with that information at his or her own pace (self-directed learning).

Lastly, the presenter creates space for the participants to share measured results with their peers through the use of the blog and other media. This sharing usually leads to some degree of sharing further resources, materials, and strategies (collaboration).

In sum, Rossett, Douglis, and Frazee’s (2003) blended learning model worked well for educating rural professionals on a zeitgeist of the North: aboriginal education. It is grounded in adult-learning principles and is easily adaptable to on-line communication tools such as web logs.

Conclusion
This paper began with the argument that blended learning was a defensible professional development model for meeting the needs of rural educators. It outlined the methods of eliciting the responses of the three stakeholder groups in two provinces and territories and presented the data of their preferred professional development models. In follow up to that information, the next research instrument, an emailed questionnaire, was described and the blended learning model used for the questionnaire was described. I have demonstrated that this particular model is particularly well suited for rural professionals as it is grounded in key adult-learning principles and allows a great deal of latitude for incorporating popular e-learning technologies.

It is also apparent that faculties of education are the best places to present that learning model. The faculty members have a great deal of experience with pedagogy and have learned a lot of effective andragogical strategies through years of teaching adults. They also have ready access to e-learning software and hardware to assist the rural professionals through the Internet with a minimal amount of software and hardware on their side of the learning partnership. Lastly, faculties of education have a long history of not only presenting professional development to school districts but also forming long-lasting and respectful relationships with the school districts.

The expectation for what professional development is in the Information Age has changed markedly in the last decade. If universities, places of learning and innovation, want to a part of that community-university relationship, they need to understand successful professional development models, grounded in adult-learning principles, that use the strengths of the Internet and related e-learning technologies to maximize learning, such as blended learning. Bringing the university classroom from the ivory tower to the classrooms of rural learners takes work but it is well worth the effort for all stakeholders.

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Youth and Community Relationships

Wendy Kotilla
Youth and Ecological Restoration Programme

The Youth and Ecological Restoration Program helps vulnerable youth build healthy community relationships with both the human and natural worlds. Through restoring local watersheds with community members, the youth gain a sense of worth, belonging and place.

Introduction

Located in the Comox Valley on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada, the Youth and Ecological Restoration Program (YER) involves youth with community members to restore the environmental health of local watersheds. The 20-hour program provides one-on-one work experience, training and support for youth under nineteen who are experiencing challenges connecting with school, community and employment. Since 2004, one hundred youth have participated in the first phase (YER I). They have worked with seventy-one community groups and hundreds of community members. In 2007 a second phase (YER II) was initiated for YER I graduates, which three youth have completed.

YER is based on my own experience as a youth, when I was constantly outdoors, surrounded by the healing powers of nature. Creating YER included referencing other youth and outdoor program models and consulting with community youth work professionals. When I started my qualifications included: Restoration of Natural Systems Diploma from University of Victoria; Negotiation and Mediation Certificates from the Conflict Resolution Program at the Justice Institute of BC; and twenty years experience with Ecological Restoration and Restorative Justice. The actual YER work has required me to hone and increase my skills to include ecologist, counselor, teacher, mentor, coordinator, fundraiser, administrator and program promoter.

Large numbers of youth today are so detached from the natural world that it has been identified as a “nature deficit disorder” (Louv 2005). With the breakdown of families and social systems, many youth are also deprived of stable and consistent human connections (McCluskey and Mays 2003). Vulnerable youth often feel segregated and alone, which can lead to difficult behaviours (Sapon-Shevin 2007). YER offers youth a combined approach for healing relationships with both the human and ecological communities.

The YER vision is to include youth at risk in a wider circle of community relationships, in both the human and natural worlds. Involving youth with caring adults and meaningful work guides them in learning positive values and building personal confidence (McCluskey and Mays 2003). Introducing youth to the natural world nurtures freedom and creativity, inspires their senses, and takes them outside themselves (Louv 2005). Encouraging them to build healthy relationships with both the social and ecological communities strengthens their sense of place and belonging.

Youth and Ecological Restoration Program History

YER was originally funded from July 2004 to March 2006 through Queen Alexandra Foundation for Children, Child Welfare Advisory Committee (CWAC) under the Vancouver Island Strategic Investment Initiatives Fund (SIIF). SIIF guiding principles recognize that each community has unique characteristics, knowledge and experience to address prevention and early intervention for youth at risk. The criteria also included providing integrated and collaborative services for youth that support a community’s capacity to build healthy relationships.

YER is considered one of the most successful SIIF projects. A CWAC support letter states that YER provides a high quality service to youth and makes a positive difference in their lives. Due to the program’s success and its support
within the Comox Valley community, the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) funded the program from April 2006 to March 2008. MCFD funding has been established for an initial six month period starting in April 2008.

In 2007 YER Phase II funding was granted through the Vancouver Foundation's Children, Youth and Families Advisory Committee. Many youth participants had asked to repeat the program, so there was a need to develop an expansion. YER II provides youth with an opportunity to build on the skills and experiences they gained in YER I. The second phase also allows a longer term evaluation of the program’s effectiveness through additional interviews with graduates.

**Youth and Ecological Restoration Program Description**

YER has been in operation for almost four years: YER I since July 2004; and YER II started in August 2007. Both phases of the program emphasize deepening youth’s understanding of the natural world and improving their sense of belonging within the community.

**Youth and Ecological Restoration Program Phase I (YER I)**

YER I youth meet “at risk” criteria and are referred from the following agencies: Ministry of Children and Family Development; Comox Valley Community Justice Centre; Comox Valley Alternate Schools; Community Mental Health Professionals; John Howard Society; and School Work Experience Programs. There is no rigorous referral process, only a phone call is necessary and youth are always accepted into the program. Transportation, a homemade lunch, work tools and wet weather gear are all supplied, and reminder phone calls a couple of days in advance to ensure attendance.

A diversity of youth are referred to the program; most of them are not fitting into mainstream social and educational systems for a variety of reasons. Some are doing community service hours for a range of crimes such as: shoplifting, drug trafficking, assault, breaking and entering, sexual abuse and vandalism. Others have mental health issues and antisocial behaviours that include: schizophrenia, attention deficit hyperactive disorder, fetal alcohol syndrome, speech impediments, depression, violence and learning disabilities.

All youth sign a work agreement with the YER Coordinator, making a commitment to complete the 20-hour programme. One hundred youth have participated in YER I, with a ninety-five per cent completion rate, which is considered high for the types of youth involved. The youth voluntarily participate for a total of twenty hours at five hours a week over a four week period. They get to know various Comox Valley watersheds and ecosystems, and perform ecological restoration work with approximately four local organizations.

Ecological restoration activities include salmon enhancement, habitat restoration, watershed assessment and monitoring, and community environmental education. The twenty-seven groups that have been assisted in their environmental efforts comprise: environmental and stewardship organizations; Comox Valley service clubs; and municipal, regional, provincial and federal government agencies. Each youth works with an average of fifty community members.

On YER I completion, it is mandatory for the youth to give an oral presentation for a community group about their experiences with the program. Youth have presented speeches to thirty-nine Comox Valley organizations, ranging from pre-schools to senior citizens homes to local service clubs. The audience numbers have ranged from three to eighty people. Youth are awarded with a YER I certificate and crest; letter of reference; and receive a fifty dollar honourarium or fulfill community service hours. Completion of the program is considered a successful achievement.

YER I evaluation has been critical to determine how effective the program is for the youth. A questionnaire was created to ask the youth three sets of questions: at the start of the program; on completion of the work experience; and after the presentation. The questionnaire has been invaluable in collecting data for the annual YER I reports and other promotional activities. Debrief questions are also conducted with the youth participants at the end of each work day. These help them to review what they have learned and are the source of their presentation notes. An informed consent form is signed by the youth and their caregivers at the initial meeting, giving permission for use of the interview content, while maintaining confidentiality issues.

The programme has five main goals: building healthy community relationships; gaining valued work experience; improving ecological knowledge; increasing personal and social skills; and enhancing communication skills. These are listed below with quotes from youth participants to illustrate some of the learning that has occurred.

**Goal # 1: Building Healthy Community Relationships**

- “Everything is connected, everything I’ve learned in this program has taught me that we are all connected and every choice we make impacts everyone and everything around us.” (Participant # 46)
- “When you give your energy to help your community, it makes you feel good inside and warms your heart.” (Participant #15)
Goal # 2: Gaining Valued Work Experience

- “I liked the best taking the water temperature, dissolved oxygen and water levels with the dissolved oxygen meter. Everything needs to be in the right order for scientific data collection.” (Participant #26)
- “I learned how to drive a bobcat, which is amazing because I didn’t think they would trust me to drive it, but they did and I spent six hours moving a monstrous pile of gravel into the stream.” (Participant # 57)

Goal # 3: Improving Ecological Knowledge

- “Roots of trees hold up river banks, trees provide shade, leaves fall off trees into the creek and rot and aquatic insects eat leaves and fish eat insects.” (Participant # 38)
- “Sustainability – to keep something the same without being harmful. Like say I had a plant, you would have to sustain it as in keep it healthy and make sure it grows and make sure no one harms it.” (Participant # 45)

Goal # 4: Increasing Personal and Social Skills

- “You are always supposed to be safe in what you are doing and careful with another person’s equipment and respecting other people and their feelings. Relationships with people mean being kind if you are working in a group and not breaking the rules.” (Participant #44)
- “That you shouldn’t just quit and keep on trying and then it will always work out for you if you keep your head up. I thought you were going to get mad at me when you came. You just looked out for me and knew I could do it and I did.” (Participant # 72)

Goal # 5: Enhancing Communication Skills

- “People can have different opinions, but we need to listen to each other, go around our differences, find things to agree on and then work together.” (Participant #13)
- “The most important thing I learned was how to communicate with people if I don’t know them.” (Participant # 37)

One youth’s YER I presentation notes were published in The Island Word newspaper and Watershed Sentinel magazine. An excerpt from the publication follows:

“Wendy’s program worked for me. I was forced to be patient, learn new concepts, accept inevitable truths, pray for change, and enjoy the moment. This experience slowed me down, which resulted in it being easier for me to confront myself and begin to fix my personal problems. I think today’s youth need support, not answers, and daily doses of river water, forest floor, huckleberries and sunshine.” (Participant # 78)

An annual YER community celebration is held to honour the accomplishments of the youth who have participated. There have been four of these celebrations and there is always a good turnout of supporters. Over the past two years, pizza, pop, coffee and a homemade celebration cake have been contributed by local businesses and individuals. We start the event by sitting in a circle and having each person share a special place or experience with nature. An overview is given of the year’s activities from the youth, community organizations and the YER coordinator. After that we socialize, share food and have fun.

Youth and Ecological Restoration Program Phase II (YER II)

YER II is in the preliminary stages of development. Entry requirement is that youth be graduates of YER I, and they be genuinely motivated to build on skills they gained in the original program. Youth who show initiative and interest to continue their learning are given priority placements. The focus is on a specific environmental project to learn more detailed ecological information, research techniques, and collaboration and communication skills.

For YER II completion, the youth lead a guided tour of the project site and are presented with a YER II certificate and hooded jacket, a letter of reference and a fifty dollar honourarium. Three youth have completed YER II, and more projects will take place in the spring of 2008. The 2007 projects were: establishing a Garry Oak forest ecological plot; and radio tracking summer Chinook salmon in the Puntledge River. Guided tours of both projects happened September 30th on BC Rivers Day.

YER II plans include conducting longer term evaluation of YER I graduates to monitor if their participation in the program led to any improvements in their lives. Questions were developed to coordinate with YER I goals and meetings will be established to conduct interviews with the program graduates. Youth who participate in YER II will also be asked preliminary, post work and post presentation questions to document knowledge they have gained.
Future Options

YER has proven to be a cost effective program that delivers consistent and dependable results. One of the most difficult tasks of many valuable programs is to solicit annual funding. My hope for YER is that more sustainable funding will be secured to allow the delivery of this worthwhile program to continue, so that our most vulnerable youth will learn how to create a better future for themselves and their community. Options for YER future development include the following:

- Continue to operate YER Phase I and II to benefit Comox Valley youth at risk.
- Promote YER in other parts of BC through presentations at conferences and forums by the coordinator and a couple of youth participants.
- Create a YER internship program to train previous graduates in working with youth at risk.
- Hire a second person to assist with YER program organizing, facilitation and delivery.
- Make DVD of YER participants conducting program work for illustration at presentations.
- Produce a training manual and program to educate others to replicate the YER program in their communities.

Conclusion

YER is a unique and innovative program, based on connecting youth with the natural world and the human community. The youth are treated with dignity and respect, and allowed to learn at their own pace without judgment. Involving them with meaningful work and caring adults supports them in building self esteem and a sense of belonging. Youth develop a sense of place by making contributions and being involved with the social and natural environments in their home place. Engagement in these cultural activities connects youth with the larger community, enhances their personal insights, and has the ability to transform their lives (Basso 1996).

Helping youth to feel a sense of inclusion contributes to building a whole community; healthy relationships are the very heart of healthy communities (Sapon-Shevin 2007). A whole and healthy community has no separation between the human and natural worlds; it is based on relationships of interdependence and cooperation with each other and the Earth, leading to balance and justice for all (Starhawk 2004). Through their involvement with YER, the youth have traveled a journey together with their community, side by side down a very good path, and have come to experience a better relationship with the people and place called home.

References


The Community-Centered Academic Health Department: Principles and Practices

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The concept of an Academic Health Department (AHD) requires collaboration between academic institutions and public health departments. Description of a community-centered model of an AHD and its applications provide important implications for community empowerment through this model of campus-community partnership.

Concept of Academic Health Department
The term Academic Health Department (AHD) emerged to concisely describe the public health version of the academic health center (Keck, 2000). The term is intended to convey the concept of a teaching hospital applied to public health departments, and has also been referred to as the teaching health department (Novick, 2006). Although the term, academic health department was more recently coined, it was readily adopted to convey the potential to enhance public health workforce development with Institute of Medicine (IOM) implementation efforts (Rosenstock, 2003), following the “Who Will Keep the Public Healthy” report (IOM, 2003). This form of campus-community collaboration can represent a robust and extensive form of partnerships that substantially support the missions of both the university and the community agency.

Variations in Academic Health Departments
Many of the reported applications of the Academic Health Department reflect CDC support for University - School of Public Health sponsored efforts to address some of the growing needs for public health workforce development (Mahan, Silver, 2006; Atchison, Boatright, Merrigan, 2006; Conte, Chang, Malcolm, Russo, 2006). However, a systematic study of local health departments in Florida demonstrated a much broader application of university and local health department collaboration beyond major public health institution supported university initiatives (Livingood, Goldhagen, Little, 2007). The Florida study demonstrated that most of the local health departments had relationships with universities with many of them collaborating with multiple universities. Approximately 50 different collaborating universities were identified with this statewide study despite the location of only one accredited school of public health in Florida at the time of the study (2005).

Many of the university health department relationships in the Florida study appeared to have much more extensive purposes than workforce development, including the enhancement of core public health functions. Although some were limited to traditional roles of facilitating field placements for students and providing adjunct faculty for the universities, a practice that goes back many decades, others had much more extensive universities affiliations for staff, involving full time faculty status with full time health department responsibilities. The broad range of these collaborating universities found in the Florida study and the agency or community service nature of these relationships reflects very different applications than the more frequently reported University - School of Public Health model with a primary focus on workforce development related to graduate public health training.

Community Centred Application of Academic Health Department
The need for more robust models of Campus-Community collaboration is particularly important for public health because of the serious under funding of public health infrastructure, particularly at the local level (Keck, 2000; Baker, Potter, Jones, et al, 2005). Collaboration between universities and local health departments can combine the traditional
research functions of the university with the assessment functions of public health to enhance both university and local public health capacities to achieve their respective missions, potentially resulting in research and health service delivery that are much more responsive to community needs. The Duval County Health Department, a local agency in Jacksonville, Florida and the University of Florida College of Medicine-Jacksonville, primarily a graduate medical education academic health center, is a well developed community-centered model of an academic health department, primarily maintained through an Institute for Health, Policy and Evaluation Research that focuses on meeting community needs but also has a record of support for graduate medical education.

Community Centred Approach and Assessment

The potential for these academic health department forms of campus community collaboration to support a much broader range of benefits to the community is illustrated by the description of the Community-Centered Academic Health Department related to the enhancement of a wide range of public health functions and essential public health services, primarily linked to assessment (Livingood, Goldhagen, Bryant, et al, 2007). Assessment is a core public health function that is critical for other core public health functions (assurance and policy development) identified in the IOM report, The Future of Public Health (1988). Assessment is also integral to many of the subsequently identified essential public health services, particularly essential services 1, 2, 9 and 10 which are to: Monitor Health Status to Identify Community Health Problems; Diagnose and Investigate Health Problems and Health Hazards in the Community; Evaluate Effectiveness, Accessibility, and Quality of Personal and Population-Based Health Services; and Research for New Insights and Innovative Solutions to Health Problems. In fact, Baker et al (2005, p 306) maintain that the entire public health structure “relies on strong science and ongoing research, including sound evaluation studies.” Other essential services such as Essential Service 3 – to Inform, Educate, and Empower People about Health Issues, Essential Service 4 – to Mobilize Community Partnerships to Identify and Solve Health Problems, Essential Service 5 – to Develop Policies and Plans that Support Individual - and Community Health Efforts, and Essential Service 7 – to Link People to Needed Personal Health Services and Assure the Provision of Health Care when Otherwise Unavailable, rely on the strong “intelligence” foundations of assessment.

Livingood, Goldhagen, et al (2007) describe how this model overcomes the traditional stereotypical roles of universities as research institutions and local health departments as practice institutions to provide substantially enhanced public health assessment functions and related essential services. The model addresses the challenges created by these stereotypical roles including: community serving as research subject, rather than the community conducting research; failure to translate research into practice; and fragmented disease-specific (categorical) approaches, rather than coordinated system approaches. The model they describe is based on an approach to research and assessment that includes: comprehensive assessment, community-based participatory research (CBPR), integration of research and practice, increased use of advanced and alternative research approaches, and integration of assessment services (Livingood, Goldhagen, Bryant, et al, 2007).

Academic Health Department and Health Services

The benefits of the campus community partnership to local public health capacity extend substantially beyond the research and assessment functions embodied in the collaborative Institute. The University affiliation engages university infectious disease faculty (some as full time staff) in the treatment of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis. The Duval County Health Department is a leader in the state related to providing primary medical and dental care to underserved populations, much of which preceded the Institute but which has been enhanced by the Institute. The Department is the largest public agency provider of Medicaid primary health care services in the state of Florida, far exceeding county health departments in counties more than twice its size. This local health department provides many of these primary health care services through contractual relationships with the University of Florida College of Medicine-Jacksonville. This enables the local health department to provide high quality medical care associated with an academic health center, by attracting young aspiring primary care and specialty care physicians who value university affiliation. These primary care programs have been so successful that the local Health Department has successfully competed to manage a Federally Qualified Health Center, and has also recently received grants to expand its FGHC to other locations within the county.

Delivery of dental care to underserved populations has been particularly challenging, and this University affiliation has been at least partially responsible for an extensive dental program. This program, currently directed by a University of Florida College of Dentistry faculty member who is full time with the local health department, provides an extensive array of preventive dental services with mobile vans that visit all of the elementary and middle schools in the county. This dental program leads all other counties in Florida in the provision of pit and fissure services to economically deprived children. Collaboration with another University, Florida A & M University, enables the local health department to contract with high quality pharmacy faculty.
The benefits to the community are also highly visible through the support that the Institute provides to local community agencies and organizations in grant writing and evaluation support. The Institute provides other health department divisions and external agencies with local data to demonstrate need in support of grant proposals, and frequently helps develop the evaluation sections of grant proposals for other agencies. These services enable many community agencies to have the infrastructure support that is not feasible for many community agencies. One example of the value of this asset to the local community agencies was a grant proposal where the community organization received a low score on the evaluation section for its first attempt. The second attempt with the Institute’s assistance enabled the community organization to score over three times the score for the evaluation section which resulted in funding of approximately 1.5 million dollars in grant support for a three year period.

The substantial research and evaluation infrastructure has also supported the local health department’s involvement in local efforts to build systems for electronic health information exchange. The local community had not been successful in obtaining state funding to build a system for local electronic health information exchange. Although the national agenda for a national public health information network relies on local public health involvement, public health is not typically involved. The lack of involvement is in large part because these systems, like the health care system in general in the Unites States, primarily reside in the private sector. Many of the challenges to developing these systems are more social and political, rather than technical. The Institute, with its grant writing and evaluation assets, combined with other Health Department assets including its major role as safety net provider and stature in the community of its Director, enabled the community to receive the grant. More important than the evaluation and grant writing was the health department’s role as a mediator for competing: community organizations, stakeholder constituencies (hospitals versus physicians), competing technological approaches (repository versus federated), and competing software vendors.

The role in workforce development, the more traditional role of academic health departments, is also a concern for this model, but it varies extensively with the traditional models, primarily affiliated with university-schools of public health. In this case, no single higher education institution meets the needs for public health workforce development. The most obvious example is the fact that much of the local public health workforce tends to be below baccalaureate degree training and schools of public health tend to be restricted to graduate education. Consequently, the campus-community partnership requires multiple university affiliations including the predominantly two year community college. These two year colleges also provide very good technical training in specific skills that even graduate students can use, such as training in computer software. Related to this education function, a large number of academic institutions (approximately 15 different institutions each year) place their students with this local health department for field experiences, covering a wide range of education and training programs that reflect the diversity of the public health workforce.

In addition to the substantial benefits to the community, the university must also benefit if the collaboration is to be sustainable. The traditional triad of university missions of research, service and teaching provide an appropriate lens to view the benefits of collaboration to the university. Although collaboration with academic institutions is expanding, the University of Florida College of Medicine-Jacksonville is the primary partner in this campus-community partnership, and the benefits to this University are of primary concern. This collaboration has substantially benefited the graduate medical education mission primarily related to Pediatrics (Zenni, Ravago, Ewart, Livingood, Wood, Goldhagen, 2006; Goodfriend, Bryant, Livingood, Goldhagen, 2006). In particular, the pediatric residents do rotations in primary care within health department clinics and the pediatric residents and faculty collaborate with the Institute on community based research projects. Most recently the campus community collaboration efforts are being expanded to graduate medical education that will include Emergency Medicine and Internal Medicine. This effort, supported by a grant form the CDC and the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), is being expanded from Pediatrics to other graduate medical education programs due to the perceived opportunities to more effectively address American College of Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) requirements for systems based practice and Resident Review Committee (RCC) requirements for research and scholarship. Much of this education is also linked to expanded opportunities for practice not found in acute care hospitals.

The University has also approved plans to expand the research collaboration associated with the Institute that is located within the Health Department to have an office on the College of Medicine campus. The College of Medicine plans to build on the applied research nature of the Health Department’s Institute to engage more clinical faculty in applied research related to a wide range of graduate medical education. The campus has a very large clientele that comes from populations experiencing health disparities. The Institute’s applied research and population research approaches provide access to research designs, methods, and resources that will enable faculty to engage in types of research that can help them expand the knowledge base related to reducing disparities.
Conclusions

The application of campus community partnership principles to academic health centers has previously been reported, particularly related to pediatric residencies (Meyer, D., Armstrong-Coben, A., and Batista, M, 2005). The application of principles of partnership to the academic health department through a community centered model of an academic health department has substantial potential to enhance both the public health system infrastructure and workforce development. In contrast to the more common university-centered model, the health department with a community-centered academic health department builds relationships with multiple colleges and universities. The social and political capital, gained through enhanced capacity and visibility in the community related to the core public health functions and essential services provides greater leverage for the public’s interest to be represented in major private sector initiatives such as Regional Health Information Organization development. Universities also enhance their education, research and service missions. Application of this approach should not wait for additional funding as research has shown that this approach generates substantial capacity and resources that are self sustaining (Livingood, Collini, Bowman, et al, 2007).

References


Community-University Research Into Medical Cannabis;  
A Patient-Centred Approach Towards Progressive Social Change

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Canadian research into the therapeutic benefits of cannabis has been stymied by the ongoing prohibition of its recreational use. This is an overview of the Vancouver Island Compassion Society’s successful research partnerships with university-based investigators.

Introduction

The late 1980s and early 90s were the peak of the HIV/AIDS crisis in America, and there seemed to be little that people could do to keep an entire generation of young men from slowly withering away as a result of what would eventually become known as “AIDS wasting syndrome.” In response to this rapidly expanding epidemic, compassionate community activists in San Francisco established underground medical cannabis dispensaries, offering a safe source of cannabis to those needing it for medical purposes. The success of these dispensaries was one of the factors that led to the development and passage of a state ballot initiative called “Proposition 215” in 1996, making California the first state to allow for the legal medical use and distribution of cannabis in America (Grinspoon, 1999). Since then, over 250 medical cannabis dispensaries have opened up in California, and it is estimated that they currently supply over 200,000 state-authorized patients (Gieringer, 2006). These community-based dispensaries remain the main source of cannabis-based medicines in both Canada and the U.S., and similar organizations have since emerged all over the world.

It has been suggested that with hundreds of thousands of patients legally accessing medical cannabis in California, this therapeutic herb is currently undergoing the largest “open-label” drug trial in the world. This may be the case, but there is one significant problem with the design of this informal trial: as a result of ongoing DEA raids on dispensaries, very little data is being gathered on either the people who chose to use cannabis as a medicine, or on its effects on their health, medical conditions or quality of life. As a researcher, one can’t help but feel that this is a missed opportunity of tragic proportions, and perhaps one of the more deleterious consequences of the federal assaults on medical cannabis patients and those attempting to supply them.

Although police raids on dispensaries have also hampered medical access in Canada, the courts have been quicker to recognize the good work of Canadian compassion clubs. As a result of strong community support and sound legal decisions from the high courts, a few dispensaries have been able to remain in operation despite continued resistance from Health Canada to actually license and regulate these organizations.

Community-Based Medical Cannabis Research

There are currently seven well-established dispensaries in Canada providing over 12,000 critically and chronically ill Canadians access to a safe supply of cannabis. Vancouver’s British Columbia Compassion Club Society (BCCCS), the oldest and largest of these organizations, opened in 1997 and now serves over 4000 members. After finding cannabis helpful in addressing the symptoms of hepatitis-C that I’d contracted through a blood transfusion at a younger age, I gave up a career as a school teacher to open Victoria’s Vancouver Island Compassion Society (VICS) in October 1999. The VICS is a non-profit medical cannabis research, advocacy, and supply organization currently helping over
With both the U.S. and Canadian government resisting public and court pressure to increase research and access to medical cannabis, it was our goal to fill some of the knowledge gaps in our own understanding of cannabis and its therapeutic potential. Community-based medical cannabis dispensaries enjoy two distinct advantages over the established drug research community: a) the VICS has hundreds of members willing to share their experiences and to participate in medical cannabis; research and b) we have a high-quality supply of multiple strains of cannabis at our disposal (the lack of such a supply still plagues medical cannabis research in Canada and the U.S., and the monopoly on production enjoyed by our respective federal governments has been challenged in court on both sides of the border).

Our early studies were pragmatic investigations of phenomena that we were noting in the day-to-day business of the VICS. We make a number of strains available to our members, and there was some speculation as to the different effects of the two major sub-species of cannabis: *sativa* and *indica*. In response, we designed a strain/symptom survey asking our members, who were eager to share their experiences, what symptoms they suffered from, and which strains they preferred. The results of the survey suggest that those suffering from pain as a result of their medical conditions lean towards the use of *indicas*, while those suffering from nausea or loss of appetite prefer *sativas*. This proved to be interesting and useful data for the VICS and its members, as we could now more confidently recommend certain strains for certain symptoms or conditions.

### Partnering with University-Based Researchers

As we became more familiar with the world of academic research, it became apparent that unless our protocols and results went through the peer-review process, the studies we undertook would never be accepted by the scientific community. In 2003 we teamed with Dr. Diana Sylvestre of the University of California, San Francisco to develop a research protocol investigating the success rate of people suffering from Hepatitis C who had used cannabis during treatment. Although this particular study was inconclusive, it became the first peer-reviewed medical cannabis research to take place in a community-based dispensary.

Our next study began with an email from Rachel Westfall in February 2003. Rachel was a PhD student at the University of Victoria, and wondered about “the possibility of setting up a clinical trial of cannabis therapy for hyperemesis gravidarum - severe nausea and vomiting of pregnancy”. Being fairly familiar with the socio-political realities of medical cannabis research in Canada, I was sorry to inform her that Health Canada would never approve a clinical trial that involved having pregnant women use cannabis, but I did suggest that a well-designed retroactive survey might be able to identify women who had benefited from the use of cannabis to stem the nausea and vomiting often associated with pregnancy. After much work on the design of this survey, we recruited Dr. Patti Janssen from UBC and Rielle Capler from the BCCCS to act as co-investigators, and in November of 2003 we launched the study at the VICS and the BCCCS.

In September 2005 the results of this study were accepted for publication, and in January 2006 our study, *Survey of medicinal cannabis use among childbearing women: Patterns of its use in pregnancy and retroactive self-assessment of its efficacy against 'morning sickness'* was published in the Journal of Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice, becoming the first dispensary-based study to ever be published in a peer-reviewed scientific journal. Here’s what we found: of the 79 women who filled out our survey who had experienced pregnancy, 51 reported using cannabis while pregnant. Of these, 40 had used cannabis to treat nausea and vomiting, 92% of which rated cannabis as ‘extremely effective’ or ‘effective’ at treating their morning sickness. The study concluded that these “findings support the need for further investigations into cannabis therapy for severe nausea and vomiting during pregnancy” (Westfall et al, 2006).

In fall 2003 we received a grant from the Marijuana Policy Project to fund a clinical protocol looking at the use of cannabis to relieve chronic pain. After a great deal of work and much advice and support from established cannabis researchers, in May of 2004 we submitted the study for peer-review. Following more than 12 months of changes and negotiations with the investigational review board, *A comparison of the effects of smoked whole-plant cannabis of different primary constituent composition, in single patients with chronic pain, using an “n of 1” design* became the first dispensary-based clinical trial to pass ethics review in North America, and the first high-THC smoked cannabis clinical trial to be approved anywhere in the world. Unfortunately our ongoing attempts to get this protocol approved by the government have been unsuccessful thus far, largely due to our resistance to using the poor-quality, gamma-irradiated federal cannabis supply (our protocol suggests importing a safe supply from Holland, or licensing the VICS to produce its own supply of research-grade cannabis), and the government’s ideological opposition to medical cannabis research and access. This uncompassionate, unscientific approach to medical cannabis is perhaps best exemplified by the Conservative government’s fall 2006 decision to cancel all further federal funding for clinical cannabis research, leaving NGOs like the VICS to carry much of the burden.

However, we remain determined as ever to empower Canada’s medical cannabis community by involving them in
community-based research. For example, since Health Canada has never bothered to poll the 2000+ participants in the federal medical cannabis program in order to better their service delivery, I teamed with Dr. Andy Hathaway (University of Guelph) to design a research protocol that would do just that. Launched in the spring of 2007, *Quality of Service Assessment of Health Canada’s Medical Cannabis Policy and Program* combines a 50 question survey addressing the personal experiences of users in the federal cannabis program with 25 semi-guided interviews, and is funded by a grant from McMaster University. Although we are still analyzing the results of this study, we have received over 100 responses to the survey, and the preliminary data is incredibly revealing. Nearly 72% of respondents are either “totally” or “somewhat” unsatisfied with Canada’s federal medical cannabis program, with over 75% ranking the federal cannabis supply as either a 1 or 2 on a scale of 1-10. The findings of this peer-reviewed research project could prove useful in making progressive changes to this federal policy through consultation and cooperation with Health Canada; or, if necessary, through the courts.

Recent years have seen dispensaries involved in a number of external research projects as well. In 2006, the Canadian AIDS Society (CAS) released a federally-funded report titled *Our Right, Our Choice* which recommended the legalization and regulation of community-based dispensaries in order to improve access to medical cannabis, as well as to increase research into its therapeutic effects (Canadian AIDS Society, 2006).

In a separate sociological investigation of the patrons of four Canadian dispensaries (including the VICS), Hathaway (2007) found that:

“compassion clubs” outside the law play a vital role in the provision of safe access and therapeutic knowledge about medical marijuana. Operating on the margins of society, these outlets fulfill another purpose in creating a community among persons who are often highly marginalized themselves. Club membership provides a group identity, empowerment, and restorative supports over and above the marijuana use itself. The authors examine the role of compassion clubs in the lives of patients who choose to self-manage their pain and suffering by using marijuana.

These social research projects illustrate the wide range of comprehensive and holistic services provided by community-based dispensaries, and the incredible potential for knowledge creation and empowerment stemming from community-university partnerships.

**Future Research Directions**

Although the future of medical cannabis research remains largely unknown, it is clear that published data reflecting the experiences of thousands of medical users has already highlighted many new applications for cannabis-based therapies, including its potential to reduce the use of other licit and illicit substances such as alcohol, opiates, and stimulants. In a project supported by the University of Victoria and the Center for Addictions Research of British Columbia, I am currently examining the changes in the use of pharmaceutical opiates and other substances in 15 new members of the VICS suffering from chronic pain. The goal of this research is to investigate a microcosm of substitution effect, a phenomena where the availability of one substance influences the use of another (DiNardo & Lemieux, 1992). If population-level theories about cannabis-based substitution effect prove to have a measurable impact on individuals with substance abuse problems, this area of research could radically shift the popular perception of cannabis as a gateway drug leading to the use of more addictive substances, to that of an exit drug helping people control or even end their addiction to potentially more dangerous substances.

Additionally, some newly-published research has caused me to question suggestions of a causal association between cannabis use and the triggering of psychosis and schizophrenia in people with a predisposition for these mental health disorders. There is recent evidence to suggest that some fertilizers used in the production of cannabis may be a risk factor in and of themselves. A recent study comparing the chemical constituents of tobacco and cannabis smoke found high levels of ammonia in the smoke of cannabis produced for Health Canada by Prairie Plant Systems. The researchers attributed this to the use of high-nitrate fertilizers, concluding that “the simplest explanation for the very high levels of ammonia found in marijuana smoke may be that the marijuana used for this study contained more nitrate than the tobacco sample” (Moir, 2007). A large body of research suggests that one of the major symptoms of elevated levels of ammonia in the blood (or hyperammonemia) is psychosis (Enns, 2005; Belanger-Quintana, 2003). Since black-market cannabis cultivation is focused on ever-increasing production yields in order to justify the profit-to-risk ratio, the over-use of fertilizers is the rule rather than the exception. Therefore, any future research into the physical and mental health risks associated with the use of cannabis should be careful to differentiate between those caused by the cannabis plant and its major chemical constituents, and those associated with fertilizers, pesticides and other products used in its cultivation.
Conclusions

The nearly immeasurable social harms and hypocrisy of the international war on drugs are perhaps best exemplified in the ongoing persecution of the critically and chronically ill who benefit from the use of medical cannabis. The cooperative involvement of patients, dispensaries, and university-based investigators in the planning and implementation of research while under the very real threat of arrest is a truly unique and remarkable social response to drug prohibition. As more cannabis dispensaries move from simple distribution to scientific contribution, society as a whole will benefit from the knowledge, courage and experience of those who risk their personal freedom to relieve the needless suffering of their fellow citizens.

References


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A Balanced Growth strategy will help local governments plan for economic development opportunities and streamline decision-making processes. Exploring avenues that contribute to consistency and predictability for private and public investment decisions will enable more cost-effective development in the Lake Erie basin.

Introduction
Lake Erie is the eleventh largest lake in the world (by surface area). It is the fourth largest of the Great Lakes in surface area and the smallest by volume. The lake borders four states (Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York) and the Canadian province of Ontario. Lake Erie is the shallowest of the Great Lakes and the only one that is completely above sea level. Ninety-five percent of Lake Erie’s inflow comes from the upper lakes: Superior, Michigan, and Huron-Lake St. Clair, the Detroit River, and numerous tributaries. The rest comes from precipitation. Lake Erie was the last of the Great Lakes to be discovered by European explorers, but has grown to become the most densely populated of all the Great Lake basins and has several large metropolitan cities within it including Detroit, Toledo, Buffalo, and Cleveland. Lake Erie is the most nutrient-rich and warmest Great Lake, and therefore the most biologically productive. Its coastal wetlands thrive in this climate and contain the greatest diversity of plant and animal species in the Great Lakes. The lake and its marshes are home to more than 100 species of fish. More than 300 species of birds have been documented in the wetlands within the Lake Erie basin. In the 1970s, Lake Erie showed severe effects of pollution. Years of chemical dumping and the release of millions of gallons of untreated sewage and non-point runoff had polluted the waters and triggered severe effects on the lake’s ecology and economy. One of the pollutants entering the lake was phosphorus, found in human sewage, fertilizers and in some detergents. The input of large amounts of phosphorous into the lake caused an increase in algae growth. When this excess of algae died it caused a depletion of oxygen from the bottom of the lake. Without oxygen, only the most tolerant life forms could survive on the lake bottom and in deeper water. In recent years, with the help of environmental legislation passed by both the American and Canadian governments, Lake Erie has been cleaned up significantly. Lake Erie’s fishery tops the Great Lakes in commercial production, and its walleye fishery is widely seen as the best in the world. Despite the evident success of this resource, some of Lake Erie’s fisheries are threatened. Thus, the effects of how land is used in the Lake Erie basin are of the utmost concern to its human polity.

Background
The Lake Erie watershed, an area of over 11,000 square miles, is faced with difficult challenges. Less than one-quarter of the watershed’s original wetlands and forests remain; farms and cities comprise the majority of the land in the region. These agricultural and urban areas deposit sediment and nutrients into the lake at three times the desirable rate. The transformation of farmland to residential neighborhoods, and the related infrastructure and water issues, also impacts the land. Protecting the lake from becoming overwhelmed by the activities in its watersheds is crucial to Ohio’s economic and environmental interests.

In 2000, the Ohio Lake Erie Commission released the Lake Erie Protection and Restoration Plan. One of its most critical components was to seek the creation and implementation of the Lake Erie Balanced Growth Initiative which is focused squarely on a strategy for finding a medium between land-use planning and the needs of the local ecosystem.
Balanced growth focuses on making new development efficient in its use of natural resources and redeveloping and reallocating urban spaces. Conversely, it also seeks to protect critical places that are unique to the watershed such as wetlands, meadows, riparian and other high value areas that are important to the region's geological, historical, cultural and recreational assets (OLEC, 2000).

Since Ohio is a home rule state, land use decisions are made at the local level of government. It was realized that in order to accomplish the balanced growth goal, land use planning should be able to transcend traditional geo-political boundaries and occur at the watershed level with participation and coordination among many facets of local governments, watershed organizations, regional planning commissions, mayors, commissioners, etc. Consequently, a Balanced Growth Blue Ribbon Task Force comprised of government officials, business leaders, conservationists, academia, agricultural and other stakeholder groups were charged with advising the Ohio Lake Erie Commission on ways to develop strategies that will balance the protection of the Lake Erie watershed with continued economic growth while conserving and preserving its most important natural assets.

Methods

To be effective stewards of Lake Erie’s unique natural resources and abundant fresh water supply, Ohio's Lake Erie communities need to develop better ways of addressing how they use their land. Research, outreach and education geared toward teaching Ohio’s coastal communities about land use and its implications have been achieved through the Lake Erie Balanced Growth Initiative. In its simplest form, balanced growth is a strategy to protect and restore Lake Erie and its watersheds to assure long-term economic competitiveness, ecological health and quality of life (OLEC, 2000). It focuses on reducing urban sprawl, protecting natural resources and encouraging redevelopment in urban areas of the Lake Erie watershed.

The Ohio Lake Erie Commission has recommended utilizing a regional focus on land use and development planning in the Lake Erie basin (Lucente, 2004, p.4). The goal is to link land use planning to the health of watersheds. While this framework is voluntary, the Ohio Lake Erie Commission will continue to work with the State of Ohio to offer incentives through various funding agencies to communities that augment their comprehensive land use plans to reflect Watershed Balanced Growth Plans.

A Watershed Balanced Growth Plan stems from local, coordinated decision-making about how growth and conservation should be promoted by local and state policies and investments in the watershed (OLEC, 2000). The framework also calls for the creation of Watershed Planning Partnerships composed of local governments, planning commissions, non-profit organizations and other parties in each watershed to develop a list of Priority Development Areas and Priority Conservation Areas (Lucente, 2005, p.). Priority Development Areas are locally designated areas where growth and redevelopment would be encouraged to maximize development potential, efficiently use existing infrastructure, promote the revitalization of cities and towns and contribute to restoring Lake Erie. Priority Conservation Areas are locally designated areas targeted for protection and restoration. These areas may be important ecological, recreational, heritage, maritime and/or public access areas that are significant for their contribution to Lake Erie water quality and the region's general quality of life (OLEC, 2000).

Results

In 2005, three grants totaling approximately $600,000 were awarded to watershed protection pilot programs. These three programs are serving as the “guinea pigs” that will help the Ohio Lake Erie Commission gauge the effectiveness of this program. Each pilot project has a period of three years to complete its mission of defining and refining their priority development and conservation areas with much public input and decision making and then follow up with actual implementation of the plans to become truly effective in their respective areas. To gauge the effectiveness, three sets of indicators were developed; programmatic, land use and natural resource. Programmatic indicators will serve to track whether the initiative is being implemented effectively and whether it is changing policies at the local and state level. Land use indicators track whether the policy changes are actually changing patterns of land use in Ohio’s Lake Erie basin. Finally, natural resource indicators will serve to track whether land use decisions are actually improving the health of the watershed. At this stage, all pilot projects are nearing the beginning of the implementation process. Much work has been done to facilitate the designation of the projects’ priority development and conservation areas. Final analysis will rest with how well each of the projects met and/or exceeded the proposed indicators for each area. This, in turn, will provide for future refining of the Lake Erie Balanced Growth Initiative and its areas of innovation and difficulties. Nonetheless, Lake Erie watershed communities have the opportunity to come together, foster regional collaboration, and work toward focusing on the sustainability of Lake Erie, Ohio’s greatest natural resource.
Implications

Ohio is a home rule state, meaning land use decisions are made at the very local level of government. To that extent, possible conflicts could arise wherein communities may not tend to agree with one another on the designation or areas of focused development and conservation. It will be evident through the pilot projects the level of success in determining the willingness of several or more communities to put geographical boundaries aside and work toward a greater level of collaboration not often seen in determining land use decisions in Ohio. It will also be interesting to note how communities that undertake watershed balanced growth planning will rank ahead of those communities that do not in terms of competitive funding for state grants and loans as an incentive to do so. There are many questions left to be answered without having the luxury of a “finished product”. However, it is believed that the amount of careful planning and participation by a large contingent of Lake Erie stakeholder groups will prove to be fruitful as Ohio attempts to address its land use and natural resource issues for the betterment of Ohio’s citizens.

References

Ohio Lake Erie Commission’s Balanced Growth web site: http://www.epa.state.oh.us/oleo/bg1/index.html


The University Assisted Community School: A Natural Fit for Community-University Partnerships

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Introduction

The University Assisted Community Schools (UACS) model at the University of Tennessee has 3 philosophical forces: (1) collaboration, (2) systems Change, and (3) prevention.

Collaboration involves school systems, individual schools, community, and the university. This works out of theory of Urie Bronfenbrenner, the intersectionality of systems (1979). Systems thinking attunes us to the fact that kids leave school as much by dropping out as by being pushed out. Push-outs can occur by casualties of the curriculum or for community and personal reasons (mental illness, alcoholism, crime, etc.). The current project focuses only on pre- and elementary schools, hence the emphasis on prevention. Prevention of what? Mental illness, crime, and poverty!

The UACS is a School that has broadened its mission and vision to meet the needs of all of its students. The school is where health, mental health, and other services are provided, and other services are provided. The emphasis is on prevention. The full-service school is a new environment where systems approach to change is used. It is not a school where human services are an add-on. Collaboration thus becomes a key process in the school. Input from the community determines what special services will be provided. By meeting the noncurricular needs of children and families, the full-service school ensures that learning will happen for all students in the school (Kronick, 2003).

These schools are open extended days and extended hours.

What is an average day?

- 7:00-7:45 AM: Breakfast club and language instruction (important for English language learners)
- 7:45 AM – 2:45 PM: Regular school day, tutoring and mentoring. Tutoring can involve remediating students with extreme deficiencies to students who are just below proficiency levels. Tutoring takes place in areas of reading and math. Most students are decently proficient in math but woefully below in reading. This puts them at a disadvantage. They can do the math function but can’t read the question.
- 2:45-4:45 PM: Tutoring, homework, and enrichment.

Some teachers will have recalcitrant students removed from their class and assigned to a tutor and a mentor because this allows them a teachable moment. With certain students out of the class, teachers can teach. Mentors will be teaching social skills and doing behavioral interventions which will preclude medications for these children. This is a currently very hot topic, and the interested reader should pursue this at their own leisure.

The after school teaching style is different from the day teaching style. We don’t give students more of the same. Enrichment activities have included theatre, art, unicycles, music, and American Sign Language, etc. An overriding theme of the university assisted school is “Students who are hungry, dirty, mentally ill, and generally living in bad environments cannot learn” (Kronick, 2005). The best teacher in the world can’t reach these children without help.
Hence school clinics are established and staffed by pre-med students. Master’s seeking students in school and mental 
health counseling work with students who are referred for mental health purposes. Appropriate referrals are made 
when necessary. Often times, however, these students are the only health care providers broadly defined who work 
with these students. Referrals may be made but it is often quite some time before they are seen by an appropriate level 
professional.

At one school that has approximately 450 students, the principal has documented 72 students with persistent medical 
problems that need to be treated. These range from asthma and diabetes to rashes and colds that just aren’t taken 
care of.

A recent study by Walker, Kronick, and Diambra (2007) found that a matched sample of students who participated in 
an after school program that those who attended did statistically significant better on the following variables: reading, 
attendance, and tardies. Improvement in math was in the right direction but was not statistically significant.

Collaboration
As mentioned above, prevention of crime, mental illness, and poverty is a central facet of UACS, hence the project 
collaborates particularly with the Department of Corrections, Office of Probation and Parole. Many of our parents have 
been, are, and will be incarcerated. It is a way of life in the neighborhood of Title 1 schools. Hence we have built a fine 
collaboration with corrections over 11 years. They have helped us with parents who are not involved appropriately in 
their children’s lives. The following quote demonstrates this collaboration in action.

The Meeting
The principal, assistant principal, coordinator of special programs, school nurse, school counselor, and Star’s 
[pseudonym] probation officer were present. The probation officer began by stating his role vis-à-vis Star. He was 
concerned not only about Star meeting the rules of her probation, but also that her house be clean and safe so that her children could succeed in school.

Comments were made by each person in attendance. The teachers particularly were glad to see something 
getting done because they wanted the children in class and learning. The coordinator of special programs 
emphasized that because the children would be in school, they would pass the state test, which would help the 
school improve its No Child Left Behind status. The school nurse was pleased that she would be able to work 
with other children and not spend as much time on the Delaney girls. The school counselor served as a case 
manager to ensure that the myriad services needed were delivered in a coordinated fashion. The principal and 
assistant principal also were relieved that action was being taken. The author was pleased that the full-service 
community school program brought together a diverse and somewhat unorthodox group to see that the head 
lice case was resolved (Kronick, 2006).

Mental health issues have percolated to the top as the number 1 non-curricular need in Title 1 schools. Collaboration 
with the Department of Mental Health and having graduate students in mental health/school counseling have helped 
deal with this onerous situation more than could have been hoped for.

Trials and Tribulations
Like other models in education, the UACS model comes with its challenges. In addition to the anticipated issues of 
personality conflict, parent buy-in, and student enthusiasm, there has been a serious institutional support issue. To a 
lesser extent, the model has come in contact with institutional barriers at the school level. That is, the model has failed 
to meet the needs of two elementary schools. Because the model requires a level of commitment to understanding the 
model (reading about the model and struggling to put it into practice), it simply has been too much work for two schools. 
If principals do not make a commitment to fully understanding and incorporating this model into day-to-day practice, it 
almost always will fail. The university contact cannot do all the heavy lifting if the model is met with challenges. Some 
schools are not able to invest the time and resources necessary to making the model work to its full capacity.

To a greater extent, most of the challenges to the UACS is the “U,” or the university. As Harkavy mentions, too often 
these programs are only a “blip on the institutional radar” (Benson, Harkavy, & Puckett, 2007). That is, these programs 
are certainly not the norm. It has been difficult to secure any formal support from the university system to continue 
the maintenance of these programs. For over ten years, this project has been led by a single faculty member at the 
University of Tennessee. Based on these ten years of experience, the reasons for poor institutional support is mainly 
because of a misunderstanding of how this model fits into traditional understandings of faculty research. In meetings 
with upper administration, there has been a lack of understanding about how this is distinct from simple community 
service. Since this model is poorly understood, resources are not dedicated to supporting the life of this program 
(money and staff), yet another hurdle to implementation. The one faculty member relies almost solely upon soft money
and student volunteerism to support these efforts. Until universities make the transition from the model of “big science” as a research agenda to an “engaged university” as an institutional mantra, these programs will continue to be an institutionally insignificant program (Benson, Harkavy, & Puckett, 2007, p. 78).

Successes

To not paint too dismal of a picture, UACS at the University of Tennessee have also been met with some successes at the grassroots level. Currently in our county, the UACS model is used in five elementary schools. In these programs, the principal has welcomed the program with open arms. Principals are able to set the institutional agenda for their school. With enough support from principals, the model will be doomed to success.

Recently, several meetings were spearheaded by one particularly charismatic principal who has been investing in replicating these efforts across the county. As a result of these interest meetings where the model is explained in detail (sharing benefits and challenges of the program), five additional schools have shown a desire to adapt the program to fit their school. A work group was created and has begun working on a grant from the United States Department of Education. This grant is one of the first acknowledgements by the federal government that the full service, university-assisted community school model is valid and can work across the nation.

Like any program run in schools, the University of Tennessee’s UACS program has been fortunate in some circumstances and would admittedly be difficult to replicate these factors. However, these next two factors have been critical to the success of the development of this model. First, in one elementary school, one particular principal has been charismatic in the implementation of the model. She has committed to getting her PhD in Theory and Practice in Teacher Education and is completing her dissertation on the UACS model’s effectiveness. She has spearheaded the work group to disseminate the program across the county. She excitably introduces her school to visitors as a full service community school. There is a strong partnership between her school and the University of Tennessee. Her leadership has been an asset.

Second, the Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy has become engaged in raising support and visibility of the UACS program. Ten years ago, no one knew about the full service community school model. Presently, it has become part of the discussion of educational policy and practice at the University of Tennessee. By hosting several lectures and public celebrations, the Baker Center has been invaluable in raising the level of awareness and acceptance of the program. As a result of the Baker Center’s efforts, the University of Tennessee has recently entered in conversations with the University of Pennsylvania about sustaining, improving, and replicating our efforts.

Relationship between Service Learning and the Community Schools

A key component to the University of Tennessee’s UACS program has been the use of student volunteers. To run after school programs, students taking Dr. Kronick’s “Service Learning and the University Student” course have been used. There is a natural connection between service learning and community schools. Three concepts drive service learning: (1) reciprocity, (2) reflection, and (3) integration.

In terms of reciprocity, students learn course concepts and better themselves. However, this personal development occurs in concert with the betterment of the community (in this case, the community schools). In this program, “both servers and recipients of the service develop a mutual sense of belonging and responsibility within their community and foster a relationship that might not otherwise exist” (Gourley, Kronick, Cunningham, forthcoming). Students and community schools benefit simultaneously.

Students also reflect upon their experiences to not only take time to process their experiences, but also link their experiences to course content and to other life experiences. Reflection is a critical component in the full service community school model, as well. Over the ten years of this program, numerous conversations about “what worked, what did not work, and how can we make it better” have been a staple holding the model together. We would posit that it takes a reflective work style to ensure success of the UACS model (an openness to change and adapt the model when needed).

Finally, true learning and productivity comes when theory and practice are integrated. In the classroom, students are accustomed to learning theory and taking notes. However, it is beyond their traditional scope of learning to put those theories into practical application. Behavioral interventions are frequently based on theoretical models (described earlier in the paper). Likewise with the community school program, it requires an understanding of the literature surrounding community schools as well as a willingness to put these theories into action. The connection between service learning and the UACS model is undeniable, hence why it makes sense for the university to have a hand in the schools, probably the most important social institution because of its ability to touch the most lives (Benson, Harkavy, & Puckett, 2007).
The Future

To move forward with UACS, there must be strong institutional support from both the university and school administration. University administration must make the connection that rigorous research can be done through community schools. At the risk of sounding like a broken record, university professors must view this type of work as valued by the university and integrated into the tenure process. Some junior faculty at the University of Tennessee will not touch this type of work because they view it as dangerous to their career advancement. Upper administration must at least make a philosophical commitment to the ideals of the FSCS model. The University of Tennessee is laboriously trying to communicate these ideas to upper administration. The road ahead is rough, but at least we are on their calendars.

Additionally, upper administration from both the school level and the school system level must realize the value of the work. The importance of the school-level leadership (principals) has already been emphasized. However, it is also crucial to secure the buy-in from system-level leadership (superintendent). Up to this point, the value of the program in our county has not been officially realized. School board members appreciate the program, but they are only willing to draft letters of support for grant proposals. Our county has recently hired a new superintendent from the Boston Metro area. We have already made contact with him to try and get on his radar. Hopefully this will be a new era in the UACS model in Knox County, TN. Based on the model of prevention and the philosophy that “Students who are hungry, dirty, mentally ill, and generally living in bad environments cannot learn,” we hope to be able to enact change in our educational system.

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City Planning, Community Action, and Academic Research: A Three-Way Intersection

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With Ottawa’s Neighbourhood Planning Initiative as a backdrop, this paper explores the role of universities in supporting communities and cities in place-based planning. It argues that researchers can play a valuable role in collecting input, identifying lessons and sharing feedback.

Introduction

Huddled in an elementary school library on a winter evening, city officials asked for feedback from community representatives on the reconstruction of Wellington Street, the main street corridor of an urban Ottawa neighbourhood. After a long silence, one local business person replied:

“My impression so far is that no one appears to know what they are doing — You are the experts; shouldn’t you be telling us what to do?”

This rather candid question spoke volumes to us, as university researchers listening attentively to this Neighbourhood Planning Initiative (NPI) meeting. It spoke to our research interests in community capacity and empowerment. It hinted at the negotiation of power and control between city and community representatives. It seemed to challenge stakeholder expectations of the planning process. While giving us much to think about, the question also prompted Carleton University’s Centre for Urban Research and Education (CURE) to consider our own role in this community engagement initiative—both as professionals and partners.

With the Neighbourhood Planning Initiative (NPI) in Hintonburg as a case study, this paper explores the role of universities in participatory, place-based planning. Since 2006, CURE’s small team of faculty, staff and students has reflected on our contribution. In what capacity would we best serve the NPI, taking into account our collective skills and resources? How can our involvement be useful and relevant to the community, city and a wide-variety of other stakeholders? And more broadly, how can this action-research project nurture sustainable campus-city-community partnerships to lay the foundation for mutual learning and social change?

The Neighbourhood Planning Initiative: At a Glance

The Neighbourhood Planning Initiative is about stepping away from traditional methods of planning to experiment with a more integrated and inclusive approach to community development. Introduced in 2006, the City of Ottawa is testing the approach in urban, rural and suburban neighbourhood demonstration sites.

Starting in the urban neighbourhood of Hintonburg, city planners have set out to achieve three overarching goals (City of Ottawa, Legislative Agenda, 2006):

*Enabling Community Connections*

First, the Neighbourhood Planning Initiative intends to establish a structured point of connection to the city for neighbourhoods. The idea is to provide neighbourhoods with single-window access to a wide-range of departments and city service providers (police, community centres, etc.). Similarly, the pilot is designed to help city officials incorporate community knowledge and resources within the neighbourhood planning process to better reflect the
needs, priorities and concerns of local citizens. In practice, the City is bringing citizens together in a systematic effort (e.g. meetings, open houses and surveys) to collect feedback on three separate, but interrelated projects focusing on street infrastructure (e.g. sewage, transit); community design (e.g. zoning, streetscaping); and other broader community issues (e.g. arts, heritage, environment, crime).

**Strengthening Inter-departmental Collaboration**

Second, the City of Ottawa hopes that a more holistic, place-sensitive approach to planning will lead to improved inter-departmental coordination. Multi-functional teams have been formed across the three key departments: Public Works and Services (PWS), Planning and Growth Management (PGM) and Community and Protective Services (CPS). Remarkably, this is the first time in the City of Ottawa’s history that these departments have tried to work together in a more concerted fashion. The City expects to see results from the pilot in the pooling of budgets and the sharing of human resources, all of which can be tracked at the neighbourhood level.

**Nurturing Citizen-Councillor Conversations**

Third, the Neighbourhood Planning Initiative is establishing a mechanism for citizens to define their needs and priorities, and to package and present them to municipal politicians. City Councillors can also offer the process to constituents interested in rolling up their sleeves to get involved in community development, thereby contributing to a greater sense of civic participation. In addition, the Neighbourhood Planning Initiative is attempting to put the ‘community-based planning’ and ‘collaborative community building’ objectives of Ottawa’s 20/20 plan into practice, and to more generally, develop innovative models for place-based planning and service delivery. If proven effective, the approach will be adopted across the city, starting with communities perceived to have the most pressing challenges (e.g. crime, poverty, infrastructure, etc.).

**Carleton’s Involvement in the Neighbourhood Planning Initiative**

In 2007 Infrastructure Canada, a federal government department, challenged multidisciplinary research teams to foster evidence-based policy and decision-making on infrastructure and communities issues. Taking up the challenge, Carleton University’s Centre for Urban Research and Education (CURE) was awarded a two-year contribution to study the Neighbourhood Planning Initiative as a case study. Our intention was to examine the roles of municipal government and voluntary organizations in promoting and facilitating community participation in decisions about local infrastructure. To conduct the case study, Carleton established a partnership with the City of Ottawa in 2006 to provide evaluation and research support. It is important to note that the City’s pilot approach and CURE’s case study were not initiated by the Hintonburg community (though they were supportive). Thus, in both cases, the parameters of the projects were largely defined by city planners (e.g. terms of reference) and university researchers (e.g. research questions). Community involvement would increase as the projects got underway.

**Box 1: CURE’s Research Questions and Interests**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Research Questions</th>
<th>Research Interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• How do local governments and communities build decision-making capacity and facilitate learning?</td>
<td>• Degree of community involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What is the substantive and symbolic value of community engagement?</td>
<td>• Power and control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How is the tension between engagement, learning and project momentum managed?</td>
<td>• Representation and accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can infrastructure provide a model for civic engagement in other areas of local decision-making?</td>
<td>• Desirability of outcomes from the pilot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Community capacity/resilience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Utility to planners</td>
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<td></td>
<td>○ Horizontality (City)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sustainability and prospects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theory and Practice: Place-based Planning vs. Community-based Research Approaches**

There are several similarities between the City of Ottawa’s place-based planning pilot and the Centre for Urban Research and Education’s community-based research approach. First, both approaches emphasize the participation and influence of “local knowledge” in some or all stages of the planning and research process. “Local knowledge” emphasizes people’s assets, needs and capacities based on their experiences or understanding of a ‘place’ or ‘community’. Second, there are common underlying goals: to learn something, develop relationships, and solve
problems. These goals apply to all stakeholders involved, including planners and researchers. Third, the key drivers of both approaches are shared, including the realization that complex challenges cannot be solved with a few people, looking at a few issues; and that engaging communities can result in more effective planning and policy as well as more useful research results. Finally, both place-based planners and community-based researchers hope that participants will find the process to be positive (if not empowering) so that, in the long-term, participants will contribute to social change and to building stronger communities (Bradford, 2005; Stoecker, 1999; Warwick-Booth, 2005; Phillips and Orsini, 2002).

Becoming a “Knowledge Broker”

Drawing on these similarities, the Centre for Urban Research and Education’s role in the Neighbourhood Planning Initiative might best be described as a “knowledge broker”. Our role has been to navigate between city protocols and community practices to generate new opportunities for dialogue, helping stakeholders to connect, reflect and correct their involvement. In this capacity, we have worn many hats: as an evaluator during important phases of the pilot; a facilitator of, and participant in, the engagement process; and as an interlocutor to share the study findings with other policymakers and practitioners (e.g. other levels of government, academics, other community groups).

In practice, CURE has attempted to gather local and planning knowledge on the Neighbourhood Planning Initiative at three interrelated levels (Bradford, 2005, p.5):

- **knowledge about communities to profile the Hintonburg neighbourhood.** CURE engaged graduate students to track current and historical trends in the community through literature and archival reviews. We participated in “walking tours” of the neighbourhood led by the Hintonburg Community Association. In May 2006, CURE facilitated a workshop to help identify 11 target stakeholder groups which might be affected by the Neighbourhood Planning Initiative. This information helped us to conduct two baseline surveys in the fall 2006 (over 350 responses). One survey was disseminated to city staff and the other targeted community stakeholders.

- **knowledge of communities to get “on the ground and in the street” feedback.** The CURE team has observed roughly 50 community meetings, open houses and other community events on topics ranging from transit routes and city lamps, to public art and community safety. In partnership with Imagine Ottawa, CURE held a workshop with panelists ranging from City planning departments, local businesses, community organizations and local residents. The workshop was part of the City Social Forum and involved 30 other Ottawa residents. To date, a dozen interviews with a wide variety of stakeholders have been conducted to gather more personal, in-depth feedback. The CURE team is also in the process of conducting city staff and community stakeholder monitoring surveys.

- **knowledge for changing communities to understand theoretical models and trends.** CURE has undertaken reviews of literature on issues related to community engagement theory, community council models, evaluation methods, as well as reviews on related initiatives such as Action for Neighbourhood Change and Vibrant Communities. CURE has also participated in and created opportunities for understanding the successes and challenges of community-engagement processes. These opportunities have included conferences, workshops and other forums involving government decision-makers, academics, students, foundations, community practitioners, the media and other citizens.

Research Dynamics: Tensions and Directions

The similarities between place-based planning and community-based research have made it both easier and sometimes more difficult to undertake this case study. In particular, CURE has encountered tensions and explored opportunities to find a niche for our involvement in the Neighbourhood Planning Initiative.

**Tensions: Accessibility, Degree of Involvement, Time and Resources**

- **accessibility.** CURE has been both an “insider” and “outsider” to the Neighbourhood Planning Initiative. On the one hand, we are privileged to be able to participate in the “nitty gritty” of neighbourhood development, from scribbling on maps to negotiating public spaces. On the other hand, our accessibility has been limited in some cases. In one instance we were officially “disinvited” to a city meeting and in another we were asked to only “observe” community meetings. This has been sometimes confusing, both for CURE and for other stakeholders.

- **degree of involvement.** Discussions about the level of our involvement in the Neighbourhood Planning Initiative get at the heart of the debate between conventional and community-based research. For instance, should we be seen as an independent “consultant” to the City so that we may provide objective feedback on the NPI? Alternatively, should we be “initiators”, taking on more of a process-facilitating role than a product-oriented role? Or should we be “collaborators” where stakeholders have an equal say in defining the research questions and research strategies? How will our decisions affect the credibility of the research (from both academic and community points of view)? (Stoecker, 1999, 7). CURE is still trying to address these difficult questions.
• **time and resources.** The City has taken the lead in organizing neighbourhood meetings which has provided us with many opportunities to interact with community stakeholders. Yet, this has also meant that CURE has needed to compete for time to get on the City’s meeting agenda and/or to gather additional input from extremely busy community leaders outside of these meetings. Further, CURE’s limited time and resources has also affected how much we can be involved in the Neighbourhood Planning Initiative.

*Directions: Representation, Interpretation and Integration, Sustainability*

• **representation.** The City of Ottawa has had limited success in obtaining feedback from “difficult to reach groups” (e.g. immigrants, youth, seniors, streetworkers, etc.) More effort is required to overcome real barriers (e.g. time, language) to participating in consultation processes. CURE’s involvement could help to ensure that the Neighbourhood Planning Initiative is more inclusive to all community members. This may involve, for example, collecting feedback in non-traditional locations (e.g. soccer practices, senior centres) and using non-traditional methods (e.g. photo-based research) to engage such groups.

• **interpretation and integration.** CURE will explore ways to increase the involvement of community and city stakeholders as co-learners, co-producers and co-owners of the research. For instance, CURE may facilitate workshops for community and city stakeholders to play a role in interpreting the results of the monitoring surveys. We will also pursue opportunities to not only share the findings in a variety of formats accessible to the community (e.g. local newspapers, radio, blogs), but will also try to put the findings into the hands of Ottawa policy-makers, both municipal and federal.

• **sustainability.** Reciprocity and mutual benefit are critical to achieving effective partnerships. Campus-city-community relationships require a sustained commitment to listening, learning, and appreciating the evolution of goals and interests, and strengths and limitations. In the longer term, CURE may seek opportunities to engage faculty and mobilize students to develop new collaborative research and service learning projects to both broaden and deepen our role with the City and within the Hintonburg community.

**Conclusion: Learning Forward**

This paper has tried to argue that university researchers can play a valuable role in participatory, place-based planning and that one way is to function as a “knowledge broker”. Informal feedback suggests that CURE’s involvement has been helpful in collecting input from stakeholders during key phases of the pilot (e.g. baseline, monitoring); identifying lessons (e.g. reaching minority groups) and in sharing real-time observations with a wide-variety of stakeholders (local residents, policy-makers, academics, etc.).

In thinking about our role as partners and professionals, Carleton University’s Centre for Urban Research and Education has extracted four key lessons (so far):

1) Navigating the complex nature of the urban planning frequently makes it difficult for scholars and students, regardless of their experience and expertise, to select the most appropriate research approach. Being flexible to “switch hats”, moving from evaluator to facilitator, for example, is critical to remaining responsive and relevant to place-based planning initiatives.

2) While the principles of place-based planning and community-based research are well documented, there is still much to be learned in developing effective approaches for putting these principles into practice. Too often, partnerships are launched with a focus on implementation and too little attention is given to the goals, expectations, assets (and limitations) that participants bring to the table. More upfront conversations of these issues can build trust and can make partnerships easier to implement and sustain.

3) Willingness to commit time and energy are important, but so are developing and expanding knowledge (e.g. theory, research) and skills (e.g. communication, team building, problem solving). Each partner has knowledge and skills to learn from one another.

4) University researchers working in communities are often faced with multiple accountabilities. Are we primarily accountable to community organizations, the City, our funder, Infrastructure Canada? This is not always an easy question to answer and may vary depending on the issue and circumstance. At the very least, it is important to recognize and try to resolve these accountabilities.

The Neighbourhood Planning Initiative in Ottawa provides a rich case study and rationale for why collaboration is critical to dealing with complex, challenging and sometimes controversial issues. While there are many obstacles to overcome, place-based planning can benefit from three-way partnerships between communities, city planners and academic researchers. Moreover, intersecting local, technical and discipline-based knowledge can enable universities to play a more significant role in supporting cities and communities to build stronger, more sustainable neighbourhoods.
The author would like to acknowledge the leadership and support of Chris Stoney and Teresa Bellafontaine in preparing this paper. For more information about Carleton University’s Centre for Urban Research and Education (CURE), please visit: www.cure-crfmu.org.

References


Is Participation Having an Impact?

Measuring Progress in Winnipeg’s Inner City through the voices of Community Based Programme Participants

Shauna MacKinnon and Sara Stephens

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives - Manitoba

In 2005, a consortium of eight community-based organizations (CBOs) that do neighbourhood-level preventative work with families, youth and children in Winnipeg’s inner city sought to develop indicators to measure the results of their work. Increasingly pressed by governments and other funders to produce such indicators, they believed that those generally in use missed many of the human gains that they were confident they were making with low-income, inner-city residents. They believed that their emphasis on the importance of colonization, and the need for de-colonization, played an important role in their success, but that funders could not fully grasp this philosophical orientation or its practical implications. They approached the authors’ research institute for assistance in designing a methodology to better identify the outcomes of their efforts. The result was a research project that had a strong Participatory Action Research (PAR) character, that involved the development of a close working relationship between the academic researchers and the community practitioners, and that reflected the very progressive values that guide the work of these CBOs.

Is Participation Having an Impact?

In 2005, a consortium representing inner-city community based organizations (CBOs), and university researchers came together to study and report on the community development work being conducted in the inner city of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. The central objective was to better understand the development strategies that have been effective, those that have been less so, and to determine what challenges remain and how they might be better addressed.

The inner city of Winnipeg is among the poorest communities in Canada. A distinct characteristic is the high population of Aboriginal people. According to 2001 census data, in some neighbourhoods the Aboriginal population is as high as 52%. Many have lived in the community all of their lives and others have migrated from impoverished reserve communities to seek opportunities in the city, only to be further trapped in poverty.

While the challenges resulting from chronic concentrated poverty, systemic racism and the lasting and damaging effects of colonization remain intense, positive change is taking place. There is a long history of creative community development in Winnipeg’s inner city. Through the State of the Inner City Report, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – Manitoba (CCPA-Mb), a community-based research institute with a social justice research mandate, works with community partners to capture the impact of this work. The study was conducted in collaboration with eight community-based organizations as a means of exploring how to measure the difficult-to-measure outcomes of participation in community-based programmes. In 2006, these organizations embarked on a journey to develop and implement a research design that would explore the meaning of ‘successful outcomes’ through dialogue with participants of inner city community-based programmes. The process resulted in interviews with a total of 91 individuals, with approximately 70% self identifying as either Aboriginal or Metis. The complete research study by MacKinnon & Stephens (2007) describes findings in detail. This paper provides an overview and reflection of the methodology and reflects on the research process and lessons learned.
The Challenge of Measuring Outcomes

Funding institutions appear to be pre-occupied with measuring outcomes, and the experience of our partner CBOs is that they do so in a narrow manner. This is frustrating for CBO representatives. Governments and other programme funders seem to be little interested in how lives are being affected qualitatively and how participation in community-based programmes might affect the lives not only of participants, but also their families, neighbourhoods and the broader community. This apparent lack of institutional interest in understanding in a qualitative way the outcomes of participation is in part based on the reality that such effects are difficult to measure. In addition, it is often the case that the underlying objectives of funding institutions are fundamentally different than the objectives of the community-based organizations participating in this project.

The CBOs that guided this project have a transformative vision. Many believe that fundamental change requires that we first address the damage of colonization and oppression. While funding institutions, in particular governments, wish to see individuals adapt to the existing social and economic structures, our community partners are interested in fundamental changes in these structures.

While change of this magnitude may seem far from reach as the inner city continues to struggle with complex challenges, there is a general sense for those who work on the front lines that real progress is being made for individuals and families in the inner city. However, much of this progress is not recognized because of how ‘success’ is measured. This research is in part a response to the ongoing pressure on CBOs to demonstrate the effectiveness of their programmes through quantifiable programme outcomes.

Transformation through Participatory Action Research

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a model used by many researchers and practitioners working with oppressed and marginalized groups through a transformative framework. Consistent with the aims of PAR, this project involved a significant community role in all aspects of the research – from planning and implementation to dissemination and utilization of findings. The project grew initially out of the mutual trust that had been developed though joint participation in earlier work, and led to the formation of a community based ‘research team’ that gathered to discuss potential research relevant to the needs of the community. Participating CBO’s provide services primarily, although not exclusively to Aboriginal residents. Some have very consciously developed their programmes through an anti-oppressive theoretical framework and they integrate a strong cultural component into their programmes. Teaching participants about the effects of colonization and oppression is integrated into many of the programmes offered and the impact of this model became evident through the research process.

Colonization, Oppression and Unrealistic Expectations

Early in the research process, the research team agreed that a framework from which to proceed would need to recognize the historical context of the Aboriginal experience. Hart, as cited in Silver (2006: 27), describes the deep damage caused by internalized colonization: “Aboriginal people start to believe that we are incapable of learning and that the colonizers’ degrading images and beliefs about Aboriginal people and our ways of being are true”. For Aboriginal inner-city organizations, reversing the damage of colonization is a first step in the transformation process. It requires that programme participants are provided with an opportunity to learn about oppression and colonization so that they can proudly reclaim their Aboriginal identity and move forward. But the journey for many is long and outcomes are not always easy to measure. Therefore it has been essential that the research project, from design through to analysis, be rooted in an understanding of the profound effects of colonization.

Research Design and Participation

In keeping with PAR, the research design required careful attention to process, instrument design and data analysis. Our aim was to ensure that the research process remained true to the inclusive, empowering and transformative objectives of the research team. Consensus emerged through the early planning process to develop a means to measure progress through drawing out the voices of programme participants. The research team felt very strongly that participants, through their own voices, have valuable insights to share through their stories. Their perceptions of what participation in programmes means to them, their families, their neighbourhoods and their broader communities, is critical to the measurement of whether progress is being made.

In the process of identifying research areas that might be of interest to CBOs, several discussions took place around the use of indicators in measuring progress in the inner city. The question ‘how do we measure?’ evolved into a discussion around ‘what’ are we measuring and ‘who determines what needs to be measured?’ For inner-city organizations working with marginalized community members, these questions are critical. For the most part, funders are looking for quantitative measures that can demonstrate the number of participants who have become employed, returned to school, etc. Organizations argue that these kinds of expectations are often unrealistic given the deep and damaging effects of colonization and oppression, and that smaller more subtle yet important gains need to be identified.
The research instruments evolved within the context of a decolonization framework. Outcomes are not measured simply by individual adaptation to please funders. This poses a challenge for institutions seeking linear quantifiable outcomes. But by increasing awareness of the deep effects of colonization, CBOs hope that funders will learn to recognize that reversing the damage of colonization requires that mainstream institutions adapt their policies, programmes and methods of measurement to better reflect the needs of colonized peoples. It is worth noting that much of the work of CBOs is required because of the damage and neglect of the very institutions that fund them, and therefore it is ironic that institutions continue to expect CBOs to demonstrate their effectiveness on mainstream institutional terms. Members of the research team are also acutely aware that much of what they are able to do is in spite of public policies and programmes that they view as inadequate at best and damaging at worst. While they can do their best to help individuals adapt, increase awareness, and advocate for their ‘clients’, the reality that housing is sorely lacking, social assistance incomes are inadequate, and access to good jobs, childcare and training is limited, is largely out of their control. Unless public policy shifts considerably to address these issues, improvements in the economic and social well-being of the people that they serve will remain less than what is possible. Raising individual awareness of structural forces, so that individuals will better understand their oppression, is a critical first step toward social transformation.

Analyzing the Data Through an Anti-Oppressive ‘Lens’

Because our community partners emphasize programme design and delivery embedded in decolonization and anti-oppressive frameworks, our analysis takes shape through this lens. While the central research question is—is participation having an impact? --we are looking for a much deeper understanding of the impact. We also want to know if and how participation is having an impact on reversing the damage that has been caused by colonization and oppression and whether programme participants, their families, neighbourhoods and the broader community, are better able to move forward as a result of their participation. Within this basic framework of analysis, we were interested in the various ways in which participation is having an impact on individuals, families, neighbourhoods and communities with the overall objective of transformation.

While PAR and the use of narrative have many advantages as a means of doing research with transformative goals, there are also limitations. The challenges and limitations experienced in this project are described within the full research report (MacKinnon, S. & Stephens, S. 2008).

Throughout the project we reflected on whether the research project described meets the transformative objectives of community partners -- is it contributing to significant social change? We conclude that it has potential for transformation on at least four levels.

1. By demonstrating that progress can be much more broadly measured than is currently favoured, there is potential for funding institutions to understand and accept the resistance expressed by CBOs.

2. By questioning the measurement instruments used by funding institutions CBO’s are taking steps to demonstrate their resistance by developing their own measurement models-- a step toward transformation.

3. Training and hiring community researchers to conduct interviews and assist with data analysis, provides an important opportunity to raise awareness and develop capacity.

4. Providing interviewees with an opportunity to ‘name their world’ has the potential to be an empowering experience that can lead to praxis (Freire, 2006).

Overview of Research Findings – How Do We Measure Success?

Responses were categorized within the themes outlined in diagram 1. A detailed consideration of each theme is articulated within the full research study (MacKinnon S.& Stephens,S. 2008).The primary purpose of this research project was to understand how we might better measure the outcomes of participation to more accurately reflect individual, family, neighbourhood and broader community benefits. Using a PAR framework – engaging CBOs and programme participants in design and implementation – we aimed to develop a better understanding by interviewing programme participants. Respondents described positive experiences that contribute to their lives and the lives of their families and communities, in many powerful ways. Their stories offer important lessons for the way that we measure effectiveness. They also provide important lessons for CBOs as they examine and refine the programmeming that they provide. These lessons are described in the final research report.

Building Capacity Through PAR - hiring and training community researchers

Researchers involved in The State of the Inner City Report are committed to training and hiring community members. Eight community researchers were hired and trained to conduct interviews for this study. Near the end of the research process we conducted interviews with three of our community researchers to hear their thoughts on the project. We
were interested in understanding whether they felt they had benefited from participating as a community researcher and how they felt about the project in general. These interviews confirmed for us that hiring and training community researchers is critical to our community capacity building aims. Interviews with all three community researchers are described in the full research report.

Reflecting on the Journey

On a cold and stormy December morning, approximately two hundred community members gathered at Winnipeg’s Circle of Life - Thunder Bird House to celebrate the release of the study. It was an emotional event as community and university researchers described the process of joint learning that took place throughout the research process. Researchers who participated in the project learned much from the experience, and powerful relationships with the community were forged and strengthened.

Out of respect for the many programme participants and community researchers who contributed their time and shared their stories with us, we conclude the story of our journey with a quote from one of our community researchers, which we believe captures the essence of the project.

When asked to provide a pseudonym to ensure her anonymity in the final report, Nancy, a community researcher and programme participant, responded as follows. Nancy’s words very powerfully articulate why this PAR model, with all of its flaws, is critical to conducting research in communities characterized by chronic poverty and exclusion:

*I really don’t mind if you put my real name on the final report. Our people have been silent for way too long…without a name or a face, which is known as an identity. I’m starting to know my culture and my identity, so without a name or a face, I am not complete or whole. I feel our government and/or other agencies could and will know the real facts. I feel too, we as a people need to speak up, and let our voices be heard. I am speaking up for people who don’t have a voice or their afraid to speak up. I am giving you permission to put my real name on the final report. I want to thank you for giving me the chance to speak up, I have learned so much about human beings, including myself.*

References


Investigating HIV-related stigma within communities of gay and bisexual men: A dialogue between photovoice and visual studies

By drawing on the literature from photovoice and visual studies, I attempt to bridge the conceptual gap between these two fields and explore what each can gain from a consideration of the other.

Henry came into the room carrying an old photo album, its stiff black paged held together with cord, the faded black-and-white images fixed in with small tabs in the corners. This, he felt, would help him explain what he meant. “This is what the parties were like,” he said, flipping it open, and immediately plunged into another time. The photographs in the album showed men locked in each other’s arms, some in full military uniform and others dressed in elaborate drag. For my master’s thesis on Kingston, Ontario’s gay and lesbian history, I interviewed more than 40 men and women. The hours I spent with Henry stand out as the most helpful and memorable of the interviews. He told me about life as a gay man in Kingston during World War II – one of the best times for a gay man to live in Kingston, he said – and as we pored over the photographs, his voice became more vibrant and his descriptions more lush. The images triggered new memories and more elaborate detail, so that he left me with one of the best understandings I obtained of gay life in that era (McDiamid, 1999). Yet the photographs not only spurred Henry’s memory, they also evoked an emotional response in me. Looking through Henry’s album I could better imagine what it might have been like for these men to seek out pleasure in each other’s company as they trained to go off to war.

Images hold power. Image-based researchers Jon Prosser and Donna Schwartz write,

“Through our use of photographs we can discover and demonstrate relationships that may be subtle or easily overlooked, we can communicate the feeling or suggest the emotion imparted by activities, environments and interactions, and we can provide a degree of tangible detail, a sense of being there and a way of knowing that may not easily translate into other symbolic modes of communication” (Prosser & Schwartz, 2003, p.116).

When I sat with Henry in 1998 and he incorporated his photos into our interview session, I had little idea that this act formed part of a research method that draws from the fields of sociology, ethnography, anthropology, history, and community health. Now almost ten years later, as I embark on a dissertation on the forms and functions of HIV-related stigma within communities of gay and bisexual men, I find myself returning to the power of the image.

Since the camera was invented in 1839, people have used photography as a means of exploring and documenting our lived experiences (Szto et al., 2005). In the early 1900s, American sociologist Lewis Hine used his documentary photos of children working in factories to lobby for legislation that would ban child labour in the United States (Power, 2003). Meanwhile, on the other side of the globe, the photographs of tortured Congolese slave labourers taken by the missionary Alice Seeley Harris were igniting the first international human rights movement and bringing about the end of slavery in the Congo (Nolen, 2003). Since that time legions of documentary photographers have sought to effect social change through photography, capitalizing on what Szto, Furman and Langer describe as the camera’s capacity to “link the human condition to the photograph’s viewer” (Szto et al., 2005, p.139). In 1996, Caroline Wang published the first article outlining a new methodology, called Photovoice, which also capitalizes on photography’s potential (Wang & Burris, 1997). Photovoice is a community-based participatory research method in which participants are given cameras and asked to take photos that reflect their experiences. The method can be used to explore a range of issues, from community strengths and challenges (Carlson, Engebretson, & Chamberlain, 2006) to individual experiences, such
The force of photographic images come from their being material realities in their own right, richly informative deposits left in the wake of whatever emitted them, potent means for turning the tables on reality – for turning it into a shadow” (Sontag, 1977, p. 180).

Orla Cronin argues that people are apt to take the photo as “true” because its referent is instantly recognizable and thus “the viewer runs the risk of taking the representation for the referent” (1998, p. 75). Not only do we expect the image to depict what “really happened”, the credibility we invest in the camera as a piece of recording technology can further authenticate the moment and the objects being photographed (Killion, 2001). We photograph moments of importance in our lives, and then these photos function to immortalize these moments.

I remember the first time I had complete control of our family’s camera. It was my first time traveling without my parents. At sixteen, I was away for the weekend in Montreal with my best friend. We took rolls of film, had a fantastic time, and were excited to see the resulting evidence of our trip. I remember vividly the keen sense of disappointment I experienced upon flipping through those photos. There we were, all dressed up, outside art galleries and bizarre urban sculptures, eating croissants and being sixteen in a large urban centre. Yet there was something missing in the images, an absence that was difficult to put into words. We shuffled through the photos over and over again looking for “a good one”, for an image that captured not only what our trip looked like, but also how it felt.

At sixteen I was too unfamiliar with a camera to understand, or really even spend much time contemplating, what was missing from those photos of our trip to Montreal. Part of the answer to that question is contained in Paul Byers’ claim that “Cameras don’t take pictures, people do” (1966 as quoted in Prosser & Schwartz, 1998, p. 122). In his article “The Camera Never lies: The Partiality of Photographic Evidence”, Brian Winston (1998) lists a vast array of technical choices as those of chronic pain (Baker & Wang, 2006). The photos created during the research process form the foundation for group discussions that are based on the Freiran model of education for critical consciousness. “Through guided facilitation participants use these photographs to engage in critical analysis of the meanings and social conditions they represent,” Wilson et al. write in their article “Engaging young adolescents in social action through photovoice: The youth empowerment strategies (YES!) project” (2007, p. 242). Photos and explanatory text are integrated into public exhibits and presentations to policy makers in an effort to effect social change through the telling of participants’ stories. Wang, who was initially using the method to explore the needs of women in rural China, writes, “The immediacy of the visual image creates evidence and promotes a vivid participatory means of sharing expertise and knowledge” (2000, p. 82).

In the following paper I discuss the benefits of a dialogue between photovoice and visual studies. To date there has been little conversation between these fields. My interest in this topic arises from a desire to draw from both areas in my study of the forms and functions of HIV-related stigma among communities of gay and bisexual men. Both approaches make significant contributions to image-based research. Photovoice encourages image-based researchers to conceptualize the process of doing research as a tool for social change and community engagement. This approach is especially relevant to research in the field of HIV where there is growing recognition that people living with HIV must be included in the research process in meaningful and beneficial ways (UNAIDS, 2007). The field of visual studies offers dense and varied theoretical frameworks that enhance our understanding of how images function. These concepts hold meaningful implications for photovoice researchers concerned with issues of knowledge transfer, and can inform the group discussion process that is also integral to photovoice.

Despite the extensive theoretical contributions to image-based research by authors such as Sarah Pink (2001), Gillian Rose (2001), Douglas Harper (1998, 2002), Howard Becker (1998), Jon Prosser (1998), Jon Wagner (2002, 2004), Michael Emmison and Philip Smith (2000), few of these names appear in the photovoice literature (Aubeluck & Buchanan, 2006; Strack et al., 2004; Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang, Cash & Power, 2000). This absence is indicative of the differences between these two fields. Image-based research, informed by sociology, anthropology, and ethnography, is concerned primarily with how images function as systems of representation and meaning. The field invokes a range of important questions: As researchers, how do we make sense of what a photograph means? Why are photographs a legitimate source for uncoding how we understand the world? And what affords images such resonance? How does the technology of the camera, the positions of photographer and viewer, or the context in which the viewing is taking place, shift how images are read? Photovoice, arising out of the fields of community-based research and health promotion, is more invested in the research process as a tool for empowerment and social change. Photovoice researchers ask: How photovoice can reflect Freire’s ideals of education for critical consciousness? What social change may occur as a result of the project? How do research participants benefit from their engagement on an individual and community level? Both photovoice and visual studies are legitimate areas of inquiry and much can be gained from a greater dialogue between these two fields.

According to Jon Wagner (2004) the power of a photograph lies in the tension it represents between ‘fiction’ and ‘reality’. From the first use of the technology, photographs were understood as “truthful, magical, and strange” (Rose, 2001, p. 19). The camera allows us to capture single moments, thus creating the illusion that what it presents is “real”. Writes Susan Sontag,
that confront the image maker. One must choose whether to physically manipulate the objects being photographed or leave them ‘in situ’, to consider lighting, select what will be inside and outside of the frame, decide upon a lens, shutter speed, aperture, and consider the angle of the shot, a factor that communicates “clear culturally determined connotations of power or subservience” (Winston, 1998, p. 63). B. Goldstein (2007), in his article “All Photos Lie – Images As Data,” lists other factors that affect the creation of an image, considerations such as perspective, colour, depth of field, field of view, framing, cropping and the eventual processing of the image. As we move further into a digital era, these options are multiplied by the accessibility of computer editing and processing. All of these decisions help to invest the resulting image with meaning. As Gregory Stanczak aptly writes, “We verbally zoom and pan” (2007, p. 8). All ‘data’ is socially constructed and the photograph is no more or less reliable than other sources (Khun, 1995; Wagner, 2002).

According to addiction researchers Rhodes and Fitzgerald, “the strength of images is their capacity to tap into the ambiguity between what we see and what we describe” (2006, p. 360). Elaine Power, in her article “Decentering the text: Exploring the potential for visual methods in the sociology of food” (2003), draws on the theoretical work of Pierre Bourdieu to illuminate this concept further. According to Bourdieu, practitioners of everyday life “draw upon dispositions and taken-for-granted knowledge embedded in their habitus which allow them to anticipate, without conscious thought, the appropriate actions, activities, gestures, and words for the situations of their everyday lives” (Power, 2003, p 10). Because the point of ‘practice’ is our somewhat unconscious act of doing, a tacit knowledge that is based in action rather than verbal expression, we often find that language fails us when we seek to describe these processes. Images, with their ability to draw on “the heart, as well as the intellect” (Khun, 2005, p. 8), offer another way into this form of knowing.

According to ethnographer D. Schwartz, photography can be approached in one of three ways, as “a precise machine-made record of a scene or a subject”, as something that “triggers meaning that is already in the viewer”, or as a “patterned social activity shaped by social context, cultural conventions, and group norms” (1989, p. 120). How the image is conceptualized shapes how we utilize it in our research. Viewing the photo as a socially constructed artifact helps to explain how the interaction between the camera, the image maker, the viewer, and the context in which an image is viewed creates it’s meaning. In order to make meaning from photographs we need more than the image itself, we need a conceptual framework through which to understand the image (Wagner, 2002). In her seminal text Visual Methodologies, Gillian Rose advocates for a critical visual methodology, one that approaches meaning-making in terms of “cultural significance, social practices, and power relations” (Rose, 2001, p. 3). Viewing photographs as systems of representation instead of truthful renderings of ‘reality’ opens up the possibility of making meaning of photos in terms of their visions of social difference. The analysis of photos can offer insights into how discourses of class, gender, race, sexuality, and able-bodiedness operate in society. In this way image-based research is well suited to the exploration of issues such as HIV-related stigma, a complex social phenomenon that is constituted by, and reinforces, other social inequalities (Parker & Aggleton, 2003).

This conceptualization of the image as a representational system that communicates notions of power is perhaps one of the key contributions visual studies can make to the use of photographs in research. Understanding images in this way can have an impact on how photovoice researchers engage in the process of group analysis of images and also raise issues relevant to knowledge transfer activities.

Group analysis of participants’ images is a key component of the photovoice methodology. Through this dialogic process participants engage in the co-creation of knowledge and in doing so develop research findings. In Caroline Wang et al.’s Flint Michigan project (2001), participants met to codify the issues, themes, and theories that emerged from group discussion and then collectively decided how to present their findings to policy makers and the general public. The majority of photovoice projects appear to engage in a method similar to the one utilized by Wang et al. However, in the photovoice literature, there is a notable lack of explicit discussion of the process of interpretation and analysis. Issues of interpretation and analysis do occupy a significant attention in the field of visual studies. For example in Visual Methodologies (2001), Gillian Rose outlines five distinct conceptual frameworks that can be utilized for the interpretation of images. “There are many ways of understanding visual imagery,” Rose argues, “and different theoretical standpoints have quite different methodological implications” (2001, p. 29). She provides an overview of aesthetics, content analysis, semiotics, psychoanalysis, and discourse analysis, outlining the foundation of each approach and their implications for image-based research. Reading Rose’s work raises the question of whether the interpretation and analysis of images should solely be co-created by researchers and participants through group discussion.

Community-based participatory research requires that academic researchers carefully negotiate how they integrate their academic expertise into research projects without disenfranchising community participants. CBPR is a framework that values community members as a source of expertise and knowledge while also recognizing that academic partners also bring particular skills and knowledge to the table. How much analysis should only occur within the group discussion process? Can the researcher’s familiarity with conceptual tools be brought into the discussion via the group discussion facilitator? For example in Clark-Ibanez’s study (2007), she interviewed each child about their images and
then examined the pictures collectively and discovered that the images conveyed information about the children's use of space was gendered. Had this been a photovoice project exploring the gendered nature of the images, these questions could have been part of the group discussion and probably would have evoked an interesting discussion. Radley and Taylor, however, in their auto driven photo elicitation study of patient's recovery in a hospital ward, drew upon participants' knowledge for their analysis and then also employed a highly theoretical analysis to the images that, had this been a photovoice project, would not have been very accessible to the participants. Ultimately issues of analysis and interpretation are guided by the intentions of the research. Both photovoice and visual studies raise complex issues regarding analysis and interpretation that require further consideration.

One of the main benefits of photovoice is that it disrupts the conventional relationship between the participant and the researcher by positioning the participant in the role of 'expert'. This is particularly important when working with members of marginalized communities, such as HIV-positive gay and bisexual men, who have less access to means of representing themselves in mainstream discourse. In visual studies research the photos are rarely conceptualized as tools for advocacy nor is there a focus on community social change or empowerment. Photovoice further addresses researcher/subject power relationships by adhering to principles of community-based research that stress participant engagement, empowerment, and capacity building (Minkler, 2005). Ideally participants are engaged in all aspects of the research process, from defining the initial question to data analysis. Photovoice provides researchers with the opportunity to perceive the world from the viewpoint of the people they are working with and in doing so, “values the knowledge put forth by people as a vital source of expertise...It confronts a fundamental problem of needs assessment: what researchers think is important may neglect what the community thinks is important” (Wang, 1997, p. 372).

According to Caroline Wang,

Feminist theory suggests that power accrues to those who have voice, set language, make history, and participate in decisions. Photovoice aims to test this theoretical perspective in practice and to bring new or seldom-heard ideas, images, conversations, and voices into the public forum (Wang, 2001, p. 561).

Unlike visual studies, photovoice asserts the importance of communicating research results to a broader audience with the intention of effecting social change. Photographs offer an engaging, evocative means of disseminating research findings. Writes Rhodes and Fitzgerald,

The less-than-conscious capacity of an image to disturb thought, to evoke emotions, memories and sensations, occupies the space between what we see and what we know. Visual data are powerful ways of hitting home a research finding and raising new questions for researchers as well as potentially creating the evidence required to bring about a policy change (2006, p. 360).

However, the visual studies literature can be of use to this process as it draws our attention to ways in which relationships between the image maker, the audience, and the context in which the image is being viewed all intersect to shape the ways in which people make meaning from images. Unlike written reports, the ambiguity of the photos serves to engage audiences in their own analysis of the images. The photos generated through these projects thus offer points of interruption not only for the project participants but also for those viewing the work. These issues can help inform the design of knowledge transfer activities.

By drawing on the literature from photovoice and visual studies, I have attempted to bridge the conceptual gap between these two fields and explore what each can gain from a consideration of the other. Visual studies present conceptual frameworks for understanding how photographs function and how we derive their meanings. These considerations can help inform how photovoice researchers engage community members through group dialogue and knowledge transfer activities. Photovoice encourages visual studies researchers to consider how image based research can be a tool for education for critical consciousness and social change. In this methodology attention is paid to how the research process can benefit participants and their communities by having an impact on the level of policy making and resource distribution. A central tenet of the photovoice methodology is that it gives participants the opportunity to represent themselves instead of being represented by others (Wilson et al., 2007). This makes it a valuable tool for work with HIV-positive gay men, a group frequently marginalized due to their HIV status and their sexual identity. Research in this field must ensure that the knowledge, capacity, and experiences of those most affected by HIV dictate the research agenda. Photovoice takes research out of the academy and into the community, a goal that should be at the forefront of HIV research.

Selected References


Schools + teachers = Learning… Doesn’t it?
Challenging the Assumptions about Teacher Education
And embracing forms of Community based Engagement

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This paper offers an overview of a research project that sought to map community locations for field experience in the U Vic elementary teacher education program. How principles of participatory engagement generated new and altered thinking about how to conceptualize and implement the alternative practicum with pre service teacher is a focus of attention, as well as how these principles will inform future research activities.

Introduction
Practically oriented, place based experiences are common to teacher education programmes across Canada and among Universities or Colleges that seek to prepare the next generation of teachers for the k-12 school system. Less common is the idea that teacher candidates might benefit from community based, non school site placements in order to better situate the social and cultural contexts of today’s diverse student population and develop broader understandings of where and how education and learning take place. This paper discusses how the idea of community based placements for student teachers—a programmatic goal—became inextricably linked with new ways of relationship building and more participatory approaches for engaging with the non profit, community and social development sector in the Greater Victoria area. It provides a brief summary of the programmatic changes proposed and the research study completed before reflecting on how the process of engagement became central to the proposed re-design and implications it suggests.

Assumptions about Teacher Education
The University of Victoria (UVic) has historically delivered teacher education programmes in British Columbia since its official inception in the 1960’s and in its earlier form as a Normal School. The educational model, while modified over time, might best be described as one that links theory to practice through apprenticeship, relying on currently practicing teachers to partner with the institution by offering field experiences in schools for the pre-service teacher. At UVic, field based experiences are included in each of the years of study following regularly scheduled classes, for lengthening periods of time, allowing the teacher candidate to gradually take on greater responsibilities for teaching. On campus studies are organized by subject matter (in the main), with a focus on how teachers and schooling act as society’s primary means of producing contributing adults. The model presumes that pedagogical teaching knowledge immerses from the presentation of theoretical and conceptual knowledge followed by site based practice. Emerging scholarship in the field of teacher education has argued that this model has failed to produce teachers ready for the complexities of today’s diverse classrooms, the social and cultural differences that are represented and the realities of 21st-century schooling (Darling Hammond, 2001; 2006; Zeichner, 2002). At the same time, it has also served to limit the professional role to one of knowledge transmitter, rather than a more fulsome conception of teacher as a advocate, collaborator, researcher and reflective practitioner (Athaneses & Oliverias, 2007).

Addressing issues of diversity has been typically been done by programmatic changes within the teacher education curriculum, including the introduction of new courses. However, our programmatic changes have also extended to altering our pre service teachers’ field based experiences and accompanying seminar classes. Placements in alternative
settings, such as native friendship centers, day care settings, family literacy programmes, environmental or arts based organizations will be offered to all students in their third year of study in order to provide a context for thinking about the array of social resources that exist within the community, allow a focus on the complexity of different kinds and ways of learning, and an opportunity to more deeply engage our students in the social and cultural diversity that exist in the community, so that this knowledge can be applied to their efforts in classrooms. This approach emphasizes communities as rich resources that can be used to enhance and deepen the educational experiences of all learners. Theoretically, we seek to create opportunities for developing a situated form of critical consciousness, combining the elements of place based or experiential learning (Gruenewald, 2003) with the practices of a critical pedagogue (Freire, 1970). We believe that such an approach also addresses the concept of teacher-as-leader, promoting teaching as a more complex role that encompasses work inside and outside of the classroom.

The Research
Before beginning our community placements it was necessary to consider what organizations existed locally, how their work might be characterized and the nature of their educational activities and work, and whether or not they would be interested in hosting a student for a short period of three weeks (the already determined length of the practicum placement). We applied for and received a small internal research grant from U Vic (April 2006) which allowed us to hire a graduate student to assist us with this work.

In May 2006 we began as a research team by brainstorming a list of personal contacts within the city; as a diverse team of teacher and adult educators and researchers, there was a very varied initial list crafted. Dr. Clover’s involvement in the project was particularly important; as an adult educator she brought a different lens to the topic of learning and education, with talk of both non formal and informal education and the relationship between community empowerment, citizenship, community development and learning for social change. This broadened the scope of potential sites to include those such as arts based and environmental organizations, many of whom worked with a range of people and groups, not just students. This discussion helped as we drafted a script to use in our recruitment efforts. It suggested:

\[
\text{We are interested in placements that would give them [our students] experiences in matters related to social justice, inclusion, and equity... We want to provide experiences that will allow our students to see the very vital role that social agencies play in the lives of children and their families, while learning about how learning is enabled in many different social and cultural locations.}
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Over the course of the next three months, our graduate student spearheaded the development of data matrix that listed the names, mission and/or organizational goals, location of potential educational sites, the names of contact persons, and the time frame or hours of operation for each organization. We also asked each agency if they could refer us to other organizations, and this technique expanded the scope of our early lists to include organizations such as AIDS Vancouver Island who wanted assistance with educational programs and outreach; the Burnside Gorge Community Center who use an ‘asset based’ model for working with troubled and/or at risk youth; the Canadian Red Cross who were working on an emergency preparedness campaign in schools; or the Capital City Volunteer agency, who sought to find companions and/or helpers for seniors or persons with disabilities.

Final steps included crafting documents that would allow the participating student and the social agency to provide feedback on the nature of the placement, the scope of the experience, and the learning that had been achieved. Several drafts were developed as the research team met to discuss how there was a need to balance an institutional requirement for adequate documentation with the potential for broadened learning that could be realized through careful and focused self reflection on these experiences. By the end of the research period (September 2006) we were ready to implement the new practicum with our students.

Participatory Principles
Reciprocity. As the project proceeded and we met to discuss our progress and reflect on next steps, it became apparent that our thoughts and beliefs about the alternative practicum experience were altering. While initially our focus had been upon our own teacher education programmatic goals of student learning and institutional needs, the process of reporting upon discussions with community agencies caused us to engage in continual scrutiny of our assumptions: about relationships of power over, the nature of institutional hegemony, and engagement with discourses of control over learning. In particular, who ‘owned’ knowledge construction in teacher education? Could we give up this power to another agency that might have goals or outcomes different from our own? We believed that we put learning at the center of our work, yet the more we reflected on the conversations we had with social agencies and considered the scope and nature of learning in alternative sites, the more we came to understand that this needed to be a shared learning partnership. By this we meant a relationship in which there was reciprocity in control over and the context of learning.

Shared knowledge creation. We also began to realize that what started as a process of identification of sites had become more about building and creating shared alliances and building communities: our theories of teacher education had suggested that our students needed to become a part of that broader community where assets and knowledge were shared; now as researchers we too began to realize the importance of ensuring the teacher education programme
became a greater part of the community. We understood more clearly the need to create spaces on campus and within programme courses and seminars to bring these partners into our teacher education enterprise. Essentially we ‘decentered’ our own understandings of what it means to ‘prepare’ teacher educators, and found ways to share that responsibility with others. We have initially identified several organizations who are willing to come into our seminar classes to talk about the nature of community based development, how this contributes to shared learning and empowerment and builds community assets. We see this as an important first step to be followed by taking further steps in re-designing our programme goals, seminars or course work so that we might better accommodate these community partnerships and share in processes of knowledge creation/dissemnination.

**Shared democratic and emancipatory outcomes.** As we engaged in communication with social agencies in our community about our own social purposes in designing an alternative practicum experience that helped support the goal of engaging teachers in community and school leadership, we found exciting new potential alliances: organizations that shared with us the goal of creating a more inclusive and just society. We were energized about how we might involve these organizations in other aspects of the teacher education programme, for example, in such areas as environmental and indigenous education. An outgrowth of this new synergy occurred when one seminar leader took his class to two of these sites as way of engaging his students in a hands-on experiential activity to make sense of and reflect on the transformational qualities of constructivist and embodied learning theory. Another member of the research team—Catherine McGregor—has designed a new undergraduate elective course that will focus on how community engagement enriches reciprocal learning in teachers and their students while promoting social equity outcomes. This course will have a significant field component that will draw from the organizational data compiled as a part of the initial research project. These examples illustrate the generative potential of participatory methodologies as we took advantage of opportunities for scaffolding our own and our students’ capacity as social change agents.

**Alternative research dissemination: representing knowledge and knowledge as representation**

Our theoretical commitment to participatory forms of knowledge building and our experience in this project also became a catalyst for thinking about how to best share our learning and experiences about this research. We wanted to highlight the role that this inquiry had in shaping our research methods and the generative effects that emerged from these early attempts at collaboration. From other work we’ve done as scholars in adult, literacy and civic education, we’ve understood the power that aesthetic modes of representation have for meaning making among audience members and/or participants. It seemed natural to us to use a method of representation that modeled the many ways in which knowledge experientially emerged and was shaped through our investigative processes; therefore our presentation of this data will take the form of Reader’s Theatre.

**Readers Theatre:** Donmoyer (1998) has made the case for using this form for the representation of knowledge in scholarly settings (such as AERA) and in written publications, although he acknowledges that its use remains limited in scholarly publications given the hegemonic norms of what it means to be ‘published’ and ‘publishable’. Representing ‘data’ in such a form blurs the boundaries of fiction and truth, and we believe, offers a way of bridging the boundaries between research and participants, creating a potentially more accessible and inclusive form of text, one that is in keeping with the goals of CU Expo. In this way the method of representation (reader’s theatre) also realizes one of the primary goals of this paper: it provides a means to examine our own practices as both educators and researchers while illustrating the collective ways in which knowledge is both constructed and understood.

**Conclusion**

We see this initial research project as an important catalyst in our own learning with and about participatory research methodologies, particularly in a field that is typically dominated by more traditional forms of research. This brief summary attempts to set out how the process of research inquiry with community agencies set the stage for thinking about research with community organizations differently, while also serving as a catalyst for thinking more deeply about our own assumed and naturalized beliefs about the nature of teacher education programmes and epistemological privilege. We also realize this project is only a first step in realizing the goals of a more responsive and effective teacher education programme, in particular, one that embraces how learning and teaching can be enriched through the assets offered by diverse communities.

**References**


On the Diversity of Actors Involved in Community-Based Participatory Action Research

Alberto Merler (introduction) and Andrea Vargiu (following paragraphs)

University of Sassari

Some relevant differences among actors involved in community-based participatory research are here analysed in order to discuss their relevance as to the planning, management, effectiveness and sustainability of activities.

The following considerations arise from confrontations among the researchers involved in activities carried out by the FOIST Laboratory for Social Policies and Formative Processes, directed by Prof. Alberto Merler: a laboratory of the Department of Economy, Institutions and Society (DEIS) in the University of Sassari (Italy). In 2007, the FOIST Laboratory commemorated the thirtieth anniversary of its existence. Activities carried out throughout the years are most diverse as to the social contexts, aims, contents and methods. In spite of that diversity, documentation, research, interventions and promotional activities have always been inspired by the idea that University ought to be useful to the territory and its people, possibly working with the people. That idea being contagious, a corresponding organization in Japan – FOIST-Nippon – has been created by Professor Michinobu Niihara (who’s presently working at Yokohama University) at the University of Chuo. Thus, a great variety of experiences inspire the following notes which will necessarily be schematic and not exhaustive. Nonetheless, the main action research experiences which inspire the following notes are reported in Borrelli-Vargiu (1998), Vargiu (1999 and 2000), Chessa-Deriu (2003), (Deriu, 2006). At present another project is being run along with local authorities and social operators on socio-sanitary services, socio-economic exclusion and consumption: “Marginality and autonomy: consumptions, rights, composite identities”.

Action Research and Participation

Most of the work done within FOIST by people involved at different level (from PhD’s to Full Professors, including external voluntary contributions) is based on participatory action research (PAR) philosophy and methodology. Actually, the term action research covers a variety of experiences which can be best defined as a family of approaches (Reason, 1994; Reason-Bradbury, 2006) that principally aim at putting research at the service of communities, by means of participatory practices for social change.

Participatory research and participatory action research both fall within Capecci’s (2006) definition of “co-research”: that notion especially emphasizes the importance of working with what are considered as subjects, instead of on objects. Accordingly, the different individual or collective actors involved in research actively participate in defining its knowledge and transformation objectives, as well as its course, its conceptual and technical means and, thus, its results. Our starting point will be the concept of participation. We will then discuss what the implications of all that are on several aspects of action research.

As Ceri (1998) points out, “In order to have participation […] some conditions must occur: 1) overcoming the distance or isolation among men or groups (aggregation), in particular moving away from situations of individualism or exclusion; 2) reducing subordination or exclusion relationships through the distribution of power (equalization).” (p. 509-10) Different combinations of aggregation and equalization identify peculiar participation styles:

1) Participation as cooperation: the actors accept the differences among them (status, role, power etc.) as real and unchangeable (no equalization), but work together (aggregation) to accomplish a task. According to Ceri, that can be defined as a functionalist approach.

2) Participation as influence: the groups or men remain separate (no aggregation beyond the already existing ones,
or instrumental coalitions) and each of them takes a decision according to their power of influence on the process (no equalization; on the contrary, possibly stronger actors strategically take advantage of difference). A pluralistic approach.

3) Participation as involvement and action: the participation action “aims at changing vertical relationships and commanding decisions into horizontal relationships and consensual decisions and, generally speaking, to enlarge the social field where a subject can determine his own choices without controls and prohibitions.” (Ceri, 1998, p. 511). Conflict approach.

The central point of those arguments is the focus equality which is thus a crucial factor in an action research setting. Moreover, that particular focus lead us directly away from identifying participation with a simple set of procedures. In fact, participation is often evoked just because a particular participative technique is adopted. A vast literature has shown the limitations of such an approach (for an overview, see Levidow, 2007).

About some Differences among Actors Involved in PAR and their Consequences

The importance of equality in participation processes obliges us to define the nature and characteristics of the actors involved in those processes. A first approximation of the specific systematization that is here proposed has been developed in particular with Romina Deriu who has used it with reference to a concrete research experience (Deriu, 2006). An advancement and a more structured organization are hereby proposed.

Due to space at disposal, we won’t be able to discuss here the complex concept of social actor. For the aims of PAR it is useful to distinguish between individual and collective actors: the two differ as to ways, time and space of action, as well as to decision-making and accounting procedures. Literature also points out the relevance of some other specific differences among individual actor: gender (Pesce, 1984; Capecchi-Pesce, 1983; Maguire, 2006), age and education level (Gaventa-Cornwall, 200), ethnic group (Edmondson Bell, 200). As to collective actors, we may distinguish between public, private and not for profit actors: each one of them acts in accordance with specific logics that strongly affect the participation process. The following scheme sums up those first elements.

Both collective and individual actors can be visible or hidden, as well as strong or weak. Degree of visibility and power are often related. Actors’ may also be invisible because they’re external to the PAR setting. In that case, they may exert an “external force” to influence the situation (Burawoy, 2003). That is often the case of administrative entities, collective actors with economical relevance and generally project financiers.

Actors are well identified on the bases of needs and resources. In the PAR relational setting it is useful to distinguish between ‘patrons’, ‘brokers’ and ‘clients’. Patrons are those who own first degree resources, frequently economic ones; brokers, or intermediaries, are generally people who own second degree resources, i.e. social capital and the time and abilities necessary for its management, development and enlargement; while clients don’t usually have sufficient first and second degree resources. Those concepts were first systematized by Mayer (1963 and 1967) and Boissevain (1969 and 1974). As to our specific research experience, Deriu (2006) pointed out a particular kind of brokers which she defines “deforming intermediaries”.

As regards resources, many authors have pointed out the various forms of capital – economic, social and cultural – and their relationship with the role-status system. Both those dimensions have strong implications as to power issues, which have a particular relevance in action research, as it usually tends to reinforce weaker actors, generally through inclusion, aggregation and empowerment strategies.

The actors’ resources and their manifest or latent needs are strongly linked with the different interests which move them. Interest is one the strongest factors which influence motives leading to action and attitudes towards participation (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Some factors influencing the PAR setting

![Diagram showing factors influencing PAR setting: Position in the field, Needs, Powers and Interests, Attitudes towards participation.]

The researcher’s interests (as well as co-researchers’, in case of cooperative investigations) are very important, too. In fact, the researcher can be considered as an actor involved in the PAR setting. Epistemological and practical problems
originate from that fact. As a matter of fact, the researcher’s basic choices are always connected to his interests. According to Oquist (1978), action researchers tend to choose a pragmatist or dialectic materialism perspective instead of an empiricist, logic positivist or structuralist one. Habermas (1968) pointed out the relationship between interests and knowledge: different kinds of interests orientate knowledge either to a “technical disposition” of reality, or to the need for the subjects to understand each other through current language in order to orientate their action. Taking into consideration Habermas’ theory, Kemmis (2006) points out the strong association between interests and epistemological options for action research. According to Kemmis, positivist (or empiric analytical) methods are associated with technical or instrumental interests; practical interests lead to hermeneutical approaches; while emancipatory interests take to critical research options. Knowledge and communication dispositions are crucial as to the choice of the participative strategy that will be adopted in action research. Habermas also points out the difficulties in conjugating systemic (or utilitarian) action and communicative action. Communication about values takes place within communicative action. Thus, that’s where knowledge about the social reality is co-produced (Habermas, 1973). That is an important theoretical point of reference for a researcher’s operational and technical choices, as he is constantly compelled to keep under control the actors’ motives and to adopt strategies fit for their convergence towards common interests for the public good. Table 1 refers what has been said about those points and makes a linkage with the different participation modes.

Interests also depend upon the actors’ particular position – linked to status and role – within the social field. According to Bourdieu’s theories (1984 and 1994), the “tensions” which characterize the field and that are determined by the system of forces facing one another inwardly are strictly related to the resources (such as different kinds of economic, cultural and social capital) owned by the actors operating within the field itself. Besides, external forces put “pressures” on the field and modify it. Thus, resources melt inextricably with the power of all internal and external actors – including researchers – and power dynamics are based on symbolic and cultural capital. Therefore, interests are also linked with needs in a mirror way. The least visible actors are often bearers of different (manifest or latent) needs, and a recorded need is not always a real existing one.

A few words have to be said about latent and undeclared needs underlying social dynamics. That is a very important issue for process management and results of PAR. It is thus necessary that researchers and co-researchers, as well as sponsors, bare clearly in mind the centrality of such issues and provide for strategies in order to face them. Co-research implies that cognitive questions are generally cooperatively formed through an often long process of confrontation and negotiation. That process is influenced by crossed powers, interests and needs of actors involved at the various levels. One major problem about it is that negotiation is seldom recognized as a “research activity”, although it is the pivot for defining theoretical and operational strategies and choices. It is a daily, hidden, underground, non standardized or standardizable work. As such, it is not visible or accountable for. This fact makes time and money management difficult. The financier or promoter must be made fully aware of the relevance of confrontation and negotiation, otherwise he will not provide for sufficient funding for those activities.

Time management in PAR is difficult because the different actors’ time resources must be dealt with. Moreover, actors usually have time expectations which are linked to their interests and needs. Generally speaking, we can observe that actors have precise and quite strict expectations about the consequences of their participation: they invest resources in it and they want to get tangible results as soon as possible. Financers and public actors in general (and politicians and administrators in particular) have very short time expectations. One of the reasons is that administrators need immediate visibility, as their most relevant interest in participation activities is usually to obtain a certain expansion, convergence and control of consent. Thus, their time expectations normally depend upon election appointments, political agenda and media pressure. As to financiers, they generally can have a clear perception neither of the

Table 1. Interests, epistemological options, kind of action and participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kind of interest</th>
<th>Epistemological option</th>
<th>Kind of action</th>
<th>Kind of participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical-instrumental</td>
<td>Empirical-analytical</td>
<td>Strategic action</td>
<td>Participation as influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>Hermeneutical-interpretative</td>
<td>Mechanical-instrumental action</td>
<td>Participation as cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emancipatory</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Communicative action</td>
<td>Participation as involvement and action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


complexity of the participative process, nor of the long time such complexity requires. They usually request precise ex-ante scheduling for funding. All those expectations are very hard and at times impossible to meet: the researcher has the responsibility of making it clear from the very beginning.

All those observations rise a further and more general matter which concerns the sustainability of PAR. The lack of time can imply that the initial objectives are not met by the end of the project. Moreover, in case those goals are reached in due time, new expectations arise and people are more willing to invest resources, generate ideas and projects. Continuity of actions and processes must be carefully considered since the beginning of a project: it is a matter that the researcher must explicitly raise and share with his partners, in order to avoid possible frustration; but also, if possible, to make them jointly liable as to future perspectives. That means formulating global long-term strategies and mobilizing resources in order to provide for the structural, operational, economic and human support for potential new PAR cycles, or other enterprise eventually emerging from PAR activities.

Thus, the researcher needs to clarify the time factor with partners relating it to the different kinds of expectable results. A point must be made that, like any other activity oriented to change, PAR may also imply unexpected results. A distinction can be made among “outputs”, “outcomes” or “results” and “outreaches” or “impacts”. That classification can be ordered on a time scale. Also, our experience shows that outputs, outcomes and outreaches can generally be associated to distinct operational strategies, thus producing diverse courses of action which interest different actors. Such actors, as bearers of interests, may be defined as “stakeholders” that can be divided into internal primary, external primary and secondary stakeholders. A scheme of time expectations, results, operational strategies and interested stakeholders is provided for in Table 2.

### Table 2. Time, results, processes, stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Action or process</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short term</td>
<td>Outputs</td>
<td>Participative exercises</td>
<td>Primary internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium term</td>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Temporally limited participated processes</td>
<td>Primary external</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long term</td>
<td>Outreaches</td>
<td>Sustainable and rooted participated processes</td>
<td>Territory (secondary stakeholders)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Main Problematic Issues**

Some relevant differences regarding the principal actors involved in PAR have been pointed out in the previous pages. Above all there are differences in actors’ social position, interests, power and temporal horizons. Some of the implications of such dissimilarities have been shortly discussed. We can summarize them as follows.

1) **As to the role of the researcher**: his specific culture, savoir-faire, sociological imagination and sensitivity are crucial. In particular, his ability in raising relevant questions, listening, reading social dynamics, using theory creatively, effectively and rigorously, forming sound and adequate concepts, transforming demands into valid methodological choices.

2) **As to theory and concept formation**: on such premises, there is the necessity for a correct definition of concepts – notably participation, action, social actor – and to place them within an articulate and coherent theoretical framework.

3) **On epistemology** ground: there is a need for a constant consideration and awareness of the connection between: a) interests and knowledge; b) relationship between observer and observed.

4) **On methodological** ground: a dialogic method is more appropriate than a questioning one, in order to create common shared knowledge through the breakage of knowledge monopoly. A particular emphasis must be put on time management issues.

5) **On the research operative** ground: a solid empiric base concerning the diverse characteristics of actors involved is necessary, especially as to their social and relational positions, resources, needs, visibility power, interests and expectations: that kind of empirical data is useful both to knowledge production and negotiation management.

6) **As to the general system of constraints and resources of the research**: problems remain open and difficult to solve as to time management and negotiation. Above all, the connection with the logics of research financing policies, conceived for a standard approach, remains a problematic one. Researchers must acknowledge that problem and develop adequate strategies to face it. We suggested that such matters and possible solutions need being discussed with partners, along with the sustainability and continuity of PAR actions.

7) **On evaluation** ground: shared evaluation systems are needed, considering the diverse time rhythms and expectations. Long term results must be bare in mind and clarified, especially in relation to relevant social needs.
Selected References

Seeing the “C” in Community University Partnerships: Pathways between diversity engagement and community research

Elin Moorlag
University of Waterloo
Joanna Ochocka, Rich Janzen & Sarah Marsh
Centre for Community Based Research

This paper discusses an emerging best practice of community-university partnerships through identification of concrete collaborative mechanisms used at the onset of a CURA titled “Taking Culture Seriously in Community Mental Health.” These mechanisms draw on a PAR methodological framework.

Introduction

In community-based research the relationship between researcher(s) and participating community members is vital to the research outcome and is always at the same time under negotiation. The processes that researchers undertake in order to gain entry into communities is a critical first step that can set the tone for the future success or failure of a research project. Surprisingly, the topic of entry is rarely addressed in the literature and is an aspect often overlooked within community/researcher partnerships. From a mainstream perspective, research is often viewed as a tool for gathering and accumulating data and thus research strategies and techniques tend to focus on participant recruitment within communities. From this standpoint, entry is then seen as a means for recruitment or research access rather than for establishing the community-researcher relationship. Yet it is at this critical first step where a vital impression can be made, and whereby the direction of the research project can be steered toward a collaborative or integrated process, rather than becoming hierarchical or disjointed.

Building from experiences gained from current and past projects with community-based participatory research, we propose that entry is a vital and integral component of the research process, and thus entry strategies or techniques used must be carefully considered and respectfully executed. Further, the process of community entry is particularly important when collaborating with ethnically diverse communities (often difficult to access through conventional “recruitment” approaches), when conducting community-based participatory research, and when exploring sensitive topics. In either one of these three cases, entry becomes the means to successfully establish a community-researcher collaboration.

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to explore issues of entry in community research on sensitive topics and to suggest a framework for entry that uses the values of participatory action research (PAR). The article will draw from a case study of a collaborative, community university research project currently underway in the Waterloo and Toronto regions of Ontario, Canada. The methodological perspective guiding this research initiative is PAR. The values of PAR have been used as a model for the twofold strategy of relationship building and participant engagement in the research process while working with five different ethno-linguistic communities. Thus, critical evaluation of how the values of PAR informed the process of entry will be explored, along with some suggestions of how a PAR approach could be used and implemented in future research.
Entry Issues in Research - Literature Review

The entry process is a critical step in research that sets the tone for the success or failure of the entire project. It can be understood as “action needed to bring people together and prepare them to work together” (Tareen & Omar, 1997). It is a slow and gradual process that involves much work before community entry and community trust can actually be gained.

The process of entry can be seen as the dividing point between pre-work and traditional project processes as well as a method of increasing participation and accessing under-researched populations. Despite an ostensible need for this issue to be addressed as a distinct phase in the research process, an insubstantial body of literature available focusing on community entry would suggest the issue is frequently neglected. Overwhelmingly, articles outlining qualitative approaches to community-based research in the social sciences, even when involving sensitive issues, often gloss over the entry process and instead focus on strategies for participant recruitment (Parrado, McQuiston & Flippin, 2005, Sixsmith, Boneham & Goldberg, 2003; Sadavoy et al. 2004). Thus, the process of gaining access to the community is presented as a fait accompli.

The question of why this is the case is pondered and discussed by Lee (1993) in a remarkably thorough overview of the access process in research on sensitive topics. Possible suggestions as to why the entry process has been so seldom recounted, explored and theorized include; time limitations as part of the research-to-publication expectations, the one-sided nature of such narratives which would potentially account for only half of the picture, and in addition, reasons behind successes in gaining access may be vague or completely unknown to the researcher (Lee, 1993). A further possible reason added by Lindsay (2005) is that this oversight is embedded within the current structure of presentation for research and findings in academic journals, in that the dominant standard for what should and should not be included generally discourages researchers from addressing and discussing this issue.

Despite the general lack of systematic investigation of the entry process within community-based research, there are a handful of sources (Lee included) that provide insight along with tentative guidelines for successful community entry. Points of convergence among these sources occur around the following topics; engaging community gatekeepers, emphasizing collaboration and involvement of community stakeholders in the project, maintaining a presence in the community, being attentive to initial hesitancies and the “politics of distrust” (Lee, 1993), and remaining mindful that the process of gaining entry is a “continually negotiated relationship” (Sixsmith et al., 2003) throughout the research project with power imbalances to be constantly navigated.

More specifically, presented by Tareen and Omar (1997) are a series of five steps that might be taken by participatory researchers in order for community entry to be accomplished. These steps follow a continuum of contact and collaboration which include drawing community members in through open discussion and analysis of research intentions and strategies, inviting stakeholders as project collaborators, and encouraging community members to take the lead on some components of ongoing action. Further discussion is provided by Sixsmith et al. (2003) on the significant role of community gatekeepers and some of the complications that may arise in the presence of multiple gatekeepers who may have conflicting views, or in the circumstance of restrictive gatekeepers who deny researchers access to the community.

Elaborating on this issue of encountering “fronts” or “obfuscation” from community members, Lee (1993) suggests that in some cases, progressive entry is needed, whereby the researcher attempts to minimize the social distance between themselves and the participants through frequent contact (the ethnographic approach of being there & being seen [Sixsmith et al., 2003]), and by making requests for access that gradually increase. While not explicitly focused on community entry, Minkler (2004) provides a constructive discussion of insider-outsider tensions that arise when conducting community-based participatory research. Minkler suggests that such tensions are often the result of negative historical relationships with institutional and internalized oppression, the fact that community members may see the research as having more gains for the researchers than for the community, and the immense time commitments that are often involved in taking part in a research project, with little or no financial compensation provided for community participants.

Participatory Action Research: Overview

If the researcher’s hope is to address and potentially rectify some of these areas of contention within communities, a PAR approach can serve as a method of both reducing tensions and building meaningful collaborations with community participants. PAR is defined as “a research approach which consists of the maximum participation of stakeholders, those whose lives are affected by the problem under study, in the systematic collection and analysis of information for the purpose of taking action and making change” (Nelson, Ochocka, Griffin & Lord, 1998:12 [emphasis in original]).

Particularly when talking about the process of entry, PAR values guide researcher’s strategies for not only recruitment of study participants but for building lasting community-research partnerships. As a form of applied research which combines the two traditions of participatory research and action research, the values of PAR are strongly rooted in...
proceedings
democracy, equality, liberation and change. There are five main assumptions that underlie PAR which influence all components of the research process. These five assumptions are (1) empowerment, (2) building supportive relationships, (3) social change/social action, (4) ongoing, reciprocal education, and (5) respect for/inclusion of diversity (Nelson et al., 1998). When using the values/assumptions of PAR as a guideline for community entry, the potential for active community involvement in both the design and outcome of the research process is present, whereby community members become partners and collaborators.

The Story of CURA

“Taking Culture Seriously in Community Mental Health”, is a 5-year (2005-2009) Community University Research Alliance (CURA) bringing together over 40 diverse university and community partners in the Toronto and Waterloo regions of Ontario. The purpose of this research collaborative is to explore, develop, pilot and evaluate how best to provide community-based mental health services and supports that will be effective for people from culturally diverse backgrounds. This research study is housed at the Centre for Community Based Research (CCBR), located in Kitchener Ontario.

The project’s three phases (each using a PAR approach) are the following: (1) exploring diverse conceptualizations of mental health problems and practice, (2) developing culturally effective practice, and (3) evaluating demonstration projects. While 5 cultural linguistic communities are actively involved (Somali, Sikh Punjabi, Polish, Mandarin, Spanish Latin American), one of the project’s goals is to emphasize the transferability of knowledge gained to all of multicultural Canada.

Using PAR values as a framework for Community Entry

Overall, our experiences using PAR values as a guideline to approach communities have been successful, and our entry strategies have served as a prelude to building a true partnership between community participants and the research team. Yet, as in all research involving multiple partners and stakeholders, this is not as simple as it would appear. For this project, we are working with five different ethno-linguistic communities in two locations, as well as partnering with more than twenty local community and cultural-linguistic organizations. For each new partner or group, a new entry process began, with new and different relationships negotiated at different degrees and different paces.

Through the following examples, what will be presented here is a select illustration of how PAR values were used to guide the entry process with diverse cultural-linguistic communities and organizations.

Empowerment

Similar to what was noted by Lee (1993) and others in the literature, much of what was encountered in the entry process involved building trust, encouraging ownership/involvement, and overcoming insider-outsider tensions and/or negative past experiences with research. Following the framework of PAR, progressive entry, as suggested by Lee (1993), took place for many of the stakeholder groups, whereby communities were slowly but continuously included in CURA activities and decision-making in a way that led to an eventual feeling of true collaboration and ownership.

For example, in all of communities face-to-face meetings were organized to engage additional community members, resulting in a total of 17 meetings involving a total of over 200 people. Discussions during the meetings were generally lively, if not at times challenging, with community members often “testing” project partners as to the benefit (and potential harm) of the research to their community. Project partners welcomed these challenges, inviting community members to help shape the research agenda through their involvement.

Building Supporting Relationships

Throughout the entry process, ongoing communication in the form of meetings and informal gatherings was an essential component of building trust and maintaining relationships with project participants. Particularly throughout the proposal development stage, frequent communication and interaction helped create a sense of ownership for the project on the whole from the point of view of community groups. In addition, community researchers, community leaders and other project stakeholders were always included in any major project activities, and assessment, reflection and feedback were encouraged.

In following with the implementation framework of PAR, ten community researchers were hired from within the 5 cultural-linguistic groups (2 from each – 1 in Waterloo and 1 in Toronto). As an essential component of the entry process, these community researchers were hired not only to help with the data collection phase of the project, but to serve as an active voice and representative from within their individual communities. Community researchers were not hired based on research skills or experience, but were largely considered based on their fit with the project, and the interpersonal and communication skills they possessed. These ten community researchers were then active and collaborative members of the CURA team and also served as a means of informal, continuous information exchange between their
own ethnic communities and the research team.

Social Change/Social Action

Given the very nature of the project, together with a PAR approach, issues around social change are crucial to both the entry process and the project on the whole. Early on in the conceptualization of the project, social change has been a driving force, not only as a potential outcome measure, but as an ongoing development throughout.

-Early in the process we approached the main contact people from each community to discuss the ideas of the project and to help us to organize face-to-face meetings with a small group from each community to present and get feedback for the draft proposal. The objectives of these meetings was to present the research proposal ideas, to have community leaders subsequently shape the research agenda, and to secure preliminary affirmation of community involvement in the proposed project. These community visits are seen to be part of an ongoing effort within the research project to deepen the engagement of community members toward social change/social action.

Reciprocal Education

A pressing objective of this project is to learn from the ethno-linguistic groups involved as much as possible about perceptions of mental health/mental illness, experiences with services available, and most importantly, suggestions for more appropriate/beneficial support.

Serving as a form of ongoing reciprocal education, steering committees were established in both Waterloo and Toronto for the purpose of guiding the CURA project through the three phases. Steering committee members consisted of a mix of various project stakeholders, including community representatives from each of the five ethno-cultural groups, academic partners, members of mental health agencies, and CCBR researchers. The main purpose of these steering committees was to provide ongoing input about project activities, including the formulation of research methods and tools, data collection and analysis, dissemination strategies, and the development and evaluation of demonstration projects within their respective site. In community-based research projects such as these, the steering committee acts as a sounding board to test ideas before going out into the larger community, and allows the researchers to tailor the research as much as possible to the groups involved.

Respect for Diversity/Diversity Inclusion

A primary component of the research at the entry process and beyond, was negotiating the reality of entering a collaborative research project with communities who speak different languages, who have different cultural backgrounds, and different religious beliefs. At each stage of the entry process, the project coordinators were necessarily mindful of actions, assumptions, and words that would be appropriate for the five groups throughout meetings, organized events, and site visits.

Discussion/Conclusion

In presenting this case study as an example of a PAR approach to entry, this article adds to the literature dealing with the subject of entry in community-based research, and in doing so, provides an illustrative framework, or guide, to community entry for future research. Given the richness of experience that has been gained working with this CURA, from a research perspective, the importance of community entry for large research projects could hardly be overemphasized.

References


Can We Talk? Building Community Capacity to Create Language Rich Environments

Jennifer Mullett, PhD
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Lynne Patrick, MSc
Vancouver Island Health Authority

A community development, multi-level intervention to create supportive environments for speech development was documented and evaluated. In this paper the activities and the effectiveness of this intervention to promote community capacity to support language development are described.

Introduction

In the fall of 2006, the Vancouver Island Health Authority supported two Speech Pathologists in Nanaimo to expand the normal services to include teaching, mentoring, modeling and collaborating with other community agencies involved in early childhood development. The evaluation to be described covers the time period of the first year of implementation to the fall of 2007. Goals of the research were: a) Assess if there has been an increase in community capacity to create supportive environments for language development. b) Document the activities entailed in organizing a community wide approach to raising awareness. c) Document and articulate what is involved in a multi-leveled intervention. d) Determine the impact on children’s language in the agencies where children/teacher interactions have been enhanced. e) Determine in what ways there has been an increase in awareness of the importance of language for development.

To begin the evaluation, a conceptual framework was developed that illustrates the stages of development for this community intervention.

Figure 1: Stages of community intervention.

In the initiating phase the speech pathologists were engaged in creating awareness, developing partnerships and establishing opportunities for language rich environments. In the building phase specific and targeted activities took place such as training practitioners in all manner of child care facilities, consulting to agencies, planning with other
groups, increasing access to informal and formal expertise for both parents and practitioners and building coalitions among groups that might collaborate on enhancing environments to encourage language development. In the achieving phase the speech pathologists continued to work in and with those agencies that had made significant changes to their physical and social environments. In each of the phases the outcomes achieved to date were documented. The evaluation framework is shown in Figure 2 below. The categories are adapted from Labonte and Feather (1996).

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discover what activities and which agencies are involved in developing supportive environments</td>
<td>Discover how the SPs develop greater capacity for children’s development</td>
<td>Discover the value of the activities in terms of children’s development and greater skill level of practitioners</td>
<td>Discover what further support community members need to continue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document analysis</td>
<td>Observations of technique</td>
<td>Interviews with community members</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Document analysis</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
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![Figure 2: Evaluation framework Results](Image)

**Outcomes in the Initiating Phase**

In the initiating phase the Speech Pathologists began by raising awareness of the importance of language development and how to stimulate that development. As a consequence of this community work, providers and parents are now more knowledgeable about the many aspects of language. Changes in thinking and behaviour that have occurred are as follows. Participants (practitioners) reported that they now: have more ways of communicating from provider to child; know different ways of talking with children; recognize the importance of language; see many aspects to speech and language; have greater awareness of communication problem; are more aware of available resources; have more ideas to stimulate language; are more confident in talking with parents if they are having challenges with their children’s speech; know more about language issues and what to look for when talking with a parent or child; are more knowledgeable of how speech therapy works; have more information and a deeper understanding of the importance of oral language; and. have more tools in their “tool kit”.

**Building Phase:** The outcomes for the Building Phase where the Speech Pathologists have worked in the agencies doing training and on the spot informal and formal supports include: on the spot assessments (no wait listing); short term therapy; parents observe role modeling of interacting with the child and the immediate result; parents educated on the importance of preparing child for school with language; immediate assistance for children who are in need of intervention; parents questions answered; Public Health Nurses (PHNs) supported with assessment and expertise; and, proactive holistic kind of work modeled for practitioners. One parent said the speech pathologist: “showed us changes we could do to help with speech helping us augment our child’s learning, supporting her ability to learn on her own.”
Achieving Phase: In the achieving phase respondents described the contribution that the speech pathologists made to building capacity in the community for sustainable development of language rich environments and the value of their services in contributing to increased access and availability to practitioners with knowledge of speech language issues. Figure 2 below illustrates how this approach extends beyond health services. The multi-level approach or population health approach is impressive in its comprehensiveness. Sectors that have not previously been actively involved in developing language are now committed to that goal.

A comprehensive multi-component approach is aimed at all structural levels from the clinical, individual level to the more universal, community structures. The ecological approach being implemented in this initiative extends the intervention from the health sector to include other social service agencies that contribute to children's development. The Speech Pathologists have been extremely successful in accessing and collaborating with providers in other environments that promote competence. As noted in the logic model in Table 1 to follow, the Speech Pathologists have taught, mentored, modeled and consulted with colleagues in health units, day cares, school district programs, drop-in-centres, and pre-schools. They have used the media, health fairs, and all means of accessing the public and providers to raise awareness. The results of all this activity are an increased awareness of the importance of language development and an increased ability to facilitate the development of language by all sectors. This means that more services that are accessed by parents now have providers with an understanding of and an ability to enhance language development.

Contribution to Building Capacity

The contribution that the Speech Pathologists have made to building capacity in the community was achieved through education, training, doing preventative screening and consulting, partnering with agencies not previously involved in speech issues and short term therapy sessions in the children’s homes.

Participants in this evaluation were asked to describe the activities of the Speech Pathologists and to assess the value of these activities in terms of the development of children’s speech and language. Responses were focused on the availability of an expertise that parents and practitioners could not previously access as easily, the comprehensiveness of the knowledge imparted, the value of the new partnerships created that will promote preventative activities, and the new tools they have learned for encouraging language development. While most mentioned universal or greater access to service as an outcome it is too soon to assess the effect of this on wait lists; however, there were indications that referrals for minor issues in speech development to the Child Development Centre may decline in the future. Practitioners, based on their greater understanding of speech issues and easier access to consultations, have changed their practice of automatically referring children to the wait list. This bodes well for the future of both the community prevention approach and clinical interventions. At the same time, children are being identified at an earlier age as needing an intervention. Quotes from participants are as follows:

As a health nurse they helped me to understand the process a lot more clearly.

She [SP] makes you more aware of language and she takes some of your usual ECE type activities off the page and makes them way more effective for communicating with children and developing
Informal assessment, showed us what we should be doing, helping us augment our child’s learning and supporting her ability to learn to speak on her own.

Summary

The volume of activity and comprehensiveness of the initiative to date is impressive and successful. There is much greater awareness of the importance of language development, significant shifts in practice, and, environments both social and physical have been changed to further enhance language development.

The community wide intervention to develop language rich environments has resulted in greater awareness, skills and more timely interventions. The advantages enjoyed by the community due to this approach are: immediate consultations; greater availability of expertise in language development for practitioners; early intervention and prevention accessibility in multiple settings of service and training; quicker process for screening; enhanced and expanded community partnerships; increased community capacity to support language rich environments and greater commitment of many members of the community to this goal. Figure 3 below adapted from Nelson and Prilleltensky (2005) illustrates the continuum of promotion, prevention and intervention.

Figure 3: Continuum of promotion, prevention and intervention

Adapted from Nelson and Prilleltensky (2005)

Conclusion

The multi-level approach or population health approach of this community wide intervention is impressive in its comprehensiveness. Sectors that have not previously been actively involved in developing language are now committed to that goal. The diagram in Figure 2 illustrates how this comprehensive approach extends beyond health services. The work of the Speech Pathologists is continuing. Recently, they have expanded to include using public spaces in the downtown area such as the giant screen outside of the theatre to show mini films of parents reading to their children. In a time when resources are scarce for services this approach involves the whole community, public and private sectors, in creating rich environments for the development of language and consequently greater capacity for learning and thinking.

References


Community-wide intervention to enhance practitioners’ and parents’ skills

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In this research the implementation of a community-wide intervention, training in the Triple P parenting program, was documented. Progress to date, changes in practice and improvements in parenting skills were assessed through interviews, observations and parents’ stories.

Introduction

Following the successful implementation of training in the Triple P parenting program in Port Alberni, the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) authorized funding to extend training to other communities. In the research project to be described the implementation of this training was documented and the immediate outcomes for practitioners and parents evaluated. Funding was provided by VIHA to evaluate progress in the fall of 2006 through to the spring of 2007. The information requirements of the staff and management of VIHA informed the purpose of the research: to determine the effects of the training on practitioners’ ability to support parents in enhancing their parenting skills and to generate information to inform the ongoing implementation. Specific research questions included the following:

a) Determine if, and how extensively practitioners are using Triple P and what, if any, plans for future use have been developed.  
b) If practitioners are not using Triple P determine the reason.  
c) Examine collaboration and determine who collaborates, for what purpose, and with whom, and future plans for further collaborations.  
d) Analyze the key elements of success across the communities and determine if and where some communities are “stuck”.  
e) Determine the impact to date in the communities where it is working.

Background of Triple P

Triple P-Positive Parenting Program, developed by Professor Matt Sanders and colleagues (1999) from the Parenting and Family Support Centre in the School of Psychology at the University of Queensland, is an evidence-based family intervention that aims to assist parents to promote their children’s social competence and manage common developmental and behavioural problems. The interventions that form the core of the program are derived from evidence gathered from 25 years of research (Sanders, Turner & Markie-Dadds, 2002). The program’s multi-level framework makes it possible to tailor information, advice and professional support to the needs of individual families and the type, intensity and mode of assistance they may require. The program incorporates the following five levels of interventions on a tiered continuum of increased strength and narrowing reach:

**Level 1 – Universal Triple P.** This intervention provides parents with access to information about parenting through a coordinated media and promotional campaign using print and electronic media.

**Level 2 – Selected Triple P.** This intervention entails brief, individual or seminar sessions with parents and caregivers. Level 2 interventions provide topic specific guidance to parents of children with mild behavioural difficulties, with the aid of user-friendly parenting tip sheets and videotapes that demonstrate specific parenting strategies.

**Level 3 - Primary care Triple P.** This is a 4-session intervention targeting parents and caregivers of children with mild to moderate behavioural difficulties and providing active skills training for parents.
Level 4 – Standard Triple P, Group Triple P. Level 4 interventions are more intensive than levels one to three and are for parents of children with more broad behavioural difficulties.

Level 5 – Enhanced and Pathways Triple P. Interventions at this intensive level are individually tailored programs for families with child behaviour problems and family dysfunction. Program modules include home visits to enhance parenting skills, mood management strategies, stress coping skills and partner support skills.

Method

On Vancouver Island Triple P is being implemented by practitioners from a wide variety of professions working in a number of different contexts. Thirty-two practitioners from Duncan, Comox, Gabriola Island, Nanaimo, Port Alberni, Tofino, Campbell River, Parksville and Cowichan were interviewed. The sample of practitioners included community health nurses involved in the delivery of services to newborns, infants, children and/or youth; social workers or family support workers working with high risk families; child psychologists; teachers; and counselors working in school districts. Many of these practitioners have been involved in the delivery of other community-based parenting programs. The semi-structured interviews consisted of 11 open-ended questions related to individual practice, community-level collaboration and future implementation of the Triple P Program. Several of the questions were structured to collect accounts of ‘critical incidents’ (Flanagan, 1954), geared towards gathering personal stories or experiences in working with the program. The interviews were carried out over the phone, recorded and transcribed. In addition to the practitioner interviews, there were two other sources of data: interviews with parents and observations and discussions at coordination meetings. The coordinator/facilitator of the training process was also interviewed and consulted regularly to validate and expand on results. Forty-two interviews and two observations were completed. At the coordination meetings, further questions were asked for clarity and suggestions from practitioners and parents were shared to help inform the implementation. The data were synthesized into main categories of: changes in practice, collaboration, and, impacts to date. The process of implementation was organized in the form of an algorithm to indicate the flow and the types of activities that lead to success.

Results

Changes in Practice. Practitioners were asked to describe the ways in which their practice had changed since receiving the training in Triple P. Some practitioners responded that their practice had not changed but rather was simply enhanced by Triple P while others indicated that they were practicing in a completely different way in their interactions with parents. The changes in practice are placed on a continuum to reflect these differing levels of change. An enhancement of practice is interpreted as a change albeit a minor one. As will be seen in the next section the most significant, widespread major change was an increase in collaboration with colleagues in other agencies. Many had not previously collaborated in any capacity. Those practitioners whose practice had been merely enhanced referred primarily to the new tools available to them but their basic orientation to parents remained the same. Those whose practice had undergone major change related it to the more structured package and tools that enabled them to provide parents with consistent information and a cohesive approach. As well, a common language facilitated their professional relationships with colleagues within and beyond their organization. The major change was the adoption of an empowering, questioning approach that aimed to develop the parents’ capacity rather than the more didactic ‘expert to client’ information exchange. For some practitioners there was an epiphany. They now engage in more interactive dialogue to determine what the parent needs to know and what might help their specific situation—a change from the expert stance they previously employed. They now concentrate on developing the parents’ ability for positive problem solving and self-regulation.

The ability to coordinate groups and meet with colleagues to solve problems increased practitioners’ confidence. Interestingly, the more structured approach, particularly with the impressive research foundation, also increased confidence to be able to talk with parents about effective strategies for managing problem behaviours. In this way the structured approach helped some practitioners in much the same way as it helped parents. Practitioners also felt they had more knowledge of other programs to offer parents. If they were not able to help the parents themselves they knew which agencies were available for referrals. As will be indicated in the next section on collaboration, practitioners particularly appreciated that they can now work as teams with their immediate colleagues as well as colleagues in other agencies. All of the communities hold network meetings to coordinate training and the scheduling of groups. Co-facilitation of groups is the ultimate collaborative practice.

Changes in practice can be placed on a continuum from “has enhanced my practice rather than changed it” to “I have completely changed the way I practice”. Collaboration was described as the most significant change. How this is enacted in practice is illustrated in greater detail in Figure 1.
Collaboration. In every interview practitioners reported that collaboration has increased in the community. The level of collaboration is remarkable. It is facilitated by the cross training and by the practitioners now having a common language with which to describe parenting issues.

Over one third of the practitioners are co-facilitating with colleagues in agencies other than their own. The remainder coordinates their activities through regular networking meetings. At these meetings the collaborations range from information sharing and scheduling to problem solving and reflection on practice.

The following are examples of how collaborations are improving supportive care in the community:

- Inter-agency facilitation of arranging group sessions for parents, agencies agree to take parents into sessions who are not their clients. Intent is to be able to phone any agency and get a space for a parent(s).
- Meetings have become integrated case management; in particular with a representative from MCFD also attending the meetings, the members are able “to come up with more strategies to help the family help themselves rather than whether or not to remove the children”. There are now more referrals from MCFD.
- Because members of different agencies “trained together” they are now able to do joint planning for families, schedule sessions and expedite access to sessions. For example: They do a lot of teamwork facilitated by “speaking the same language” and can “send families so much quicker to sessions. It is more consistent.”
- One Community Centre had funding for parenting programs that was not used because parents were not attending. The Centre partnered with agencies trained in Triple P to share resources, personnel and space, and Triple P sessions are now being run there.

Effect of collaboration on service delivery to families

Implementing the same parenting program across communities has enabled and facilitated greater coordination of services to parents. By increasing the access points, that is, where and when services are available, it has given the parents the flexibility to be able to match the scheduling of the program with their working schedule and their readiness for change. In addition, it has increased collaboration across communities in the region. Port Alberni, the first community to implement Triple P represents a living model of how to implement, support and sustain the program. Practitioners in other communities refer to Port Alberni for advice and for resources.

Nineteen practitioners were able to give examples of how this increased collaboration helped them to manage a case. Those who work more one- to- one (rather than those who facilitate groups) did not have examples at this time. The collaborations ranged from seeking advice and referrals, to one practitioner training one parent while another trained the other parent.

Examples (quotes)

Greater flexibility for families. “Times when only the mother has come to training… partner is working and they aren’t interested in both getting trained, and then halfway through the partner will really notice a change and …want to take the program. So then the partner might go to a Group while one [the other parent] is in “Standard” (one to one format).

More points of access. One client, her first call was to the parents’ line at the Boys and Girls club …person there was the co-facilitator [with a group at our agency] and she was able to recommend Triple P to this client …It can serve as an entry point for additional referrals. …getting and making referrals from other agencies. Right now we have put up a waitlist for our Feb Triple P and we are willing to take on other clients from other agencies... Rather than waiting until their agency… is putting on a Triple P [group], they are able to refer them [the client] out.
More perspectives on a “case”. Lots of referrals or case conferences have been enhanced by Triple P. We have a health nurse that took the training and she is attached to our centre so I collaborate with her a lot… bouncing questions off each other etc.

Promotion of a collaborative community approach. Parents [clients] were involved in the CDC (centre), and spoke to someone there who knew about Triple P and recommended it to them, and, when I did an interview with the child’s teacher, she didn’t know about it but was really interested and enthusiastic and willing to support it. That really helps when you are in a situation with a vulnerable child; to have others in the community to support it is great… having everyone on the same page, having it be universal (“across the board”) and evidence based.

Group problem solving. Because we all have the training, we have a lot of internal consultation to manage problems, we have a group debriefing to discuss how to handle things, it’s easier because we had the training.

A “Roots” worker and one of the PHNs are working together and they’ve had parents coming in who perhaps needed enhanced rather than standard. They’re able to work together to determine how to benefit a particular family. It’s not public health having to say “we need this other agency involved”, they’re already working together and linked, they can determine where one agency’s involvement begins and where their involvement can enhance that.

Universal access and early intervention. Parents are referred or hear about it in many different ways: at the birth of their child, through friends, social workers, etc. It is an open referral, universal access- anybody can come who looks after a child 3 years and under.

Increased confidence in making referrals. It has also increased the number of referrals that I am getting from VIHA, now there is less grayness, they know what I offer and they co facilitate with you and we are all using the same language so they can refer with confidence. They know exactly what that family they refer is going to be receiving. Likewise, I can refer people to group Triple P and parents are self-referring from the description I am able to give them.

Extra services for parents. Another agency was working with kids with behavioral issues, they were seeing the youth workers, and we had a group volunteering to baby-sit the siblings and then I ran the parent group with the parents, so that was a good example of interagency collaboration.

The Harmony program is a program for kids with issues and right now when the kids are in Harmony, the parents are in group Triple P so that’s a collaboration with mental health (some of the parents probably need enhanced, but this is a good start).

Interventions are expedited. A family (clients) had taken Triple P with another agency who had implemented it sooner and it was helpful in that way cause they already had the background and some of the tools.

One family with a Mom who was regularly smacking her child, we have many people involved in that case- CYMH, MH Adult, we have a family support worker, we have another agency and we are all able to sit down together because we all have the same training, all talking the same language so we know what it means, we are on the same page, and that has been really helpful.

Reduced wait lists. We use to have a waitlist over four and a half months and that is ridiculous for a family that is having a crisis to tell them to come back in four and a half months. What we did was we phoned all the folks on the waitlist and said you can either continue to be on the waitlist…and get the individual or the family counseling or you can come in as a parent and take the Triple P which is starting in two weeks, three weeks whatever it was at that point. It really helped us cut down on the waitlist and streamline the process.

Summary of Changes and Implications

Most important of the impacts is the availability of a universal program with a positive focus. Parents related stories of seeking help for a long period of time and reaching a breaking point when they were referred to the program. Some had been to see professionals and while they received reassurance that there was nothing significantly wrong with their child they felt they did not get the practical skills they needed to manage their child’s behaviour. The Triple P program gave them in the words of one parent: “a new language to communicate with my kids, can show who is boss but in a positive way… I have a really positive feeling –it is a culture, a method, a set of tools, a communication skill, a language.”

The community wide approach to the training has now increased the entry points through which parents can seek help. In addition, practitioners are able to reduce wait lists by referring parents to other programs in the community through their networking meetings. The opportunity to co-facilitate with practitioners from agencies other than one’s own facilitates case conferencing and enhances skills through mentoring. The result is more accountability and a greater quality assurance. Not only do parents fill in their pre and post assessments but the practitioners are in a position to observe each other, provide advice and support to each other with regard to problem solving and case management and to learn from each other. In this way the Triple P program acts as a medium for reviewing and assessing the work in the community, a built in quality assurance.

There are two elements of the Triple P program that are unique: first it is multi-level and thus involves practitioners...
working across the spectrum of difficulty; second, the program has multiple media by which to present the information to parents, for example: tip sheets, videos and role playing; this enables the practitioner to use tools at whatever level is appropriate. Triple P has in fact, facilitated greater multi-disciplinary care and even incorporated prevention and community awareness into regular service provision.

References
For over 20 years the Occupational Therapy programme has partnered with over 30 nonprofit community agencies to provide mutually beneficial practicum and research experiences for students and clients. The development of this collaboration, lessons learnt, and recommendations for future developments are outlined.

Introduction

The Occupational Therapy (OT) Department at the University of Alberta is housed within the Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine and has a history of innovation in education. One innovation has been the development of the “Independent Community Placement” (ICP) (Mulholland & Derdall, 2005). The OT programme has used this collaborative approach since the early 1980’s. This paper discusses why enhancing capacity for community-based OT practice is important, describes ICPs, identifies what we have learned through our experiences, and discusses future opportunities for practica and agency-driven research in these sites.

Background

Why is Community-Based Occupational Therapy Important?

Occupational therapists are professionals working within rehabilitation and health promotion and are specifically interested in the interactions between people, their environments and their occupations (or, the meaningful activities they choose or have to do in their daily lives). The extent to which occupational therapists have the opportunity to work alongside clients within clients’ own day-to-day environments, and to directly enable clients to engage in their routine occupations, varies. In hospital and clinic settings, the environment is frequently arranged to promote efficient medical care, and often bears little resemblance to the environment in which the client typically lives. Client opportunity to engage in daily routines is also frequently affected by hospital procedures and policies. The OT profession has long recognized the need for an increased focus on community-based or community-built (Wittman & Velde, 2001) services. But, as McColl (1998) says:

One of the main challenges to occupational therapists in contemplating a major shift to community practice is the extent to which our existing knowledge supports a different kind of practice in a different kind of environment (p.11).

Community-Based Student Practica

One way of gaining that knowledge, for both educators and students, is to pursue opportunities to learn in the community, to move away from focusing primarily on a medical model with individuals and to concentrate on primary prevention and/or health promotion with communities (Scriven & Atwal, 2005). Fortune, Farnsworth and McKinstry (2006) argue that practicums (also referred to in some professions as apprenticeships, fieldwork experiences, placements) that focus on practice in emerging areas and/or have a project emphasis are preferred learning experiences for OT students. Wood's (2005) survey of ICPs (also known as non-traditional and role-emerging practicums) suggest the following strengths of such practicums: development of a stronger professional identity, increased independent thinking, student exposure to opportunities beyond traditional practice, and greater scope
Our Experience with Independent Community Placements

Description of the Partnership

Community agencies with no occupational therapist on staff, but with a clientele who could clearly benefit from OT services have been identified and approached by University faculty or, often, have themselves approached the programme to ask if their setting would be suitable for student practicums. Once the “fit” between agency and the University has been confirmed, a profile of the agency is developed and students are offered opportunities to complete a practicum within these settings. A partial list of agencies and programmes we have partnered with over the past 20+ years includes:

- a local school for deaf students;
- a wide array of inner city agencies that provide housing, addiction treatment, shelter for abused women and children, child care and other services;
- provincial and federal jails;
- halfway houses for individuals discharged from jail or from long-term psychiatric facilities;
- a centre for young offenders;
- supported living homes for persons with multiple mental and physical health challenges;
- an after-school programme for children with disabilities;
- vocational agencies and
- community programmes for persons with traumatic brain injury, multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injury.

The OT programme currently has agreements with over 30 local (predominantly Edmonton based) agencies, and could easily expand the number and location of sites if there were not constraints related to student supervision. The agencies serve children and adults with a particular focus on aboriginal and/or women’s issues. The majority of clients have mental health concerns including addictions; their ability to function is often further complicated by homelessness, abuse, imprisonment and poverty.

Models of Supervision

Student supervision at the ICPs is typically two tiered. First, direct supervision is provided by an on-site supervisor (who is not an occupational therapist) who may be a nurse, social worker, psychologist or other professional. Second, an off-site supervisor who is an occupational therapist with experience in mental health and student supervision is provided by the University. At various times, this off-site supervision has been provided by a contracted therapist, or by faculty members with a particular interest in a specific agency/area of practice. Currently, supervision of ICP students is the responsibility of one faculty member (University OT supervisor); this assignment is considered part of her teaching assignment.

The Student Experience

During a typical practicum session, there are 12 – 18 students completing an ICP. These practicum experiences are full-time and have ranged from five to eights weeks in duration; in the new graduate level professional programme, practicum experiences will be six weeks in duration. Students are generally placed in pairs, and thus have a colleague with whom they can share ideas, solve problems and promote peer-learning. In recent years, students have also had access to an online practicum forum, and have used that as a way to connect with other students undertaking an ICP.

Participating in an ICP is considered a special privilege and students with a poor academic or fieldwork history or very junior students are not able to apply for one of these placement opportunities. On occasion, various ICP sites have collaborated with the University to provide students with challenges (weak skills) with a safe environment for them to have a meaningful volunteer learning opportunity outside of the curriculum. The University OT supervisor and on-site supervisor have been very dedicated to this process and have provided the student with honest feedback and guidance so s/he could develop the skills necessary to be successful in their next practicum experiences.
Benefits of the Partnership

Clients, agencies, students and the University benefit from involvement in the ICP initiative. Students may offer direct services to agency clients or they may also be involved in projects whereby the agency and/or community itself is in fact the client. Students work directly with clients having a variety of concerns: being able to engage in former leisure pursuits, putting together a resume and cover letter, improving communication skills, self-regulating disruptive behaviour in school, mastering public transportation in a new city or learning how to cut with scissors.

benefits for the agency/community and clients. As an example of students working to meet the needs of an agency/community, during the most recent five week practicum session, students received guidance in writing grant proposals in a not-for-profit respite care agency; their proposal was funded, and has allowed the agency to expand services. In another setting, students knew of a programme that provides funding to allow access to fitness programmes, and were able to arrange this for clients in a halfway house. Students developed a “train the trainer” programme to address office ergonomics issues in a community agency; in another setting, students conducted a back injury prevention programme for staff. Students developed manuals detailing normal child development, and describing strategies facilitating development through play for childcare staff in a community agency. In a kindergarten, the student prepared a manual to assist teachers who had children in their class with fine-motor delays, as well as working directly with children with delays. Students working in the psychiatric unit of a provincial correctional institution designed and ran basic life skills and expressive arts groups. Their work with inmates was so successful that they were able to secure additional options for their group members in terms of access to resources elsewhere in the prison. These particular students were so excited by the experiences they had during their practicum, that they are, on their own time, voluntarily updating a proposal for funding for a full-time OT position at the site, even though neither is intending to work in the province following graduation. Clearly, agencies and clients benefit from having occupational therapists completing practicums in the community.

benefits for the student. Students benefit through learning about the impact of poverty, violence, homelessness and mental illness on daily life. In many cases, our students have had little previous exposure to individuals who have to face these issues every day. Furthermore, OT students need to be prepared to work with these individuals in the nonprofit realm as well as the hospital and regular health care system.

Most students report that their ICP experiences have been transformative. They come to understand, first hand, their own prejudices and misconceptions, and the impact that stigma has on individuals. Their awareness of social and cultural environments and what occupational therapists refer to as the institutional environment (policies, procedures, agencies, government structures, funding sources) is greatly enhanced. Students learn to, as Smith (2005) says so eloquently, “feel the fear and do it anyway” (p.474). They often tell us that they also become aware of the resilience, creativity and ability to maintain hopefulness that the people and agencies they work with have. One of the educational approaches that informs our curriculum philosophy is transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991). Transformative learning can occur when an individual has an experience which calls into question her/his assumed beliefs, reflects on the situation and changes the way she/he sees the world. It is our experience that the ICP setting is often a source of much transformational learning, perhaps in part because the student enters the setting with a much less clearly defined role. Some students experience considerable anxiety through the process, but report that, afterwards, they feel like this was their first chance to understand clearly some key idea from their classroom studies. For instance, one student reported that his ICP was the first time he truly understood what being client-centred was.

benefits for the University. The academic programme benefits in being able to provide students with unique opportunities to see what we have talked about in the classroom come to life in the community. We get almost immediate feedback on what we are doing well or not doing well in the classroom and lab. We also benefit by making connections with community agencies and gaining an understanding not only of their services, but also of potential research partnerships.

research opportunities. Research to date at these community agencies has included a small number of interesting Masters level projects which we expect will inspire future and more in depth studies. For example, one study used qualitative interviews to identify which activities homeless individuals performed during the day and which ones they found meaningful. Another project encouraged homeless individuals to use a donated camera to record activities that were important to them.

Students and agency supervisors often identify opportunities for research. Two recent examples were an agency recognizing that the services they provide for women with traumatic brain injury are somehow missing the mark; they wondered if we could assist them in looking for better ways to serve these clients. Another agency is interested in how OT assessment could contribute to a better understanding of the profile of clients who are successful in launching small businesses funded under a federal micro-loan programme.
What We Have Learned So Far…

The following is a summary outlining the lessons we have learned along the way over the years. These lessons have been incorporated into the current ICPs to ensure continued quality of experiences for both the students and community sites and clients.

- value of placing students in pairs and the strength of peer-learning
- importance of having students communicate across sites to share experiences and resources
- preparation – group meetings with the University OT supervisor and a pre-practicum seminar on working in unfamiliar environments
- support from the OT community – shadowing opportunities for students on ICPs to see “traditional” therapists at work
- educating site as to what OT is and isn’t – with of course, a broad definition that includes both individual and population health, and intervention ranging from prevention to tertiary intervention focus.
- weekly (at minimum) contact between students and the University OT supervisor (FEICP) – this contact might include supporting transformative learning by highlighting a “disorienting event”, asking students to consider their assumptions, providing opportunities for critical reflection, encouraging consideration of alternatives, encouraging discourse with other students, helping students to articulate revised assumptions and perspectives and finally supporting students to act on their changes assumptions (Cranton, 2002).
- sharing of student experiences with other students considering an ICP
- importance of considering sustainability
- development of resources – site manuals and resource boxes
- student access to University resources such as standardized assessment tools, books, craft materials, computer lab
- online forums are valuable to some but not all students
- self-evaluation: students almost invariably harder on themselves than site supervisor or University OT supervisor

Recommendations for Future Developments

As we move into the future and our OT programme shifts to a Masters entry-level (Sept 2007) and social environments change we need to ensure the ICPs remain beneficial to all stakeholders. The following is a summary outlining recommendations for future developments

- surveying ICP agencies to gather their suggestions for needed research
- matching students with a particular research interest to ICP sites where they can deepen their knowledge of their research topic
- exploring a cohort model where a small group of students works with an agency to address a specific programme development need
- OT participation in an already existing inner city clinic run by an inter-disciplinary team of health care students
- where scheduling allows, pairing junior and senior OT students in placement sites
- developing a systematic research plan to explore the outcomes that Wood (2005) suggests come from ICP experiences, in particular looking at whether and how completing an ICP leads to stronger professional identity and increased independent thinking.
- explore how doing an ICP affects future job choices

References


Finding the Fit:
Community Partners as Co-educators in Community Service-Learning

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This paper outlines a research project that used surveys and interviews to discover what community partners wanted in order to feel more like co-educators when they agree to host and mentor community service-learning classes.

The October 2007 edition of Canadian current affairs magazine, The Walrus, includes an article by Rick Salutin called “The Mystery of Teaching.” In the article, Salutin refers to teaching as “a normal human function” (p. 38) in which we all participate, regardless of credentials and context. “In this light,” he writes, “. . . why not extend teaching duty, in an assistant capacity, to members of the community. . . ?” (p. 38). Universities are also asking themselves this very question, attempting to tap into what Henry Giroux calls “the transformative power of education” by “form[ing] alliances with parents, community organizers, labor organizations, and civil rights groups at the local, national, and international levels” (2003, p. 13). But, when community partners perform their role as co-educators, how do they know how they “fit in” to the university, and more specifically, into Community Service-Learning courses?

In 2006-07, the Community Service-Learning Program at the University of Alberta surveyed community partners and conducted follow-up interviews with nine community partners to discover what community partners wanted in order to feel more like co-educators when they agree to host and mentor community service-learning classes. Community partners recognized themselves as valuable resources to students, but they repeatedly lamented the lack of a relationship between instructors and themselves. One community partner wrote, “I would . . . love to have a relationship with the ‘Profs’ because there’s no link between us and the classroom.” Another respondent commented, “The professors should not be afraid to ask us [to come into the classroom].” This paper reviews the results of our surveys and interviews with community partners and explores the ways in which we can respond to our community partners’ requests for a more transparent and reciprocal relationship with professors and enhance their role as co-educators.

While we recognize that effective partnerships often require years to establish, we aim to provide some immediate, concrete strategies for building relationships between instructors and community organizations. Many of the strategies that we outline will be useful for newly formed, short-term partnerships, which, given the academic calendar and the relative nascence of our CSL Program, characterize many instructor-community relationships. However, we also intend for these immediate strategies to foster long-term relationships, characterized “by processes of negotiation that . . . closely align each partners’ goals and expectations, . . . frequent communication, [and] a belief in the value of the partnership” (Worrall, 2007, p. 6).

Surveying Community Partners

Survey Purposes and Procedures

The University of Alberta’s Community Service-Learning (CSL) Program, under the guidance of Evaluation Coordinator Ruth Wolfe, compiles an annual Evaluation Report (available at on our webpage at: http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/csl) based on surveys conducted in the Fall and Winter semesters with students, instructors, and community partners. The main purpose of the surveys is to provide a picture of what is working and what is not working in the program. Students, instructors, and community organizations are invited to evaluate the usefulness of CSL for students’ learning in several areas, including understanding of the community, understanding of course material, contributing to social change, developing leadership skills, developing critical thinking skills, and encouraging participation in the community. Overall, students’ and instructors’ responses suggest that CSL encourages connections between the university, including
instructors and students, and the broader community. Community partners, however, did not share this outcome. Of the 25 community partners who responded to the survey, the majority indicated that CSL was not useful for developing relationships with university instructors. In response to another survey question, which asked what would make it easier for community partners to participate fully in future CSL opportunities, several organizations gestured to the need for more communication with the instructor and, in the words of one organization, “more engagement with the profs.”

This need to foster greater faculty involvement in community-university partnerships is not unique to the University of Alberta’s CSL program. As Marie Sandy and Barbara Holland suggest in their article, “Different Worlds and Common Ground: Community Partner Perspectives on Campus-Community Partnerships,” service-learning programs throughout North America are finding the same thing: Community partners’ “greatest challenge in partnering with campuses is to find ways to interact directly with faculty through ongoing, reciprocal relationships . . . and engage with faculty more deeply in the work of their agencies” (2006, p. 37). In her article, “Asking the Community: A Case Study of Community Partner Perspectives,” Laurie Worrall replicates Sandy and Holland’s findings, noting that community partners reported “inadequate faculty involvement” as a primary challenge to working with service-learning programs (p. 6). To better understand what community partners meant by “need[ing] more ‘engagement, the CSL Program conducted follow-up interviews with nine community partners.

We asked, “Community partners commented that CSL did not help to build stronger relationship with the university. Was that true for your organization? If so, what kind of relationship would your organization like to have with the University? What do you think would be required to achieve this?” Responses to this question revealed four broad themes. First, faculty need to understand better the daily climate of the non-profit sector as well as the broader political climate that shapes the sector’s work. In other words, “faculty should . . . work to better understand the culture, conditions and practices of community co-educators” (Sandy & Holland, 2006, p. 37). Second, faculty need to communicate their “expectations” more clearly. There is some ambiguity around the term “expectations,” which we will discuss. Third, general improvements in “communication infrastructure” (Sandy and Holland, 2006, p. 39) are required. And, fourth, there needs to be a greater recognition of the value of community partners as co-educators.

**Strategies for Enhancing Community Partner-Instructor Relationships**

*Increasing Instructor Knowledge of the Non-profit Sector*

In our interviews, community partners called for instructors to become more cognizant of the community organizations. As one community partner put it, “How about a professor come to our community, our organization to see where their student [is] going to. At least they [would] know the background of the organization, what we are doing. . . . Why not to see the reality of life.” If the instructor visited the organization, this community partner suggested, he or she would “know what’s going on” not only in the organization itself, but also in the community outside of the university. Community partners have accurately identified a need for instructors to learn more about the work of the specific organizations where their students are placed as well as the non-profit sector and the community more broadly. This suggestion also reflects the commonly held perception that, as Giroux writes in “Public Pedagogy and the Politics of Resistance,” “too many intellectuals and educators are disconnected from social [and community] movements” (2003, p. 13).

The community partner quoted above makes one very concrete recommendation to strengthen community-instructor relationships: instructors should visit the community organization site. This community partner also acknowledges the common barrier of time here, however. We, of course, recognize that instructors and community partners are pressed for time. Still, as this community partner suggests, even one site visit per term would help the instructor better understand the organization and the workplace environment. A single visit near the beginning of the semester, for instance, during which the instructor learns about the organization’s background and current projects may also help her choose more appropriate readings, design more effective assignments, and realize more integrated expectations. Moreover, the face-to-face communication of a site visit encourages a more aligned and committed partnership and facilitates the construction of a communication infrastructure – a point to which we’ll return.

Community partners can also invite instructors to community events. Community events can help academics understand how their research might translate into a public forum. Such events might also encourage academics to connect their work to “pressing public issues and wider constituencies outside of the university” (Giroux, 2003, p. 13), which is central to effecting the socially transformative potential of education. As Giroux and others argue, academic work must be connected to “real life social and political issues in wider society” (Bennett qtd. in Giroux, 2003, p. 12). “The time has come,” Giroux continues, “for educators to develop more systemic political projects in which power, history, and social movements can play an active role in constructing the multiple and shifting political relations and cultural practices necessary for connecting the construction of diverse political consequences to the revitalization of democratic public life” (2003, 13). Forming alliances with “community organizers, labor organizations and civil rights groups at local, national, and international levels. . . [will help educators] to better understand how to translate private troubles into public actions, [and] arouse public interest in pressing social problems” (Giroux, 2003, p. 13).
We host a half-day orientation session at the beginning of each semester, (shortly before classes start), where instructors and community partners meet to discuss the course that they will share. After a brief introduction to service-learning and an overview of the administrative details, community partners and instructors break off into groups to discuss the course projects and their expectations and to arrange an initial classroom visit where community partners pitch their organizations and projects to students. Community partners share their organization’s literature with instructors during the orientation session, and instructors share their syllabus with the community partner. Community partners repeatedly remark that having the course “syllabus ahead of time really helped.” Recognizing the importance of ongoing communication between the community partner and the instructor, the CSL Program also prompts community members and instructors to use the orientation session to establish a preferred means of communication and a tentative schedule of “check ins” throughout the term – another process of building communication infrastructure. These orientation sessions have been very well received.

For most instructors and community members, the session initiates their relationship, but it could also be extended and used as a forum for community partners to educate instructors about the non-profit sector. We are currently contemplating extending the half-day orientation to a full-day information and orientation day: in the morning session, which might be titled, “A Primer on the Non-Profit Sector,” community members would teach instructors about the culture, conditions, and practices of the non-profit sector; the afternoon session would consist of the orientation as sketched above. While this strategy requires more time of participants, a community-led information session encourages instructors to recognize community partners as co-educators. If instructors first encounter community partners as teachers, they will more readily recognize the knowledge that community partners bring to the course and feel more comfortable integrating that knowledge into the classroom. In other words, in addition to fostering awareness of community strengths, weaknesses and processes, this community-led information session would encourage a more reciprocal relationship between instructors and community partners and meet the community partners’ call for more emphasis on their role as co-teachers.

Community partners also suggested that instructors should learn about the community and non-profit sector by volunteering. Again, community partners recognized time and workload as barriers to this kind of faculty involvement, and instructors would certainly concur. Another barrier to faculty volunteer service is the current culture of the university, where teaching and community service are devalued relative to research. Thus, instructor volunteer service might be a long-term goal related to the larger aim of changing the culture of the university to recognize and reward faculty’s involvement in the community outside of the university.

Defining “Expectations”. In the surveys and interviews, several community partners made ambiguous remarks about “expectations,” such as, “[We need] more engagement with the profs to understand what they want” and “lay out expectations right at the beginning.” It is not clear from these calls for clearer expectations exactly what “expectations” means to community partners. Are faculty and community partners talking about the same thing when they use the term “expectations”? As Brenda Bushouse suggests in her article, “Community Nonprofit Organizations and Service-Learning: Resource Constraints to Building Partnerships with Universities,” community organizations tend to focus on specific outcomes, whereas universities are oriented around ongoing processes of student learning (2005, p. 33; Worrall, 2007, p. 6). These institutional and ideological differences suggest that community partners and instructors may not share an understanding of “expectations.” We recommend that instructors initiate a dialogue about “expectations” with their community partners. Instructors should recognize that, in most instances, simply giving the community partner a syllabus will not adequately convey his or her pedagogical expectations. Course objectives are often too vague or “academic” to provide useful guidance for community organizations as they plan student projects and imagine their roles as co-educators. Our program organizes a syllabus-building workshop each semester where instructors formulate objectives in ways that make sense to community partners.

Other community partners spoke more specifically about the need for instructors to convey their expectations of students. One community partner suggested, “It would be helpful to know exactly what the teacher is hoping for the students to get out of the placement.” Another remarked, “I have no idea what the expectations of teachers are, for the students to get their grade.” While the latter comment implicitly recommends that instructors formulate and share clear student-centered learning goals with their community partners, the former comment points to a need to share evaluation criteria. In the short term, sharing evaluation criteria can help community partners understand instructor’s expectations. In the long term, it could encourage service-learning curriculum collaboration between faculty and community partners.

It should be noted that expectations can change over the term as service-learning experiences are never entirely predictable. Therefore, ongoing communication, such as the scheduled “check in,” is ideal. Even a brief email once every two weeks or so to inquire how the project is going or how student x is doing helps to insure that the instructor’s and community partner’s expectations are aligned. One community partner recommended instituting a mid-session in-person meeting between the instructor and the community partner, which would be a perfect opportunity for the instructor to visit the organization site.

Improving Communication Infrastructure: Many of the recommendations that we have made so far thematically overlap
and could also fall under the rubric of improving communication infrastructure. Obviously, encouraging regular “check ins,” mandating a mid-session meeting, recommending site visits, inviting instructors into the classroom and community members into the classroom all go some way to building the kind of communication infrastructure necessary for stronger community partner-instructor relationships. We would like to add two other strategies to this list: first, institute a CSL showcase at the end of the academic year, and second, employ online communications for course material and assignments.

Both community partners and instructors have noted that the semester ends abruptly, without any substantive “closure.” Many instructors invite community partners into the class at the end of the term to hear students’ final papers and presentations, which is a strategy that meets the community partners’ calls for an enhanced role as co-teachers. Such in-class participation is also useful as a strategy for improving communication and providing appropriate closure to short-term community partner-instructor relationships. An end-of-year CSL celebratory showcase for all students, instructors, and community partners would address this issue of closure at the same time as it would provide an opportunity for networking. Featuring a sampling of the year’s projects, the showcase could spark other project ideas and collaborations between academics and community organizations.

Instructors might also consider using online technology such as websites, blogs, and electronic-portfolios to increase the transparency of classroom work and faculty expectations. As one community partner commented, “there’s no link between us and the classroom. . . . [It] would be really cool to somehow engage a little bit more . . . [with] what’s happening in the classroom[,] so we could kind of tap into their [instructors’] energies a little bit more and really figure out why they’re here.” If, for example, an online discussion forum was one of the course assignments, community partners would be able to observe classroom activities online. They could also participate in the forum by posing questions or responding to postings, which would enhance their role as co-teachers. Online access can be regulated to certain discussions or sections of e-portfolios to avoid violations of privacy, although expectations and terms of privacy would need to be agreed upon by members of the class as well as the community partners. Another barrier here is access to technology; while computers and internet access are widely available on campus, we recognize that not all community partners have equivalent resources. Similarly, while many members of the university see online technologies as part of innovative pedagogy, community organizations may imagine more effective ways to engage students and the public. Nonetheless, online tools have the potential to facilitate communication between all service-learning participants and to increase the community partner’s role as a co-educator.

**Valuing Community Partners as Co-Educators.** Community partners repeatedly remarked that one of the most “valuable” and “rewarding” aspects of their experience with CSL was joining the class on campus. Invitations to give presentations and lead class discussions are very well received by community partners. As one partner explained, “The professors [should be] encouraged to use the resources that they find in the community partners, to come in and give a real life example or to be a guest speaker on a topic that we would know a lot about. . . . [T]here are community partners who are very good educators. . . . [This is] part of valuing the community partners as co-educators. . . . One piece is students going out into the community, we complete the circle by having community come back in.” This community partner effectively articulates the concept of horizontal learning, “a process involving negotiation among learning partners” (Mayes and Crossan, 2007, p. 300), as opposed to more conventional vertical learning where “a locus of control over the learning environment resid[es] with the teaching staff” (Mayes and Crossan, 2007, p. 300) and knowledge flows in one direction from faculty to students. Thus, having community partners enact their role as co-teachers in the classroom also contributes to the collective construction of knowledge (Saltmarsh, 1997, p. 82).

Community partners are also regularly invited into the classroom at the end of the term for final student presentations. Again, community partners remarked on the value of these wrap-up sessions, which gave them the chance to hear students articulate their most important service-learning lessons. One community partner referred to joining the final class as “the most positive experience I had with CSL. . . . [The] discussion between students and other [community] supervisors [was] really rewarding.” Hosting a concluding class-community colloquium or simply inviting community partners to sit in on student presentations definitely enhances the instructor-partner relationship by increasing the transparency of classroom work and revealing the student outcomes of co-teaching responsibilities.

**References**


CUexpo 2008
Social Innovation: The Centre for Community Based Research Celebrates Twenty Five Years

Joanna Ochocka, Rich Janzen, Sarah Marsh, Elin Moorlag
Centre for Community Based Research

This presentation will feature the Centre for Community Based Research (CCBR) as an example of social innovation. CCBR is Canadian leader in using community-based research to solve social problems. CCBR is located in community and receives no core funding, relying instead on an entrepreneurial spirit in collaboration with its hundreds partners to initiate new projects.

Introduction

“Be the change you wish to see”, was how Ghandi put it. If community-based research is concerned with sparking social innovation, then how it is practiced speaks as loudly as what innovation it produces.

The Centre for Community Based Research (CCBR) is an example of social innovation in Canada. Founded in 1982, CCBR is an independent, non-profit organization located in Kitchener, Ontario that is a leader in community based research. During the last 25 years CCBR staff has conducted over 230 research projects, applying participatory, action research methodology and leading to concrete action and change. Uniquely positioned between academia and community, CCBR has grown from the organization of 2.5 full-time staff to one that currently employs 12 full-time, 8 part-time, 27 community staff and 5 graduate students on placements.

CCBR receives no core funding, relying instead on an entrepreneurial spirit in collaboration with its many partners to initiate new projects. Over the years CCBR has partnered with literally hundreds of groups from across our country and beyond. From grassroots community groups to inter-governmental initiatives, CCBR has facilitated people to work together in new ways.

The purpose of the presentation is to give a brief overview of CCBR’s mission and history. Next CCBR’s organizational structure will be described, demonstrating how it is linked to a vision of using research as a catalyst of social innovation. We will end with an exploration of the three building blocks of social innovation used in CCBR’s 200 plus projects: 1) knowledge production (gathering and analyzing information that better informs people working for social change), 2) knowledge mobilization (creatively communicating research findings in ways that speak to people) and 3) community mobilization (using research to build relationships among people who, in turn, use the knowledge they jointly produce to guide their collective social action).

Mission

The mission and values are the focus and energy for this organization. The Centre for Community Based Research is committed to social change and the development of communities and human services that are responsive and supportive, especially for people with limited access to power and opportunity. Demonstrating leadership through research, education and community involvement, CCBR stimulates the creation of awareness, policies, and practices that advance equitable participation and integration of all members of our community.

Our philosophy is linked to participatory and action oriented research. The principles of a participatory, community based approach that twins research and education guides all the work CCBR does. We are committed to creating a world where everyone can participate and be full citizens. And we believe that it is important to understand research findings within a social context and within power relations that exist in the world. The purpose of this organization is
to promote and enact a particular vision about how social research can most constructively contribute to the creation of strong, inclusive communities. The work is guided by 6 values and 10 principles. (for a complete list see www.communitybasedresearch.ca)

History

The Centre for Community Based Research was established in 1982 by a small group of academics and social advocates. The founders all had experience as university-based researchers, but saw a need for research that was more closely linked to community based work. They were also interested in how research could provide insights into innovation and be more relevant to social change. In the early 1980s, the founding director and Centre board members were promoting a style of social research that was still very marginal in the Canada at that time: one that relied strongly on participatory approaches and qualitative methods.

The founders believed that CCBR would help to facilitate collaboration among academics, consumers, service providers, and advocates by making research tools available to those who were marginalized. In order to ensure that this new entity had the independence to provide a true alternative to academic research, CCBR was incorporated as a charitable, not-for-profit organization. Board membership was expanded to include consumers, researchers, service providers, academics, and advocates, in order to ensure that CCBR remained grounded in the experiences of those who make use of human services.

Early CCBR projects included a three year action research initiative with the national Canadian Mental Health Association, a major study of institutional closures in British Columbia, and a qualitative review of Independent Living Centres across Canada. These early projects helped CCBR to establish connections across Canada with leaders who were interested in utilizing research as a key tool for understanding innovation and social change.

Leaders at CCBR have always seen it as an organization that twins community research and education. From the beginning, CCBR staff and board members have engaged in various types of applied social research, including needs assessments, policy analyses, program evaluations, descriptions of change process, applied research projects, and research-based community mobilization efforts. By its very nature, participatory action research is as much about education and training as it is about organizing and interpreting data. Student interns and volunteers have always been an important part of life at the Centre, and we are actively involved in training people in a wide variety of settings. Centre staff members frequently offer workshops on community research and teach courses at universities.

The link between research and education is fundamental to the Centre’s participatory approach. We often hire and train community researchers who have direct personal experience with the issues under study. The Centre’s NewsReport, now in its 25th year, has been an important educational vehicle for friends of the Centre, consumers, other researchers, and policy makers.

A Pioneer in Social Innovation

CCBR is a Canadian pioneer in using community based research as a catalyst for social innovation. Since 1982 CCBR has been doing research in a participatory and action-oriented way that initiates practical change within communities.

Participatory Action Research. CCBR is a leader in Participatory Action Research Approach (PAR) in Canada. PAR is defined as “a research approach which consists of the maximum participation of stakeholders, those whose lives are affected by the problem under study, in the systematic collection and analysis of information for the purpose of taking action and making change” (Nelson, Ochocka, Griffin & Lord, 1998:12 [emphasis in original]).

PAR values guide researcher’s strategies for not only recruitment of study participants but for building lasting community-research partnerships. As a form of applied research which combines the two traditions of participatory research and action research, the values of PAR are strongly rooted in democracy, equality, liberation and change. The essential characteristics of this type of social research are: 1) doing research “with,” not “on” people, 2) offering training and mentoring, 3) providing opportunities for meaningful involvement of community members, 4) valuing experiential knowledge, and 5) focusing on social change (Ochocka & Janzen, submitted).

Building Blocks of Social Innovation

Community based research can be one way to stimulate social innovation. At CCBR this is done through the three inter-related building blocks listed below:

- Knowledge production
- Knowledge mobilization
- Community mobilization
Knowledge Production

Gaining deeper understanding is more than an academic exercise. CCBR is a leader in using participatory action research in a way that makes research relevant and useful for communities while still maintaining academic excellence. How knowledge is produced is as important as its content. Examples of innovative research include:

- Participatory Action Research
- Qualitative Research
- Mixed-method Approach
- Evaluating Innovations and Complex Community Initiatives
- Need assessment with policy implications
- Innovative research topics based on community needs and questions
- Linking formal and informal supports
- Community supports for people with complex needs
- Cultural diversity and mental health

Knowledge Mobilization. CCBR communicates research findings in ways that speak to diverse people and can be used to transform society. In addition to traditional ways of disseminating research learnings, CCBR uses innovative communication strategies. These strategies privilege the voice of marginalized groups while motivating all stakeholders to take needed action. Innovative examples include:

- Theatre
- Community Forums
- Poetry
- Consumer-led Workshops

Videos

Community Mobilization: Community mobilization is about a social change agenda. Research is not only relating to producing knowledge and communicating the knowledge and hoping others will act. Research is about starting the process of change (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). CCBR staff believes that community mobilization is possible because knowledge is jointly produced and knowledge is jointly mobilized. “Sharing power and knowledge” is one of our PAR article titles (Ochocka, Janzen & Nelson, 2002). When researchers share the responsibilities of knowledge production and knowledge mobilization with community stakeholders, community empowerment is possible— a community gaining mastery or control over its future.

We use research to build relationships among people who, in turn, use the knowledge they jointly produce to guide their collective social action. CCBR sees research as a way to bring people together around shared problems—even if people have never collaborated before. Some innovative examples include:

- Deinstitutionalization and closing institutions in Canada
- Support Clusters – Linking formal; and informal supports for people with dual diagnosis
- Waterloo Region Immigrant Employment Network (WRIEN)
- Community Research Ethics Board
- Global networking among faculty, students and community members
- Culturally effective mental health services
- Institutional and system change in community mental health
- "Paradigm shift" in community mental health

References


Enhancing Lake Planning Initiatives through Service Learning

Heather Reid, U-Links Centre for Community-Based Research
Dr. Eric Sager, Trent University
Katie Garrah, Trent University

Trent University, U-Links, and a lake association partnered to expand the scope of the ongoing lake planning process. This partnership provided a learning opportunity for students, direction for lake plan implementation, and insight into the process of developing service learning projects.

Getting Students Involved in Lake Plans

Haliburton County is peppered with lakes and is very well known for its appeal to cottagers. Many lake associations in this area are taking on lake planning. In Ontario, lake planning has traditionally been a top-down process. Regulations have been imposed upon shoreline residents in an attempt to reduce and manage impacts on the lake ecosystems. These regulations were usually driven by endpoints that dealt with nutrient loadings, fisheries habitat, and in very complex ways attempted to determine appropriate levels of shoreline development via development of lakeshore capacity models. More recently, provincial regulatory agencies recognized the importance of engaging the local communities in effectively managing lake resources. Thus, lake associations and local stewardship groups are being encouraged to participate in such planning exercises to ensure that future development occurs within the natural, social, and physical carrying capacity of their lakes. The Kennisis Lake Cottage Owner’s Association (KLCOA) initiated a lake planning process in 2004. In an extensive survey, data was gathered on what was important to, and the values of, the local shoreline residents of the lake. The respondents identified a number of important lake and quality-of-life factors. At that point, during the summer of 2006, the Chair of the Kennisis Lake Planning Committee approached the U-Links Centre for Community-Based Research (U-Links) about a project focused on how to implement a lake plan. Their feeling was that the values of the lakeshore residents had been articulated, but that there would be a challenge in putting those values into action and that they would benefit from research on the social element of changing behaviour.

U-Links was able to match the project through the Community-Based Education Program (CBE). The purpose of the CBE Program is to link organizations and businesses that have research needs to university and college students and professors who are interested in undertaking community-based research projects. In this case, U-Links matched one student with KLCOA and the resulting report “Marketing a Lake Plan to a Cottage Community and Watershed Residents” (author: Katie Garrah) was very well received. The KLCOA was enthusiastic about that experience and saw an opportunity to engage more students second semester. A partnership was established between a Restoration Ecology course at Trent University, U-Links, and the KLCOA to expand the scope of their lake plan. U-Links worked with the Kennisis Lake Planning Committee to develop several projects. These projects were presented to the Restoration Ecology course at Trent and students could pick a topic they were most interested in. All the projects focused on conducting secondary research to provide information to cottagers about topics they had already identified as being important. The projects that were matched as a result are listed below.
Students created final written reports as well as poster presentations summarizing their work. Each report describes the issues, outlines legislative and voluntary options for implementing changes, and some include recommendations for Kennisis Lake.

At the 2007 KLCOA meeting in May, a draft of the lake plan was presented. Some of the student work was included directly in the plan, while other information will be more relevant to the implementation strategy. The student posters were on display at the meeting to illustrate the work being done. The Kennisis Lake planning process is continuing. After their May meeting they facilitated several opportunities for feedback and input into the plan throughout the summer. At their meeting in the fall of 2007 they presented changes to the original planning document and continue to gather input from their lake community. More recently the KLCOA has been recognized by the Federation of Ontario Cottage Associations (FOCA) with the Jerry Strickland Award. This award is given to an association that has “realized a significant accomplishment(s) to benefit Ontario cottagers or demonstrated innovation in its work with its members and community”.

Models of Community-Based Research

Traditionally U-Links has promoted individual projects through the CBE Program. Using this approach, students choose from a list of projects their professor has indicated are appropriate to the course they are taking. Students select a project and then meet with the host organization to better understand the project details. The students work independently on their projects, as they would on an essay for a course, and complete a report for their host organization at the end of the term. The project all relate to the course content but not to one another. This model continues to work successfully in other courses. The example above, however, was a departure from this model and has proven to provide different results for both the host organization and the students involved.

In the Kennisis Lake example, U-Links had an established relationship with the host through a previous student project and recognized the opportunity to consider a new model. Lake plans are significant documents and the secondary research KLCOA was looking for was too much for one group of students. U-Links involved the professor in project development by arranging for meetings with the host and all three parties worked together to define smaller pieces of the lake plan that could be carved off into individual/small group projects. There are several key differences in this approach: increased faculty involvement at the project development stage; one class partnering with one host organization; and the lack of formal proposals for each smaller project piece. These differences created both benefits and challenges to project coordination.

Increased Faculty Involvement

This approach of connecting the professor directly with the host organization and jointly defining the project options has proven effective in a number of ways. The professor had first hand knowledge of the projects and was able to provide much more detailed support to the students. It also created a level of comfort with the host where they were willing to refer things back to the professor without concern that the project would be taken in a different direction. Participation in the project development phase requires more time in the part of the professor, which is not likely offset in terms of supervision of the students after projects have been matched. It does go a long way to improving the relevance of the project to the host because everyone supporting the students is on the same page from the beginning.
One Class, One Host

In this case, fourteen students from one course worked on eight connected projects with one host. Although different members of the Kennisis Lake Planning Committee acted as contacts for the students, this high number of project with one host can raise a red flag in terms of their capacity to respond to students’ questions and concerns. Due to time constraints, most of the initial meetings took place over the phone and some students never met their host in person. Making personal connections between the host and student has been a priority in the past for U-Links and has been identified as an area for improvement in using this model in the future. In this one class/one host model, the risk of overlap between the projects needed to be monitored. Students were encouraged to work together and share resources and, because they meet regularly in class, they had the opportunity to discuss elements of the project informally with other groups. Finally, from an outcome perspective, linking with an entire course ensured that more of the topics identified by the host were chosen and larger piece of work was completed.

Less Structured Proposals

Students who are involved with a U-Links project are required to create a project agreement that states what they are going to do, their timeline, and their deliverables. Usually students draw significantly on the host proposals for content for their agreement. Without formal proposals, students were challenged to define the scope of their project more independently. The result was that it often took longer for the projects to get started, but that students took more ownership for the final product. It also made the initial meetings between the host, the students, and the U-links staff even more critical to the process.

Overall, the one class/one host model worked well. The students learned about the lake planning process as well as their specific topics and the host received useful information. U-Links is using this model with another host working with the Restoration Ecology course in 2008. Adaptations to the model that have proven useful to date are: a class visit by the host to provide an overview of the project, site visits for the students combined with one on one meetings with the host, compiling resources for all students to share (reports, pictures, etc.), and consciously connecting the students working on interconnected part of the project.

Conclusion

Lake planning is largely being done by volunteers so the link with the university provides much needed capacity. This is an exciting example of how students working on community-based projects can have an impact on a larger community issue. The information collected by the students not only had a substantial impact on the KLCOA’s lake planning process, but is accessible to all lake associations in the area. The focus on secondary research makes the reports relevant to anyone interested in the lake planning process. They are all accessible through the U-Links office and have been circulated widely since their completion. Student involvement in lake planning presents a unique learning experience because the projects are part of an on-going initiative. Students can readily see how their work will make a difference.
Health Literacy in Context: A Social Practice Approach to Social Determinants of Health

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This paper is based on my research on health and adult learning involving community organizations and academic institutions. It focuses on health literacy by exploring relationships between health and literacy using some social determinants of health as a framework.

Introduction

This paper represents a progression from my professional life as a front-line mental health worker to a person with a passion for research and a keen interest in theory. I began my work in the area of health and learning as the director of a small non-profit community-based mental health organization where I enjoyed providing public education about issues related to mental health. I translated this interest in health, education and learning into a Master of Arts degree in Adult Education and Community Development at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. In September 2007 I completed my thesis titled “Learning to participate: Exploring the relationships between literacy and mental health. In the process of completing my graduate degree I developed a strong interest in research and research methodology. I also began to seek opportunities to broaden my understanding of health, wellness, literacy, and learning, and to delve deeper into theoretical considerations of these issues. I will continue this work as part of my doctoral research with Dr. Nancy Jackson at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto.

The working title of my research is “Health Literacy in context: A social practice approach to social determinants of health.” This research on health and learning in Canada will focus on exploring the relationships between health and literacy using some of the World Health Organization’s social determinants of health as a framework. I will use a research-in-practice methodology and a social practice approach to literacy to gain a richer and deeper understanding of the connections between health, wellness, literacy, and learning.

Through the use of learning circles and follow-up interviews this project will explore the relationships between learning and health. Literacy practitioners, health practitioners, and learners will work together to share and create knowledge about health, wellness, literacy, and learning.

Research Context and Rationale

Despite increased attention to literacy and efforts to address what is often considered a literacy “crisis” that affects the health and wealth of the nation, there are few indications of significant advancement in this area over the past two decades (Rootman & Ronson, 2003). In Canada, literacy was declared a national priority in the Speech from the Throne in 1986, and 1990 was designated “International Literacy Year.” Today, the Public Health Agency of Canada reports that almost 50% of Canadian adults cannot work well with words and numbers (Statistics Canada, 1995). Twenty-two percent are said to have serious difficulties with any type of printed material and another 26% have problems with all but the simplest tasks requiring reading and writing. Fewer than 10% of Canadian with low literacy skills enroll in upgrading programs and many of those who do often drop out. As new technologies continue to develop and Canada’s participation in the global “knowledge economy” increases, this “illiteracy” is seen as reaching crisis proportions. A number of surveys, the most prominent of which is the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), have been used to support literacy as a major labour force development issue (Rootman and Ronson, 2003). Low literacy levels have also been linked to problems in the health care field in a number of studies (Perrin, 1998: Sarginson, 1997; Davis, Meldrum, Tippy, Weiss & Williams, 1996; Parker, Baker, Williams & Nurss, 1995).
Given this research and data, it is not unreasonable to conclude that something may not be working or something may be missing in attempts to increase literacy. Recently, there has been growing acknowledgement that other factors may contribute to the “literacy problem,” the most prominent of which is the issue of health. For example, Davis et al. (1996) make reference to the 1993 U.S. National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) when talking about a “literacy crisis,” which they believe leads to a crisis in health care. In the past decade, there has been a growing interest in the links between literacy and health.

To state that definitions of literacy are varied and complex could be considered an understatement. There is often disagreement about what literacy means depending on the context in which it is discussed and who is talking about it. Similarly, there are many different ways of exploring the concepts of health and wellness. While the relationship between health and literacy is increasingly recognized, there are few models of this link which incorporate knowledge gained from both practice and theory. Within the broader health field there is a need for research that addresses literacy and health, although interest is increasing. Rootman and Ronson (2003), in their research paper sponsored by the Canadian Institute for Health Research suggest that we know that literacy skills predict health status even more accurately than education level, income, ethnic background, or any other socio-demographic variables. If we are to improve disparities in health, we have to address literacy. If we are to improve disparities in literacy, we have to address health. Collaboration and balance are essential.

While the links between health and literacy are often recognized, there are fewer models which incorporate knowledge gained from both practice and theory. In order to gain a fuller understanding of what literacy and health mean for individuals and communities and how they can be enhanced, we must explore the issues that affect and connect them. This understanding is important for effective literacy and learning practices and for effective health practices. It can foster closer connections between literacy and health researchers and practitioners, which can support practice and research and may ultimately influence policy.

A consideration of the social determinants of health can provide a useful way to think about the relationships between literacy and learning, health, and wellness. It moves away from a strictly biomedical model of health and a functional model of literacy and takes into account socio-economic factors. As the Primer to Action: Social Determinants of Health (2007) describes, “These factors [social determinants of health] come together like streams to form a flowing river to help us reach a state of complete physical, mental, and social well being. ” For the purpose of this project I have chosen to use the seven determinants of health that Rootman and Ronson (2003) suggest are particularly relevant for literacy. They are: education, early childhood development; aging; personal capacity; living and working conditions; gender; and culture.

There is considerable discussion in the health field about the importance of evidence-based research and the challenge of transferring academic knowledge to the community. Perhaps part of the challenge of bridging theory and practice is due to the fact that there are often two different groups of people engaged in this process. That is, academics enjoy a certain authority to create knowledge and construct theory while front-line workers are expected to simply adopt it into their practice. This link routinely breaks down. One means to work toward overcoming this division might be to involve literacy practitioners, health practitioners, learners, and service users in the research process. Research-in-practice and participatory research methodologies might allow practitioners, learners, and service users to identify what is important, what concepts and ideas mean to them, and how they make their own meanings. It may provide a culture that is more equitable, creates richer knowledge by incorporating the lived experiences of people in situations, and fosters lasting changes in learning and health.

The Research Question. This research project will bring together literacy practitioners, health practitioners, services users, learners and community members in order to explore the relationships between learning and health. Participants will form discussion groups to share, create, and extend knowledge about health, mental health, wellness, literacy, and learning for literacy practitioners, health practitioners, learners, and service users. They will develop richer and deeper understandings of the connections between learning and the social determinants of health as defined by Health Canada. Ultimately, they will form closer ties as community partners and stakeholders explore these issues together. The question guiding this research is: “What is the relationship between health and learning regarding each of Health Canada’s Social Determinants of Health that Rootman and Ronson (2003) have identified as particularly relevant for literacy?”

Theoretical Framework

In considering the role of theory in literacy I choose to look at a social practice theory of literacy and in particular, the role of literacy practices. Rather than trying to simplify the picture I think this allows us to look at literacy and health from different perspectives. It helps us to explore learners’ experiences and provides a foundation to move beyond the individual and toward a consideration of the communities and institutions in which learning take place. It can bring to light power relationships in institutions, programs, and interactions among individuals. It reveals attitudes and values related to literacy and learners. It provides an opportunity to understand and therefore value learners’ knowledge and
experience. Ultimately, it offers the hope of a more holistic and inclusive approach to literacy and learning that promotes the participation of learners in the everyday world.

A consideration of social determinants of health is useful and the terms are descriptive, but it is beneficial to break them down and consider the person within the determinants and how they influence and are influenced by the lives of learner. It is possible to use the social determinants of health and still be looking at literacy as functional. Therefore, in order to look at literacy in a different way and to better understand its relationships with health, I would suggest an alternative to the functional approach to literacy.

One of the alternatives to a functional model of literacy is suggested by Barton and Hamilton (1998). Working in the area of “New Literacy Studies”, a line of research within the ethnological tradition that has been developing for the past few decades, they propose a social practice approach to literacies. They offer a social theory of literacy which assumes that literacies are enmeshed within their social contexts rather and involve literacy practices and literacy events. That is, literacy is not simply the ability to read a text and to write. It is not a skill that can be taught in a step-by-step manner to anyone regardless of context. It is not an autonomous and individual “thing” that someone either has or lacks. Rather, literacy involves a set of cultural practices and events. They describe literacy as an activity located in the space between thought and text, and in the interaction between people. Literacy cannot be separated from the person or the context within which it is taking place. Although literacy practices are not obvious, Barton and Hamilton suggest that we can uncover them by examining literacy events. Events are observable episodes of literacy which arise from practices and are in turn shaped by them; we can analyze literacy events in order to learn about literacy practices.

Barton and Hamilton’s (1998) social theory of literacy is based on six propositions. They suggest that literacy can be understood as a set of social practices that are inferred by exploring events which involve written text. There is not one literacy rather different literacies are associated with different domains of life. Some literacies are more dominant because literacy practices are shaped by social institutions and power relations. People are active agents in their own lives, therefore, literacies are purposeful and intertwined in broader goals and cultural practices. Literacy has a historic aspect. It is important to have an understanding of culture and traditions that inform current literacies. Finally, literacies are not stagnant; existing ones change and new ones form through informal learning.

Methodology

This research project uses qualitative methods, particularly focus groups and interviews. I have chosen this method because I will use open-ended questions in order to encourage participants to talk about what is important to them in their own words. As Kitzinger (1994) notes, focus groups are beneficial because they encourage people to talk with each other rather than directing all responses toward the researcher. This group process can help people express and clarify their views in a way that is less likely to occur in a one-to-one interview. It also allows the researcher to tap into different forms of communication such as jokes, stories, and teasing which can reveal group and cultural norms. In addition, I will use the terms “discussion” and “learning circles” rather than “focus group” as it might be a term more familiar to participants and will reinforce the idea that part of the purpose of the group format to learn share knowledge and experience with each other rather than simply to provide data for the researcher project.

Research will be conducted by a team of researchers from the community. The team will be comprised of myself as the lead investigator, one person from the health community, and one person from the literacy community. Members of the research team will facilitate a series of discussions related to social determinants of health. Discussion participants will be health practitioners and literacy practitioners who will be invited to participate in each discussion group. Discussion groups will be audiotaped and selected passages will be transcribed. The research team and project participants will analyze the transcripts for emerging themes and evidence of knowledge sharing that can be applied to community development and learning. Participants will develop a plan to share the knowledge they gain with their own organizations. They will also identify some themes and issues to be used for the commission of a piece of art to be used for knowledge exchange and dissemination.

Contribution to Knowledge

I believe this research can contribute to the field of literacy and the broader fields of health and learning in a number of ways. It can promote an increased comprehension of the social determinants of health and the way in which they are related to health and learning. While the field of health promotion and prevention uses the concept of social determinants of health, there are fewer opportunities in this region to explore them through discussion and application. Although people in the learning or education field often understand the way in which social and economic factors affect learners, there is a need for opportunities to consider and apply these within context. This project can bring together health and learning practitioners to actively engage in these issues together.

This project can contribute to easing divisions between sectors such as health and literacy which sometimes operate
in silos. By coming together to discuss the relationships between health and literacy, a more comprehensive and holistic vision may be fostered for both health and learning. Creative alliances can be formed by those working for and interested in the overall wellness of the community. Ultimately, this project can contribute to a richer understanding of health and learning which can lead to changes in theory, practice, and policy and result in improved quality of life for everyone in the community.

The findings of this project could be generalized and of particular value to rural communities. Many rural communities do not have hospitals, universities, or other institutions that traditionally receive funding for research and applied projects. Not-for-profit organizations often express a lack of capacity necessary to engage in research. Rural areas are different from urban centres in terms of population diversity and distribution, educational opportunities, health conditions, economic conditions, geography, and general resource availability. This project can bring to light issues related to these factors and therefore be beneficial for other small centres.

This project seeks to foster an innovative community-based approach to learning about health and adult learning. It will address the skills, knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes that are important in learning about health. It has the potential to promote knowledge and practices that may enhance both health and learning. The research incorporates knowledge and experience from both the health and literacy sectors as well learners and people who use health care services. In order to gain a fuller understanding of what literacy and health and wellness mean, we must explore the issues that affect and connect them. This understanding is important for effective literacy and learning practices and for effective health practices. Alliances between literacy and health researchers and practitioners can pave the way for creative conversations that incorporate health and wellness in literacy and inform and are informed by research. They can help create stronger connections between literacy and health researchers and practitioners which supports practice and research and can influence policy.

References


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Improving the Economic and Social Determinants of Health in our Community through Development of Community Gardens

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Our community-academic partnership began by focusing on individual determinants of cardiovascular disease (CVD), but we now address individual, environmental, and social determinants (e.g., information, access, economic factors). In this paper we describe how we used multiple methods of assessment to determine our current intervention: sustainable community gardens.

Introduction

Pemiscot County is a rural community in Missouri covering 493 square miles. It is home to approximately 19,400 people, 25% of whom are African American and 26% of whom live below poverty (in comparison to 10.6% in MO as a whole). The median household income is $24,937 USD in comparison to a median household income in the state as a whole of $40,885 USD (US. Census, 2000). There are approximately 300 non-farm business establishments with paid employees in Pemiscot County (US. Census, 2000). Approximately 10% of Pemiscot adults are unemployed (in comparison to 4.1% in the state as a whole) (US. Census, 2000). Pemiscot County has a high school graduation rate of 76.7% (in comparison to 81.4% in the state) (KIDS Count, 2001.)

About fifteen years ago, African American community members in Pemiscot County teamed up with staff from the Saint Louis University Prevention Research Center. Together our community academic partnership set out to tackle the high rates of cardiovascular disease among African Americans. Although cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in Pemiscot County, the burden of the disease is not equal for everyone. In particular, African American men in Pemiscot County have significantly higher rates of death due to CVD (681 per 100,000) in comparison to white men in the county (486 per 100,000) and higher than the rate in the state as a whole (261 per 100,000) [2000-2005 (Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, 2004)]. African American women have rates (353 per 100,000) that are higher than their white counterparts (121 per 100,000) but lower than either African American or white men.

Initially, our community-academic partnership began by focusing on individual determinants of cardiovascular disease through the Heart Health Coalition. However, over time the work of our community-academic partnership has evolved and we now recognize that the etiology of cardiovascular disease is multifactorial. Currently, we are attempting to address the individual factors as well as environmental and social determinants (e.g., information, skills, access, and economic factors) that act synergistically to influence cardiovascular disease. (Economos et al., 2001; Glanz, Sallis, Saelens, & Frank, 2005; Salis & Owen, 2002; Stokols, 1992; Swinburn, Egger, & Raza, 1999)

Acknowledging that environmental and social determinants (e.g., education and employment) contribute to cardiovascular disease, we developed a program called Men on the Move to intentionally focus our attention on these determinants. Through assessments conducted as part of this program we found that in spite of our efforts with the Heart Health Coalition many African Americans in our community still did not consume the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables. By broadening our assessments to include community audits we also found that there are limited community outlets that sell fruits and vegetables, and limited produce selection at existing outlets.

Access and availability of fruits and vegetables at local venues is a key factor in influencing fruit and vegetable consumption. Recent work points to the association between access to fruits and vegetables in grocery stores,
restaurants, and community events, and fruit and vegetable consumption. (French, Story, & Jeffery, 2001; Glanz et al., 1995; Jeffery & French, 1998; Kamphuis et al., 2006; Moreland, Wing, & Diez-Roux, 2002b; Raine, 2005) Recent studies have found that in areas where there are more supermarkets higher rates of fruit and vegetable consumption are observed (French et al., 2001; Glanz et al., 1995; Jeffery & French, 1998; Kamphuis et al., 2006; Moreland, Wing, & Diez-Roux, 2002a; Moreland et al., 2002b; Raine, 2005) Others found an association between increased availability of fruits and vegetables at restaurants and increased consumption of those goods. (Befort et al., 2006; Edmonds, Baranowski, Baranowski, Cullen, & Myres, 2001) Access is also regarded as a function of the broader social and economic environment. Studies show that the density of food outlets and the food available through these outlets differs by race and class, with lower income and racial/ethnic minority communities having less access and availability. (Baker, Schootman, Barnidge, & Kelly, 2006; Cheadle et al., 1991; Moreland et al., 2002a; Taylor, Carlos Poston, Jones, & Kraft, 2006; Zenk et al., 2005) For example, research indicates that individuals living in neighbourhoods with lower socioeconomic status (SES) consume fewer fruits and vegetables than those living in wealthier neighbourhoods. (Diez-Roux et al., 1999; Lee & Cubbin, 2002; Shohaimi, Welch, Bingham, Luben, & Day, 2004) Moreover, the structure of our economy influences household and individual decision-making regarding fruit and vegetable consumption. As with many other rural communities, in the Bootheel region of Missouri, we found that the historic agricultural economic base has moved from general production of food items to the monoculture of soy and cotton, leaving little locally grown produce available for local consumption (Hendrickson, 2007). Several researchers have begun to recognize the impact that these types of changes in food production, processing, and distribution have on dietary consumption (Glanz et al., 2005; Popkin, Duffey, & Gordon-Larsen, 2005).

This paper will describe two methods that were used to better understand the interplay of these economic, historic and social determinants and health (with a focus on fruit and vegetable consumption and its contribution to CVD), and to develop specific intervention strategies to address these issues within our community.

Methods

An economic assessment and photo-elicitation interviews were conducted to understand the economic, historic and social factors contributing to reduced consumption of fruits and vegetables.

The economic assessment provided a “two thousand foot view” of the economic opportunities and threats present in Pemiscot County, MO. This assessment was conducted by Dr. James Johnson. According to Dr. Johnson (Johnson Jr., 2002)certain types of capital including political, physical, financial, human, cultural and social, are critical for a community to enhance their potential for economic development. Using a variety of public use databases (including newspaper and popular articles, technical reports, government documents, and statistical information), Dr. Johnson reviewed information related to each type of capital for the time period from 1991 to 2006. He then synthesized this data and reported back the results and subsequent recommendations to Pemiscot County residents, as well as community, governmental and business leaders.

While the types of capital needed for economic development were a critical part of the economic assessment, we needed a more complete framework to understand how capital and economic development influenced community health. The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework was used in order to understand how these factors played out within the community as a whole (Department of International Development, 2006.) The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework suggests that different types of capital (human, natural, social, financial) influence each other as well as policy development and implementation. Policy development and implementation in turn influence livelihood choices (i.e., ways of making a living) which in turn influence community health. The photo-elicitation interviews were conducted to identify the extent to which the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework was a useful way to understand these dynamics within Pemiscot County and to help in defining specific intervention strategies.

The photo elicitation interviews created a structured group dialogue in which community members critically reflected on photographs taken within their community. The group began by identifying what they saw in the picture. Then, the group was asked to critically reflect on what the picture represents. The group was also asked to discuss the impact of the issues identified on the community as a whole. All group sessions were audiotaped with the permission of the participants and transcribed verbatim. A focused coding process was then used to code and generate themes (Dauchet, Amouyel, & Dallongeville, 2005; Dauchet, Amouyel, Hercberg, & Dallongeville, 2006; Joshipura et al., 2001).

Results

The economic assessment yielded several critical issues for consideration and specific recommendations for how to better position Pemiscot County for economic development. First and foremost, the assessment pointed to the importance of the county’s geographic position and natural resources (located on the Mississippi River and at the intersection of major east/west and north/south highways and train lines) as making it particularly well suited as a
logistics and distribution hub. The rural environment suggested that agriculturally related development might be particularly appropriate. While the assessment pointed to this as the type of development that would be potentially successful, it also pointed to a number of challenges in reaching this potential. For example, the assessment noted that in order to reach this potential it is critical that Pemiscot County strengthen public education to improve school performance and decrease dropout rates. These factors are an indication of the quality or skill level of the workforce and are therefore critical for businesses considering locating in the area. The assessment report also indicated that it is important to change existing infrastructures and practices so that the community is seen as adhering to principles of social justice and equity.

Photo-elicitation revealed some similar findings. The participants noted that there is a history of development within the agricultural sector. They pointed out, however, that this history has led to a concentration of power within the agricultural sector, and that there is a lack of willingness to allow development of other, potentially competing, industries. As a result there has been a lack of economic development, decreased job opportunities, and people either leaving or feeling hopeless about their ability to create choice and change in their lives. The photo elicitation interviews also found that there are many institutional (institutional racism demonstrated through in zoning and lending practices) and cultural (African American community does not always support African American businesses) barriers to economic development within the African American community.

In summary, the results suggest that one opportunity to increase access to fruits and vegetables is to build the economic base of the community by developing skills and infrastructure necessary to create sustainable agriculture and broaden produce distribution both locally and regionally. However, as the assessments point out, this must be done in a way that acknowledges the social and political context within the community.

Implications

Based on our work, we identified the development of “community food systems” as an effective way to address individual, environmental and social factors that influence the consumption of fruits and vegetables and CVD. Based on our pilot work, we identified the development of “community food systems” as an effective way to address this wide array of factors. A community food system is “one in which sustainable food production, processing, distribution and consumption are integrated to enhance the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of a particular place” (Garrett & Feenstra, 1999) Other researchers have suggested that by creating community food systems, “community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance, social justice, and democratic decision making” (Hamm & Bellows, 200e).

The development of a community food system is slowly taking root in Pemiscot County as part of the work of Men on the Move and the Heart Health Coalition. As a first step, we developed community gardens. Through these gardens and our Men on the Move trainings, we have provided basic “soft skills” needed for developing and maintaining a work force to grow and distribute produce (i.e., individual information on team building, job skills, decision-making and goal setting, basic nutrition information). At the environmental level, we are working to expand access to locally grown produce by organizing distribution to the community organizations that are affiliated with our garden activities (e.g., youth and senior groups, churches). Further, we are strengthening partnerships with the local mayors, local school administrators, and the regional economic development council. As a result of our extensive pilot work and consultations with external economic and agricultural experts, we are developing the skills and infrastructure to create more sustainable agriculture and broaden distribution both locally and regionally.

Our previous work with the community has shown that in creating these changes it is important to utilize approaches that incorporate all partners (community, academic, business, governmental, faith based) in all phases of the change processes and incorporate opportunities to develop and/or enhance bridging social capital (reciprocal trusting relationships between the African American community and the broader white community). There are a number of other forms of capital that also influence our ability to be successful including natural (water), financial (money to purchase hoop houses), and human (skills). The way these various forms of capital are used and the way that policies are created and implemented within our community are often influenced by historical and existing institutional racism. We have also seen how natural disasters, such as the tornado we experienced in 2006, do not create but rather exacerbate these existing challenges. To overcome these challenges we need to build on community strengths; and acknowledge the interdependence of individuals, their social networks, and the community structures, norms, cultures, history and values (Auslander, Haire-Joshu, Houston, & Fisher, 1997; Hamack, Block, Subar, Lane, & Brand, 1997). By putting aside differences in race and class, and building upon each other’s strengths we are able to create strategies that are economically viable and sustainable. By creating equity in terms of access to healthy options we are better able to see the interconnectedness of our experiences and how the benefit to one is the benefit to all.
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Participatory Research: Assessing Needs and Building Capacity at McGill University

Jon Salsberg, MA and Ann C. Macaulay, CM MD FCFP

Participatory Research at McGill (PRAM) – McGill University

We assess the needs of faculty and researchers for conducting participatory research at a major institution and translate the results into development workshops. This mixed model study used an initial qualitative design to inform survey development, and quantitative results to inform workshop development.

Introduction: Participatory Research at McGill

The Royal Society of Canada has defined participatory research as “systematic investigation, with the collaboration of those affected by the issue being studied, for purposes of education and taking action or effecting social change” (Green, et al., 1995). It has been increasingly recognized as a highly effective method of adding relevance and value to primary health care research (Macaulay, et al., 1999; Minkler, 2000). The equally important goals of participatory research are to undertake high-quality research, benefit the community or group where the research is occurring, and develop knowledge applicable to other settings (Minkler and Wallerstein, 2003; Wallerstein and Duran, 2006). Taking a participatory approach integrates knowledge translation throughout the course of the research by ensuring that the end users of the results, such as patients, practitioners, community members and organizations, and policy makers are involved in the undertaking from the development of the research question, through data collection and analysis, to interpretation and dissemination (Macaulay, et al., 1999).

In recent years, more researchers have begun to adopt a participatory approach to research. At the same time, an ever increasing number of funding opportunities are calling for a participatory or partnership component to proposed research designs. It has become clear to many researchers that an additional set of skills are required successfully compete for these funds and successfully build and maintain successful research partnerships.

To this end, Participatory Research at McGill (PRAM) began in September 200 with a mandate to further critical scholarship in participatory research, while building capacity among McGill faculty and researchers to competently undertake participatory research.

Our Program

To further scholarship, we have undertaken two key review projects. The first is a comprehensive review of the literature in order to determine the benefits of participatory research. This is an 18 month project lead by our PRAM post-doctoral fellow and will result in a paper and a synthesis grant application to continue the work in further depth. The second study reviews on-the-ground community-academic research partnerships in order to explore the variation in how project partnerships manage themselves. This ongoing study will create a best-practice guide for communities and researchers in the process of seeking partnerships.

In order to increase capacity in the McGill community for undertaking participatory research, PRAM is offering consultation; compiling resources; presenting on and off campus; partnering with new and existing research projects; holding a regular lunchtime seminar series; and designing faculty development workshops.

Through our participation in the Ottawa-based Anisnwabe Kenendazone Network Environment for Aboriginal Health Research (AK-NEAHR), PRAM is also offering seed grants and graduate and post-doctoral funding to those working in the area of Aboriginal health.
Designing Learning Tools from Scratch

One of PRAM’s principal undertakings since its inception has been the design and delivery of a faculty development workshop on participatory research. This has been a two-year process from conception through workshop evaluation. From the beginning, we conceived of this project as potentially contributing to the understanding of assessing needs and the design and delivery of faculty development tools. We therefore applied for IRB ethical approval and required active consent from all participating in the initial qualitative study.

Qualitative Study

Workshops should be organised around an overall goal and specific learning objectives (Steinert, 1992). We were determined that these objectives would be grounded in concrete needs. We first conducted prospective semi-structured interviews with 7 academic team members, and one focus group with 9 participants from 8 departments across 3 faculties (Medicine, Arts, Education). Participants were selected for their range of pre-existing knowledge and experiences with participatory research, with the goal of eliciting a broad set of thematic categories. Interviews and focus group were conducted in the winter and spring of 2007 and analysed in August 2007.

Results. Qualitative analysis identified emergent themes which would inform survey tool development during the needs assessment phase. Preliminary analysis revealed several emergent themes which could shape the categories and questions in the needs assessment tool. Major themes were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Major Theme</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New developments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Needs Assessment

These emergent themes from the qualitative analysis were then used to form categories for the needs assessment survey. Categories were:

PR Background; Partnerships; Funding; Research & Project Evaluation (Scholarship); Disseminating Results & Influencing Policy; Professional & Academic Skills/Leadership; and Ethics.

Tool development took place in September and October 2007. In all, sixteen principal questions were included in the final tool covering each of these themes. Input from those regularly involved in needs assessment within the Faculty of Medicine advised us to keep the total number down under 20 questions if we wished to maximize our return. Further questions were also included to determine respondents’ level of experience with PR and with research in general, their potential collaborators, academic department and preferred learning format.

The questionnaire was piloted at the end of October 2007 and administered in two waves, preceding and following the winter break between academic terms.

Results. By the end of the second call for participation, we had received 126 responses from members of 14 of the 21 departments in the Faculty of Medicine, as well as from 2 Schools (Nursing and Physical & Occupational Therapy), 4 Centres, 3 clinical units, 7 divisions, and 1 department outside the Faculty of Medicine.

Respondents were asked to rate 16 issues on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 was “most important” and 5 was “least important” (see Table 2). They also ranked various learning formats. The preferred format was half-day workshop (see Table 3).

Respondents were also asked to rate their level of PR experience (none, some, significant, see Table 4); their total years involved in research (see Table 5); and their likely research partners (see Table 6).
Table 2: Responses to “It is important to me to improve my knowledge of… 1 (most) - 5 (least)”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>grantsmanship skills specific to PR</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>0.976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evaluation methods and models used in PR</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>1.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>research partnership agreements, encompassing partner responsibilities, data ownership, protection, etc.</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>1.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying and overcoming challenges</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>1.108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>integrated Knowledge Translation throughout the PR process</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>1.098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>major challenges to conducting PR and how these challenges may be overcome</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>1.130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR issues with IRBs</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>1.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>using evaluation results to manage, plan, strategize and improve partnership</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>1.058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>how to influence policy</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>1.136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>how to develop and maintaining partnerships</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>1.189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>process evaluation for a PR partnership using a model-based approach</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>1.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scholarly and community dissemination of PR studies</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>1.158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>how to identify PR partners</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>1.243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>how to balance personal, community, academic values in PR</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>1.118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>key terms and principles used in PR</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>1.175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenure and promotion in relation to PR</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>1.385</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Preferred Learning Format (lower mean=higher rank; multiple responses allowed)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Format</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Half-day workshop</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>1.078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-learning tools</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>1.279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual/group consultations</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>1.224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-day workshop</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>1.159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>1.139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Participatory Research Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exp</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>none</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>some</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>65.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Years involved in research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16+</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patients</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisations</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community members</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy makers</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Workshop Development

Needs assessment survey results informed workshop content by prioritising learning objectives to be covered within the half-day session. Since we felt it was feasible at least to touch upon every learning objective to some degree, the needs assessment results determined how much time was allotted to each relative to how much information there actually was to impart on each topic. Thus, although “grantsmanship” ranked highest, there was relatively less information to impart than under the combined category of “ethics” which conflated several of the categories, such as research agreements, IRBs and data ownership issues. So those were actually given more time in the final program.

Analysis of response variance (one-way ANOVA) for “Rate your Level of PR Experience” revealed a significant difference between groups for about 1 in 3 questions. This led us to conclude that a second, more advanced workshop should be planned as a later follow-up. By comparing means among those with “significant” PR experience, the highest responses were for: how to influence policy; PR issues with IRBs; integrated knowledge translation throughout the PR process; grantsmanship skills specific to PR; and research partnership agreement. The later workshop will therefore spend more time on these issues. In addition we will ask participants to plan or brainstorm further developments in their own PR projects.

Final Workshop Program

Based upon final analysis of the needs assessment data, our final workshop program is as follows:

**Learning Goal:**
To build participants’ capacity to conduct participatory health research.

**Objective-based topics:**

Introduction: understand key principles in PR
- i. history
- ii. enumerate concepts
- iii. research design
- iv. professional/career issues

Identify Research Partners
- i. contacting organisations
- ii. mobilising groups
- iii. maintaining relationships

Ethics & Research Agreements
- i. identify governance issues
- ii. identify partners’ roles
- iii. identify partners’ rights and responsibilities
- iv. determine means of conflict resolution
- v. understand protection of individuals and collectivities
- vi. determining Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP) of data
- vii. meeting IRB and Community needs

Integrating KT in research process
- i. how to include parties in formulating research model
- ii. ensure two-way communication between stakeholder representatives and their organisations throughout process
- iii. incorporate non-academic voices in design and dissemination

Post-research dissemination
- i. incorporating non-academic voices in scholarly articles
- ii. incorporating multiple voices
- iii. presenting to community or other interest groups

Conclusion

This workshop, our introductory level program, will be piloted in April 2008 within the Department of Family Medicine – PRAM’s academic home – for continuing medical education (CME) credits from the College of Family Physicians of Canada. It will be evaluated through participant feedback, adjusted appropriately and the final product will become a Faculty-level workshop open to all departments in the Faculty of Medicine and allied schools. The follow-up “advanced PR” workshop will be developed over the next year and piloted in the spring of 2009.
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The Third Responsibility: Students Contributing to the Community by Engaging in Community Based Research

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Carleton University

Abstract: This paper adds to the knowledge on Community-University Partnerships by presenting the results of an evaluation by the School of Social Work at Carleton University to engage students in community-based research as part of a required graduate level research course.

Introduction

In addition to teaching and research, service to the community through community-university partnerships is recognized as a “third” responsibility of universities. A number of studies have shown the positive outcomes for students from community based service learning and participating in community based research, (Hayes, 2006; Rogge & Rocha, 2004; Timmermans & Bouman, 2004) but there is limited research into the outcomes for the community organizations (Fryer, 2007) and some research that shows that positive outcomes appear negligible (Johnson & Rouse, 2007). The potential positive outcomes involve building community capacity through increased voluntarism.

Following a brief review of the literature on community-based research and a description of the course, this article will present the results of a survey of participant community organizations that shows the contribution the research has made to the functioning of their organization.

Literature Review

There is a great deal of literature on campus-community partnerships available in the US (Hayes, 2006; Walsh & Amis, 2003) and Canada (Andrée, 2008; Hall & Keller, 2006; Jackson, 2005; Savan, 2004). One type of community university partnership is Community Based Research (CBR) which involves research done in collaboration between the university and the community. CBR seeks to democratize knowledge by validating multiple sources of knowledge and promoting the use of multiple methods of discovery and dissemination with the goal of social action (Strand et al, 2003). There is a burgeoning literature on community based research. Some of the literature describes community based research projects (Flicker et al., 2006; Kelly, 2004; Kowalewski, 2004; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003; Sclove, Scammell, & Holland, 1998; Stoecker, 2003;), some looks at barriers to academics and the community of engaging in CBR (Ahmed, et al. 2004; Seifer & Calleson, 2004) and others look at the ethical issues that develop when CBR projects are reviewed by institutional ethical review boards (Downie & Cottrell, 2001; Fadem et al, 2003; Flicker et al, 2007a; Khanlou & Peter, 2005; Minkler, 2004; Stocking & Cutforth, 2006). A review of community based research projects in Canada found that CBR was found to foster societal outcomes which are not perceived as being achieved with traditional research methods (Israel et al., 1998). In particular, increased community capacity (62%), plans for future projects (60%), cordial working relationships (51%), new coalitions (47%), changes in agency programming (38%) and changes in government policy (15%) were cited as concrete outcomes from the projects undertaken by our respondents. The frequency of reported negative outcomes (e.g. increased polarization, increased mistrust and alienation from funders, etc.) was low (under 2%), (Flicker & Savan, 2006).

Since 1997-98 Carleton University School of Social Work has structured the MSW research course so that students in small groups engaged in research with community agencies. An evaluation was carried out in 2004 of 60 community research projects, for the five years spanning 1999 to 2004 (Germain, 2004). The findings suggested that there was
overall satisfaction with the research course. There were however, concerns about the lack of contact between the instructors and the community organizations. It was recommended that regular contact be built into the course. An attempt was made to address these concerns of the community participants raised by this evaluation, by having the course instructor attend a planning meeting between the students and the agency.

**Teaching CBR at Carleton University’s School of Social Work**

A letter is sent out in June inviting community organizations to submit a request for research. In August, the two instructors review the requests and select a short list of projects based on appropriateness in terms of learning opportunities, as well as meeting a need for an organization with few resources to otherwise do so. In September, the class is divided into teams of three to five students. The teams are invited to select from the approved projects, the ones they would like to pursue. A member of the team then contacts the organization and sets up an initial face to face meeting involving the students, instructor and representatives of the organization. During this meeting a contract is developed which spells out the details of the project, which tasks will be undertaken and by whom, and the timelines. The team then develops a detailed research proposal for the approval by the organizations and the instructor. The proposals are presented in class for discussion and feedback. The teams also develop an ethics review proposal for approval by the Ethic Review Board of the university. In January, once the proposals have cleared ethics, the teams start gathering and analyzing data. The teams then write the final report often in collaboration with the agency which is presented in class for discussion and feedback. The final step, which takes place in late March and early April, is for teams to present their final report to the organizations.

**Methodology**

In the Spring of 2007, agencies were contacted by telephone and asked to answer questions related to whether the research carried out by the students made a contribution to the organization, promoted individual and organizational change and/or contributed to a research-minded culture (Stuart, 2006). A qualitative methodology (Patton, 2002) was used in this exploratory project. An interview guide approach was used in the interviews, so that the exact order and wording of questions was flexible and emerged through conversation (Patton, 2002). Of the 12 projects completed in April 2007, we received responses from 10 organizations. We did not receive responses from two because the contact people were no longer employed by the organization. We had a very broad range of participating organizations. Half of the organizations were multi-service health and community resource centers while the rest included a variety of agencies service serving clients with developmental, mental health, health, immigration and addictions issues.

**Results**

The agency contact people were asked whether they felt that the initial meeting between themselves, the students, and the course instructor was helpful in clarifying the research project. All of the organizations felt that having the instructor present during the initial meeting with the organization was very helpful. Many of the students had overly ambitious ideas of what could be accomplished and were ready to agree to much more extensive projects. The instructors’ role was to ensure that what was agreed was realistic in terms of academic timelines, research methodology and met the needs of the organization. Respondents stated that “it was helpful to clarify the nuances of each (stakeholder’s) perspective”; that the meeting “laid the groundwork for the project” and “got talking about concrete things that the students wanted to research and to set limits on the students (not enough time to interview a hundred people).”

In response to the question of whether the participating organizations were able to make use of the information in the final report, all stated that they were able to use some or all of the information. Several stated that they would use the information in funding applications, others responded that they planned to use the findings in staff and volunteer training, or as part of conference presentations and another organization planned to use the recommendations to refine their program.

“We will be using the findings in our application for funding from the ministry.”

“We will take the results to the volunteers to discuss what can be dome to address the challenges raised.”

“The literature Review was helpful because they received up to date information on why they are doing what they are doing”

We asked the organization contact person what suggestions they had for improving the research process. Some of the suggestions related to the level of participation of the organization. Those organizations who took a less active role in the design of the actual research tools and methodology felt there were communication difficulties between themselves and the students. A couple of respondents said, “We would have wanted more ‘check ins’ with the students”. This
agency contact person suggested including a schedule of meeting with students in the initial contract. Other comments included: “Another meeting in January with the Prof. present would have helped.”; “We would have like more input in the development of the final report;” “We would have liked more discussion on the interpretation of the data” This comment differs from the literature where community organizations did not want input into the data analysis because they felt it would bias the analysis, Hyde & Meyer, 2004. “We would have liked some input into the grades given to the students”.

Discussion

The community sees this course as an asset that enables them to carry out research required by their funders. Some have contacted us wanting to be involved in their project so that they can increase their profile as research minded. The school views this course as a mutually beneficial partnership between university and community and as an opportunity to be more engaged in its community.

Conflicting demands on the students’ time continues to be a challenge. This can be addressed to some extent in the initial meeting between the team, organization and instructor. Although students agree that the workload for this course is quite heavy, they also feel that it offers a tremendous learning opportunity that provides them with marketable skills. One group was able to present the results of their research at a conference launching their academic careers. The results of another group’s research were presented at an international conference as part of other research carried out by the organization.

There are institutional barriers to community university partnerships. Some have been noted in the literature. The workload for faculty is very heavy. This includes administrative work; time to meet with students and agencies; time to run interference, re-negotiate with agencies and to negotiate group dynamics in student groups. Other studies have noted that an institutional barrier to community university research partnerships is the extra resources required for the development and maintenance of the partnerships, for the evaluation of off-campus student work and lack of funding for applied and community based research (Savan, 2004). Negotiating the ethics approval process has been noted by other researchers as an institutional barrier (Hyde & Meyer, 2004). While the ethics review process is certainly time consuming, it is less of a problem at Carleton University because streamlined forms have been developed. It should also be noted that the Coordinator of the Ethics Review Board spends a great deal of time helping the students through the process.

Conclusions

This evaluation has found that the agencies use the research results generated by our students in collaboration with them in numerous ways. They use it to show funders they are meeting their goals and to apply for new funding, they use the research to inform their volunteer training, others have used the research to increase their credibility with in their organizations. In this way the university is engaged with the community and giving back to the community as well as creating a dynamic environment for students to learn and become good citizens, there by fulfilling our third responsibility.

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Developing Wellness Strategies: Mum’s And Dad’s Resisting Alcohol Use

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Meg Kapil, University of Victoria, Lara Shepard, University of Victoria

Women who are pregnant or parenting and who have substance use problems experience barriers in obtaining services. These barriers are linked to health, social, and economic concerns that require a multi-pronged, holistic approach to FASD prevention. Moms Mentoring Moms Project and Ladysmith Fathers Group are community projects that address these issues. Collaboration and knowledge transfer between universities and community groups can better address poverty, homelessness, and service barriers for families living with FASD. Mentorship is integral in building respectful, collaborative relationships among all involved.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is an umbrella term used to capture the range of birth defects that can occur in an individual whose mother drank alcohol during pregnancy, including Alcohol-Related Neurological Disorders (ARND), Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), partial FAS, and Alcohol-Related Birth Defects (ARBD) (Chudley et al., 2005). According to Health Canada (2004), FASD has a prevalence rate of approximately nine out of every 1000 babies born in Canada while the British Columbia’s Annual Report on Early Childhood Development Activities (2002/2003) estimates of 3.5 per 1000.

Prenatal alcohol exposure has been linked to more than 60 disease conditions, birth defects, and disabilities. Damage is a diverse continuum from mild intellectual and behavioural issues to profound disabilities or premature death. Prenatal alcohol damage varies due to volume ingested, timing during pregnancy, peak blood alcohol levels, genetics and environmental factors. As children become adults, FASD does not disappear but rather the issues of youth translate into ongoing problems in family relationships, employment, mental health and justice conflicts. The cost to the individuals affected, their families and society are enormous and as a society, we cannot afford to ignore them.

Women who are pregnant or parenting and who also have substance use problems experience many barriers in obtaining health services. According to the Centre of Excellence for Women’s Health (2007), barriers are linked to broad health determinants including health, social, and economic concerns that require a multi-pronged, holistic approach to FASD prevention. The Moms Mentoring Moms Project and the Ladysmith Fathers Group are two community projects that address the multiplicity of issues.

The Moms Mentoring Moms Project is targeted at moms who are pregnant as well as those who have already given birth to prenatally exposed children. The goal is to develop a model of support for high-risk women where addiction has been identified as a barrier in their ability to parent. The intent is to connect with moms in order to provide support whether or not their children are in foster care; to develop appropriate parenting strategies; and to determine the women’s needs and to assist them to make informed, healthy life choices. The Project aims to support women to reduce their intake during pregnancy; to empower families by teaching them parenting strategies and life skills; to reduce unnecessary involvement with the foster care system; to build positive working relationships within the community; to build the capacity of women to mentor other women; to develop a mentorship package and manual for other communities to use, including a training section for volunteers; and to produce a package of marketable products to help sustain the group.

The two facilitators from Prostitutes Empowerment Education and Resource Society (PEERS) have extensive experience working with women who battle addiction. Both facilitators are highly respected by the women they work with.
and the agencies involved, an important attribute due to the isolation of these women and the apprehension they feel in accessing community supports. Two mentors work between 10 and 20 hours per week to support six to eight clients who attend the group. Both mentors have personal experience with substance use and are able to share their stories with the group members as well as to be role models for the women who are all at different stages of recovery.

The second project, the Ladysmith Fathers Group, is associated with the Born Healthy program, a pregnancy outreach program funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada and provided through the Ladysmith Resources Centre Association. Born Healthy provides education and support to all pregnant women who are “at risk” of having a baby with a low birth weight or other poor prenatal outcomes such as FASD. The Father’s Group is aimed at supporting men whose partners are pregnant or are new mothers and provides opportunities to develop parenting skills and to reduce alcohol consumption in their families.

The two men who facilitate and mentor the group have expertise and experience working with men who participate in “risk” behaviour. The mentors bring their children to the Saturday morning activities for dads and children and provide education and support by modeling what it means to be a grandfather and father, by inviting guest speakers to discuss topics of interest as indicated by group participants, by making available educational materials, and by affording opportunities to socialize with other men whose partners are pregnant or parenting. In addition, they provide men with connections and referrals to additional services; raise individual and community awareness of the importance of fathers in family health (i.e. supporting women to be healthy, modeling healthy behaviours to their children, parenting etc.); and liaise community organizations to facilitate community support.

A principle of mentorship was central to both the functioning and outcome of both community projects. This principle set the tone for the collaborative and respectful nature of the groups and for the cascading effect of positive mentoring relationships that follow. Many of the women in the Moms Mentoring Moms group had experienced shame, disrespect, and stigma as a result of their involvement with substance use and their challenges with parenting. Time was taken to hear their stories without judgment and the women were treated as partners with valuable insights to offer the group. Although participants were not familiar with the experience of mentoring, the approach encouraged them to continue attending the group, to take steps to improving wellness, and in some cases regain parenting privileges from the Ministry, and to mentor other group members with the same respect that was afforded them.

In this paper we will examine the ways in which collaboration and knowledge transfer between universities and community agencies and their clients can better address social issues of poverty and homelessness, barriers to health services, and determinants of health, including father involvement. A mentorship philosophy appears to be integral in building respectful and collaborative relationships among researchers, community partners and the clients they serve.

**Mentorship and Modelling**

Many programs are shortsighted as they only focus on individual wellness strategies. The benefit of this community-based research project was the systemic perspective taken which included building healthy relationships as a sustainable strategy for individual and community wellness. The navigation of multiple systems and relationships was a key consideration to the success of the two projects. For example, the researchers learned to navigate the system of community service delivery, the facilitators learned to navigate the system of academic ethics and research protocols, the facilitators and mentors learned to navigate the social system of the group participants, and the participants learned to navigate the social support system in order to address their many barriers to wellness. A variety of relationships evolved and became important conduits in knowledge transfer.

Authentic mentorship is a voluntary and personal relationship between two or more individuals that cannot be mandated (Davis, 2001). An important contribution of mentorship is the formation of a particular type of learning climate that includes autonomy and agency, accountability, communication, education and training, mentoring opportunities, and safety. **Autonomy and agency** developed as all individuals involved became collaborative partners by creating spaces where all voices were heard. Mothers and fathers connected with other community resources and were supported until they were able to access resources on their own. Participants were encouraged to make informed decisions regarding their health and their lifestyle as they received nutritional and budget education and were supported by advocacy actions in areas of social assistance, legal aid, and independent housing.

Defining the roles and responsibilities of participants, mentors, researchers, and facilitators contributed to accountability. Group participants were supported to take charge of their own recovery and wellness including relapse prevention strategies, nutrition, and health. Participants were supported to regain custody of their children and to problem solve existing parenting barriers and challenges. **Open communication** was modelled to group participants by the facilitators and mentors. The researchers and the community partners, underscored by mutual respect and openness, collaborated on effective approaches to gather project information and assisted in the creation of participant-friendly forms and letters of consent.
Open communication supported *education and training* which involved candid feedback, sharing of resources and experiences, the opportunity to test out ideas and take risks, and mutual support. The group participants provided input on which speakers to invite to the meetings and the mentors and facilitators presented relevant material to the group, thus transferring their experience and knowledge regarding wellness and substance misuse to the group. The researchers and facilitators were able to provide each other with ongoing feedback regarding the assessment and the bidirectional transfer of knowledge. The sharing of knowledge and information between facilitators, mentors, participants, and researchers provided *mentoring opportunities* for all involved. Researchers learned from the facilitators and mentors best practices in approaching participants in a respectful way by educating the researchers about the variety of barriers and challenges faced by them. The collaborative and respectful climates characteristic of this mentorship approach fostered *safety* for participants, an important factor in building individual capacity. The modeling of respect and non-judgement demonstrated to members that everyone is valued as part of the supportive community. In addition, psychosocial support was a key component of safety for the group and included affirmation, encouragement, counselling, and friendship.

**From Mentoring to Knowledge Transfer**

The placement of mentorship at the centre of the research and community project provided a means by which knowledge acquisition and transfer, wellness, and the mutual sharing of resources and information could occur among all parties involved. Argote and Ingram (2000) define knowledge transfer as the process through which one unit (e.g., group, department, or division) is affected by the experience of another. While the term is traditionally employed in analyses of the organizational practices of businesses and industry, its relevance to the dynamics that govern the interaction of any two groups is increasingly appreciated. The power of collaboration among different parties emerges from the opportunity for knowledge transfer: the potential for the perspectives, expertise, and insights of one group to enrich the breadth of understanding of the other. It is the desire for knowledge transfer that underlies effective partnership.

Though a relationship may be initiated based on one organization’s request for the expertise of another’s, the success of the process of knowledge transfer is predicated on each party’s appreciation for the culture of the other. Yakhlef (2007) explains that “the more distant the source unit’s knowledge from the recipient’s institutional context is, the more difficult the transfer process will be” (p.43). “Transfer of knowledge from one context to another entails the transformation of both the content and context of knowledge” (p.44). Extending this concept to the nature of community-university partnerships such as that undertaken in the current projects implies that effective collaboration involves a bi-directional transfer of knowledge. Each party brings to the collaboration its own expertise and perspectives, its own context. In order for either entity to benefit from the partnership a shared context must be developed; the development of this shared context becomes in and of itself a form of knowledge transfer.

The relationships encompassed by the collaborations for the current projects served as points of knowledge transfer within the common context of mentorship and modelling. The arrows in the following figure illustrate the many instances of knowledge transfer encountered during the course of this collaboration. These exchanges are then examined below in greater detail.

*Figure 1:* Knowledge transfer between groups is indicated by arrows. For all exchanges, the mechanism by which knowledge transfer occurred was mentoring and modelling.
A number of relationships characterized the collaboration between researchers and the two programs, as diagrammed above. The nature of knowledge transfer within each dyad is explored in this section.

**Participants and Researchers.** Both the group participants and the university researchers entered into this collaboration as “gate-keepers”, each having access to a broad body of knowledge largely inaccessible to the other. The success of the collaboration emerged from a willingness of each party to acknowledge what the other group had to offer and to seek out a common language through which such knowledge could be transferred. Researchers recognized that developing an effective and meaningful program evaluation demanded a nuanced understanding of the experiences of program participants, while participants acknowledged that the expertise offered by researchers could offer improved physical and mental health on the individual level, as well as program sustainability that would in turn improve health for the broader community. Researchers offered specific health-related information on topics ranging from treatment options for nicotine withdrawal, depression and lung cancer, to current research perspectives on infant neurodevelopment, hypothyroidism, and the effects of in utero drug exposure. Program participants offered testimonies of personal encounters with healthcare and social service systems, presented expertise on how to navigate these systems, and shared their insights into why many community members are wary or suspicious of the motives of university researchers.

**Researchers and Facilitators.** Through their interactions, facilitators and researchers shared with each other their respective expertise and working knowledge of how to navigate the systems in which each party functions. The program facilitators shared with researchers their understanding of and expertise in working with under-served, marginalized populations, and exposed the researchers to the nature of “front-line” community work and the challenges encountered when working with a population in great need. This included offering specific examples of existing barriers confronting women trying to access support services, and techniques to overcome these barriers. The facilitators were able to educate researchers in the pragmatic considerations required for effective community engagement, and offered insight into the perceptions and tensions that exist within the community with regards to university researchers. The facilitators modeled for researchers how to communicate effectively with group participants and how to ensure group members’ commitment to an endeavour by articulating the concrete positive outcomes that would arise from involvement. The researchers, in turn, provided the program facilitators with expertise in the practice of program evaluation by designing a structured and systematic approach to program evaluation, including ongoing surveys and feedback forms. Through the researcher-facilitator relationship, facilitators developed a more comprehensive understanding of the academic rigor demanded by evaluative bodies, such as funding institutions and sponsors. Researchers further shared with program facilitators their experience in negotiating detailed bodies of knowledge pertaining to physical and mental health. The researchers introduced the program facilitators to reliable online references for researching health concerns, introduced program facilitators to health advocates in the community, and offered program facilitators informal training in deciphering medical literature and interpreting the implications of research findings. Through the researcher-facilitator relationship, both groups developed a greater comfort with working within the other’s societal sphere by developing a better understanding of the language, procedures and expectations that exist within the other’s “context.”

**Facilitators and Mentors.** Specific to the Moms Mentoring Moms program, facilitators and mentors have an ongoing relationship outside of this project which provided multiple occasions for knowledge transfer. In particular, program mentors were often able to afford program facilitators with a more meaningful understanding of the perspective of program participants, which proved invaluable for a comprehensive program evaluation. Such an understanding arises out of the unique role of mentors, who come from circumstances similar to those of the program participants but who serve in a leadership role and often co-facilitate program activities. For example, because mentors frequently accompany women to meetings and appointments in the community, they were often aware of circumstances in a group member’s life that affected her ability to participate in group activities and often had potentially negative implications for her health. The knowledge mentors shared with program facilitators allowed for more effective interventions to be put in place, and also helped program facilitators to shape the program to best address the evolving needs of participants. This, in turn, had a positive effect not only on the individual woman, but on the success of the group as a whole.

Program facilitators, in return, offer mentors ongoing experience, guidance, and training in administering a community program, including meeting the demands of program evaluation, finding and securing funding sources and broader community support, and serving as advocates for group participants in the community.

**Facilitators/Mentors and Participants.** In both programs, program leaders and mentors have forged a remarkable relationship with participants, founded in the principles of mentorship and modelling. The initiation of a new collaboration between university researchers and the Moms Mentoring Moms program and the Ladysmith Father’s Group presented the challenge of introducing a new facet to participation in the group (ie. program oversight by an outside entity), complemented by the potential for this new feature of group participation to lead to the opportunity for group members...
to garner a broader awareness of their situation. Within the context of the community-university collaboration, program leaders have modeled accountability, responsibility and openness to feedback and constructive criticism. They have mentored group participants in advocating for information as it pertains to their own health and the health of their children. In turn, the program participants have continued to offer program leaders insights into the realities of life as a woman dealing with a history of substance abuse and the effects on parenting, and to share their perspective on how to best support women who confront multiple barriers. This ongoing bi-directional knowledge transfer, realized through the context of modeling and mentoring, is crucial to the ultimate goal of improving community wellness in an enduring, sustainable manner.

Inter-institutional Researchers. The community-university collaboration undertaken by this project was enriched by having embedded within it inter-institutional and cross-disciplinary collaboration. Researchers involved in the project engaged in knowledge transfer throughout the process, recognizing the potential in bringing together individuals from different academic backgrounds. The diversity of viewpoints afforded by the sharing of their respective disciplinary orientations has allowed researchers to interpret project findings in greater depth. Furthermore, collaboration between institutions has provided the opportunity to learn of different research techniques, to call on a wider range of resources, and to cultivate a broader base of support for the study. This in turn has imbued the project’s findings with a more expansive reach, garnering greater awareness of the significance of the work being done by the two programs while drawing attention to the extent of the need that persists within the group of women and men served.

Mentorship and modeling are the mechanisms through which knowledge transfer occurred in the Moms Mentoring Moms project and the Ladysmith Father’s Group. The bi-directional knowledge transfer among the various project members is critical to the objective of improving community health in a long-term, ongoing manner. Capacity building can only occur when knowledge and skills are shared. Such sharing creates open spaces where continuous learning stimulates transformational change within communities and society as a whole.

Evaluation of the Moms Mentoring Moms and the Ladysmith Father’s Group has been funded by the Victoria Foundation.

References available upon request.
Accounting Learners Impact
Public Library Operations

John Shepherd
College of New Caledonia

A series of learner projects have assisted library staff in updating operating practices, exploring new opportunities and reducing resistance to change, with a significant strategic impact on a library with 64 full-time and part-time employees.

Background
The Prince George Public Library hired Allan Wilson to be its new Chief Librarian in the autumn of 2004. After starting his new job, discovered that, while the public library enjoyed an excellent reputation, many of its operating policies, systems and procedures were out of date. For example, its library circulation system was 27 years old, used by only two libraries in the world and badly needed replacement. The library has a $4 million annual budget and 64 full- and part-time employees. The College of New Caledonia hired a new accounting instructor, John Shepherd. John and Allan had previously worked with the Prince Rupert Public Library in Prince Rupert. Allan served as its Chief Librarian and John was Vice-Chair of its board of directors.

While playing chess one Friday night, Allan described to John the internal problems at the library and the resistance of key library staff to change. As John had a history of involving his learners in community projects, he thought a community service project would be an excellent learning experience for his accounting students. As a result, the first of a series of five projects commenced the spring 2006.

In the second year of the Accounting and Finance Diploma programme, there is a computerized accounting course, ACC 269, with a term project worth 30 percent of the mark. The project involves setting up the books for a hypothetical company and completing an accounting cycle. Beginning in spring 2006, ACC 269 learners were given the choice to either complete the computer simulation or volunteer for a project at the public library. is directly involved in each project and learners receive letter of reference from their instructor and the chief librarian.

Community Service Projects

Group Process
The five student projects, since January 2006, have followed a standard process. First, the chief librarian and the instructor meet in advance, brainstorm project concepts and plan future projects in general terms. At the beginning of each course, the chief librarian is invited to the classroom to describe the proposed project and collect the names of interested learners.

The following week, a meeting is and students meet at the public library. Learners are introduced to library staff, given a tour of the facility and given the choice of two or three projects. Participation in the project is completely voluntary and learners can withdraw from the project at any time. Learners are involved in all decisions and treated as equals. The instructor prepares minutes of all meetings and the final project report. Subsequent meetings are scheduled at the public library on the same day and time each week for the duration of the semester.
Spring 2006 Business Analysis Project

As their project during the spring of 2006, six accounting learners performed a business analysis of the public library's information systems. A business analysis involves a systematic evaluation of computer systems to determine systems requirements, assess the suitability of existing systems, and assist organizations in achieving their strategic goals.

Learners explored three information systems at the public library, its accounting, fundraising, and materials acquisition/circulation systems. They interviewed a dozen library employees, collected samples of paper output, and observed staff on the job. The instructor took minutes of their meetings, supplied them with information on how to conduct a business analysis and edited their report. The assistance of the college's Computer Information Systems faculty was instrumental in executing the study.

The resultant study identified major deficiencies with the library's existing information systems and operational practices. Based on the report, Prince George Public Library replaced both its accounting software and library circulation systems. A new $325,000 library system was approved by City Council in 2007 and went live in January 2008.

Autumn 2006 Business Process Resign Project

Given the success of the first project, a second project was initiated in the autumn of 2006. One problem identified during the spring study was a weakness in financial reporting for internal decision-making. The accounting system was designed for external financial reporting and was unable to provide managers with timely and relevant financial reports.

After some brainstorming, the team decided to focus on the library's purchasing and accounts payable systems. Two learners interviewed the library's Manager of Public Services, his supervisors and book acquisitions staff to identify their information requirements. Based on these interviews, they prepared specifications for reports that met information needs.

Another priority was reviewing the library's process for approving expenditures and signing cheques. The existing process was highly centralized, with the chief librarian personally signing every cheque for the library. A third learner interviewed the Chief Librarian, the Manager of Finance, and library supervisors with the goal of developing a new policy. She reviewed the existing general ledger accounts and made several recommendations. Subsequently, the library redesigned its general ledger and developed an innovative programmatic budgeting system in 2007.

Spring 2007 Library Fundraising Survey Project

During the spring of 2007, four learners conducted a web-based survey of B.C. public libraries, asking questions concerning accounting and fundraising practices. With the assistance of the college marketing instructor, designed a questionnaire that was tested on library staff prior to distribution.

One of the learners had experience in HTML programming and website design. She created a web-based version of the questionnaire that was posted on the library website. Responses to the online version of the questionnaire were automatically accumulated onto a spreadsheet. The learner presented the final report at the Beyond Hope Library Conference in April 2007 and is now a part-time employee of the public library.

Next, the chief librarian contacted libraries around the province via e-mail, informing them of the upcoming study and requesting their participation. A second e-mail was sent by the learners to public libraries, asking their librarians to complete either the website or PDF version of the questionnaire.

In addition, learners contacted public libraries of different sizes by telephone. They prepared profiles of these libraries that were included in the report. The BITS (Business and Information Technology Survey) study was circulated to all the public libraries who participated in the survey.

Fall 2007 Capitalization of Tangible Capital Assets

The project was the result of new PS 3150 financial reporting requirements for local governments. Under PS 3150, local governments must capitalize the cost of roads, buildings, equipment and other long-lived assets onto the balance sheet and amortize the cost of these assets over their useful life spans.

Four learners researched how the Prince George Public Library could capitalize over 200,000 library materials onto its balance sheet. A simple and low cost method was needed to capitalize existing library collections and to maintain reliable accounting records over time. Learners reviewed the financial statements sixty-eight B.C. public libraries and interpreted the new also contacted Canadian academic and public libraries that currently capitalize their collections and recorded their accounting policies.

Their final report described three methodologies that public libraries could use to comply with the new financial reporting standard. The learners participating in the project thoroughly enjoyed themselves and two are applying for scholarships to help them fund their university studies.
Spring 2008 Fee-based Services Project

The City of Prince George has suggested, on a number of occasions that the public library might offer fee–based services to businesses and other organizations. A fifth student project is currently exploring this possibility. Two accounting learners are involved in this project. One student is contacting local organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and Community Futures to explore whether demand exists for fee-based research services. The second student is contacting public and academic libraries across the country that already offer similar services, such as the InfoAction department of the Vancouver Public Library.

Spring 2008 Prince George Airport Project

A second project is also underway at the Prince George Airport Authority. In October 2007, two learners were introduced to members of the airport staff and attended employee training and orientation. They regularly visited the airport throughout the autumn with the goal of defining a project by the end of December.

The learners decided to explore the new federal safety management system regulations for airports. They are developing a project management plan for the implementation of the new regulations.

Evaluating the Impact of Public Library Projects

Impact of Community Service Learning on Participating Learners

Out of 117 learners enrolled in ACC 269 classes over this period, nineteen have participated in five projects at the Prince George Public Library. Participants have ranged from 25 to 40 years of age, above average and several are described as model learners by their other instructors.

The learners enjoy themselves, express satisfaction in their accomplishments, and appear to gain self-confidence during the projects. Several were surprised at the complexity of public library operations, stating “I didn’t realize that there is so much involved in running a public library.”

Two of the diploma graduates have received $5,000 scholarships to complete their university degrees. One participant was hired by the Prince George Public Library and two were hired after using the instructor as a reference. As the learners are highly motivated and above average learners, it is not clear what affect that community service learning had on their subsequent success.

Impact of Community Service Learning on the Prince George Public Library

Allan Wilson, Chief Librarian, has regularly expressed satisfaction with the quality of the work done and updates his board on the projects. He recently stated that their reports are better than some of the management consulting reports that he has read. Their work has helped clarify issues at the library, assisted senior management staff in decision-making and reduced staff resistance to change.

Learners primarily serve in a consultative role. They perform research with the active involvement of the instructor and chief librarian. The involvement of the chief librarian, who has taught at the university level, has been critical to the success of the projects. He can appreciate the strengths and limitations of second-year diploma learners. The ongoing involvement of senior management staff and distribution of minutes from each meeting helps ensure the transparency of the process and the relevance of the project.

Student projects provide not-for-profit organizations with an alternative to hiring outside consultants, a cost that societies often cannot afford. Learners assist library staff with the early-stage exploration of issues, researching the best practices of other libraries, performing feasibility studies and scoping potential projects. Their knowledge is useful as the public library has a relatively flat organizational structure and its managers are hired for their skills in librarianship not for their expertise in accounting.

A side benefit of the student projects has been their impact on library staff. Over a dozen library employees have talked confidentially with learners and gained their trust. Many employees performed their jobs without seeing the bigger picture or the impact of their work on fellow employees. Student projects have opened the eyes of library employees, “unfreezing” existing attitudes and reducing their resistance to change.
Lessons Learned from the Public Library Projects

The Benefits of Developing Longer-term Partnerships with Community Organizations

As the basic approach is exploratory and not guided by literature, the following conclusions are suggestive. There appear to be benefits associated with establishing longer-term partnerships with organizations. First, trust is a key ingredient in any relationship. It takes time to develop trust, not just with the project sponsor, but also with employees at different levels of an organization. The learners listen to what employees have to say, keep detailed minutes of their meetings and obtain approval from employees prior to the circulation of their notes. Their confidentiality has gained the respect and trust of individual employees.

An existing relationship also overcomes the problems inherent in one-semester projects. Four month semesters limit the scope of projects that can be undertaken. Time is lost at both the beginning and end of a semester, leaving only two months to complete most of the work. This time limitation can be overcome if an ongoing relationship already exists. Ongoing partnerships reduce the learning curve for all the parties. The chief librarian has a realistic understanding of what college learners can reasonably be expected to achieve. The course instructor has working knowledge of the organization and can guide the learners during their projects. The learners can read previous student minutes and reports to reduce their learning curves.

Upfront work has been crucial to the success of the projects to date. Unstructured projects lead to learner confusion and anxiety. Concepts for future projects are jointly explored by the chief librarian and instructor before the start of each semester, with the scope and methodology of potential projects defined in general terms. Upfront work enables learners to make informed choices, reduces planning time and increases their comfort level in undertaking projects.

Application of Project Management Methodologies to Community Service Learning Projects

While past projects have succeeded, there is considerable room for improvement. The use of project management techniques might help an instructor oversee multiple concurrent projects. The effectiveness of planning and controlling multiple student projects could be enhanced by using standard template forms, project management software and milestone dates. One possibility is to integrate community service learning projects into a project management course. Course participants could learn both the theory and application of project management techniques to real situations.
Action Research: Teaching And Learning In Motion

Mary Stratton

Canadian Forum on Civil Justice

This paper celebrates the success of the Civil Justice System and the Public, a national collaborative, interdisciplinary and community-driven action research partnership that has generated ongoing multi-directional teaching and learning, networking, policy development and a broad range of evidence-based disseminations.

The Civil Justice System and the Public Project

This paper celebrates the success of the Civil Justice System and the Public (CJSP), a national collaborative, interdisciplinary and community-driven action research partnership. The project provides an inspiring example of the power of collaborative action research to mobilize knowledge and generate multi-directional teaching and learning that can lead to positive policy and program change.

From conception, the CJSP has been a groundbreaking venture. The success of the project is due to the commitment of the collaborative partnership and the belief of the many participants in access to justice for all Canadians. The civil justice system is a fundamental and far-reaching component of Canada’s system of democracy, but historically, issues of civil justice have been subordinated to criminal justice in terms of investment, research and media attention. During the last decade, however, there has been increasing international recognition of the importance of civil justice systems, which give essential definition to inter-personal relationships, and provide structured processes crucial to the maintenance of citizens’ rights and the peaceful resolution of private disputes. In Canada, complex layers of systems, organizations and players have developed independently in each province and territory, as well as federally, providing significant challenges to communication, research, collaboration and reform on a national scale.

The vision for and convening of the CJSP were advanced by the Canadian Forum on Civil Justice (the Forum), a non-profit, independent, national organization with a mandate to bring together the public, the courts, the legal profession and government in order to promote a civil justice system that is accessible, affordable, fair and efficient. The Forum was established in response to recommendations of the Canadian Bar Association Task Force Report on the Systems of Civil Justice (1996), which underlined delay, affordability, and lack of public understanding as major barriers to access to justice. As an early CJSP dissemination stated:

Our research begins with the belief that improved communication is key to reducing these barriers. We believe that improved communication will, in turn, open the door to involving the public directly and productively in civil justice reform. Our hope is that the system will be able to respond effectively when public needs are clearly communicated. The Civil Justice System and the Public is a collaborative research program designed to involve both the public and the justice community in examining the current state of communication within the Canadian civil justice system and between the system and the public. The goal is to identify good practices, and to make specific and clear recommendations about improving communication. (Lowe & Stratton, 2004, p.3).

It is well established that action research is intended to promote change by engaging participants in a process of sharing knowledge that generates teaching and learning and encourages a willingness to enact change (Reason & Bradbury, 2001). Of necessity, the action component of the CJSP was strong and a wide collaboration of stakeholders essential to success. The project broke new ground in a number of ways:

- The newly created Forum was (and still is) the only national organization in Canada with an in-house research
capacity in the field of civil justice, and the CJSP was the first systematic evaluation of communication within the
civil justice system in Canada.

- The CJSP was the large national partnership of Canadian justice community stakeholders to come together with
academic partners for the purpose of conducting research.
- The Forum was one of the first community-based organizations to be granted a Social Sciences and Humanities
Council (SSHRC), Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) grant. The project was initiated and led
by the practice-based interests of the justice community. Formal partners signing on to the SSHRC application
included: the Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice, the Canadian Bar Association, the Canadian
Judicial Council, the Canadian Association of Provincial Court Judges, the Association of Canadian Court
Administrators, the Public Legal Education Association of Canada (and member organizations), Justice Canada,
the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, the Legal Aid Society of Alberta, the Alberta Law Reform Institute and
the Yellowhead Tribal Council. This group expanded as the project unfolded.
- The collaborative action orientation and the national scope required the development of innovative methodology
that promoted network building among partners and allowed them varied ways to be involved in every aspect of
the research process.
- A multiple method approach was selected, with an emphasis on qualitative data from interviews, observations,
focus groups and case studies. The 300 in-depth interviews that were completed, broke new ground in Canada
for the use of Atlas.ti software for qualitative analysis. The software enabled us to retain a grounded approach
to reporting despite the quantity of the data (Cresswell, 200).

### Teaching and Learning in Motion: A Continuing Process

An outstanding feature of the CJSP project is the multiple levels and directions in which teaching and learning has taken
place throughout the project. The convenors had bold, relevant research vision, strong connections to justice community
and academic partners, and considerable knowledge about the Canadian civil justice system. They needed to know
more about designing research methodology and conducting field research. The Research Coordinator they hired to
provide this knowledge knew nothing about Canadian civil justice systems. The mutual teaching and learning process
that ensued was invaluable to the quality of the developing project and to the nuances of communication among such a
diverse group of partners and participants. The following are some of the most notable ways in which the CJSP put into
motion teaching and learning exchanges that continue to reverberate:

- **The value of good communication.** At the outset of the CJSP, many members of the justice community
wondered why we would focus on the issue of communication. Often, key contacts and potential participants did
not initially fully recognize the roles they played in communicating about the civil justice process either among
the justice community or with the public. The action design of the project encouraged questioning of the issue
and the participants’ role, underlining the potential even an individual can have to positively influence the access
to justice process. It is now rare to be asked why we think good communication within the system, as well as
between the system and the public, is an important aspect of access to justice.

- **Collaborative teaching and learning with students.** The CJSP field team comprised of law and social science
graduate students from a variety of disciplines (19 students over the duration of the project). These students
learned hands-on about every stage of applied research, including disseminations. Furthermore, team
members taught each other about the different disciplinary cultures and perspectives they brought to the
project. Most team members remain in touch and have told us how the CJSP experience has influenced their
thinking about research, communication and career goals.

- **Increased understanding and valuing of evidence-based research.** The collaboratively collected CJSP data was
powerful and Atlas.ti allowed us to retain context and pertinence in a wide variety of grounded disseminations.
Stakeholders, recognizing their own experiences reflected in the data, became more open to also recognizing
the differing experiences of others. Many CJSP partners and other justice community stakeholders have
expressed increased interest in creating a base of research evidence on which to build future policy and
program development, and as we discuss subsequently, several have taken action to that end.

- **Teaching and learning through unexpected outcomes.** Because collaboration is essentially a process of
teaching and learning, it is never possible to fully anticipate events and outcomes. Actions and exchanges
of information may precipitate unexpected events, some of which will involve tensions and challenges to
be negotiated by a further teaching and learning exchange. Some unexpected outcomes can, however, be
entirely positive. Stakeholder engagement in the collaborative process and interest in the CJSP data prompted
some partners to ask if that data could help in answering policy and research questions beyond the specific
communication focus of the project. Happily, both the data and analysis software were up to the task of investigating issue-based questions. Already pleased that the data had successfully addressed the initiating questions we were delighted to be able to also produce reports specifically related to issues such as access to justice for people with disabilities, public perceptions of the judiciary, Aboriginal experiences of civil and family justice, and social, health and economic costs of failing to find a resolution to a legal problem.

• An ongoing commitment to collaborative process. Bradford (2003) notes an increased interest in collaborative process among all sectors in Canada and the orientation of the CJSP reflects this. The project provided a vehicle for exploring collaborative possibilities and partners continue to express interest in working together to create effective alliances.

Taking Action for Change: A Tribute to the Power of Collaboration

One of the challenges for action research is to assess and evaluate exactly what impact the process and research findings have. Successfully mobilized knowledge does its own work and ideas evolve, even during the course of an interview, as one participant observed:

Because we share experiences, it gives you ideas … [we could] do more training in the courts, especially with front-line staff … but we don’t spend enough time on the interface with … either the legal profession or the general public … it’s very important. It counts. We should insist on that – in fact, this conversation is giving me some ideas [laugh] (881, court manager, cited in Billingsley Lowe, & Stratton, 2006, p. 21).

Initial action for change generates more knowledge-sharing and the formation of new or extended alliances. The CJSP was born because the Canadian justice community and members of the public had identified the need for change and the project itself must be seen as an action outcome. Establishing the Forum as an independent institute was a crucial facilitating step that allowed us to undertake the role and work of a neutral convener among the many diverse and dispersed stakeholders. Such a large project clearly required considerable coordination and we identified four tracks to the collaborative work, which often occurred simultaneously and had overlap, but were nevertheless distinct components of the collaborative process (Billingsley et al, 2006). Recognizing these tracks was also helpful in tracking action outcomes:

• Project direction and partnership coordination. Once formed, the collaborative partnership had to be maintained. One CJSP objective was to facilitate the direct sharing of information among the project partners. Initially, however, the CJSP team provided the conduit that conveyed information. In 2003, after the pilot phase of the CJSP, a Partner Symposium provided a rare opportunity for the partners to meet face-to-face and talk with each other about their respective organizations and reform initiatives. As the CJSP continued, direct communications among partners increased and new local, provincial, national, and even international alliances formed around specific interests.

• Data collection and analysis. This central activity included many components that involved the partner representatives and many additional members of their organizations in research actions that included: research site profiles, key contact meetings, activities to identify and engage public as well as justice community participants, short questionnaires, in-depth interviews, observation notes, analysis and interpretation of the data. Each activity was a multi-directional teaching and learning tool for all involved.

• Case studies of good communication practices. A component of the over-all methodology was to identify and observe examples of initiatives that were aimed at improving communication between the civil justice system and the public and thus provide models for others (see Billingsley et al, 2006 for details).

• Getting the word out. In the context of the CJSP, ‘dissemination’ was considered to be the entire action process of getting the word out about the research from the conception of the project and continuing after completion. We have used a wide variety of forums to accomplish this, documenting these activities in a periodically updated “Getting the Word Out: A Record of Knowledge Mobilization” made available on the Forum website. This continuing record has been a helpful way for the research team and partners to review the action activities and outcomes associated with the CJSP.

Other collaborative action research endeavours initiated by CJSP partners pay the strongest tribute to the power of collaboration has to promote action for change through a process of teaching and learning in motion. This paper allows only a brief discussion of two of an ever-increasing number of initiatives for change to civil justice delivery, the British Columbia Supreme Court Self-Help Information Centre Pilot Project and the Alberta Self-Represented Litigants Mapping Project. These two projects are apt examples because they are strongly linked to the CJSP process and to each other.

Supreme Court Self-Help Information Centre Pilot Project (SHIC). The SHIC was one of the CJSP case studies, beginning at the CJSP Partner Symposium where the Executive Director of the BC Law Courts Education Society
shared the fledgling idea. In the wake of provincial service cuts and a concern about the number of litigants attempting to use the Supreme Court without legal representation (SRLs), the proposed SHIC was intended to provide free legal information and assistance. A large collaborative committee of civil justice stakeholders was formed and very step of the SHIC process, including agreement to become a CJSP case study, involved the input of this collaboration. Reaching agreement among so many contrasting perspectives was not always easy, but committee members persisted until different viewpoints were successfully negotiated and the project moved forward. Part of the process included a needs assessment to ‘map’ currently available services for self-representing litigants. In April 2005 the pilot SHIC opened in the Vancouver courthouse. Both the SHIC service and the process that brought it into being have become models for justice community stakeholders across Canada.

**Alberta Self-Represented Litigants Mapping Project (SRLM).** One of the stakeholders interested in the SHIC model was Alberta Justice Court Services. Alberta Justice was not one of the formal partners at the outset of the CJSP but became an increasingly active partner as the project developed. Also concerned about the increasing number of SRLs, the Ministry formed a Self-Represented Litigants Advisory Committee and sent a delegation to visit the recently opened Vancouver SHIC. Subsequently, Alberta Justice asked the Forum to assist them in establishing collaborative NGO committees to discuss the possibility of conducting a mapping process to document current SRL services and to better understand how to address gaps and shortcomings in those services. As a result of these consultations, in 2006, the Forum acting on behalf of the NGOs, successfully applied to the Alberta Law Foundation for funding to conduct the collaborative mapping research, which was then matched by funding from Alberta Justice. The SRLM was completed in that year (Stratton, 2007) and by June 2007, Law Information Centres (LInCs) had been opened in Edmonton, Calgary and Grande Prairie. Members of the SHIC committee, as well as the BC Attorney General were, in turn, interested in the SRLM process as they continued to push ahead with innovative changes to the civil justice system. Alberta stakeholders liked the research approach used in the SRLM and the Alberta Law Foundation suggested the Forum develop a proposal for a large-scale and comprehensive research mapping of all Alberta legal services. This forward-looking collaborative project is now underway.

**Into the Future: Research in Action**

In 2006, ten years after the *Systems of Civil Justice Task Force Report* (Canadian Bar Association) the Forum hosted a two-part national conference for civil justice system stakeholders, many of who had, in a variety of ways, participated in the CJSP. The Conference had three objectives: 1) to provide an update on the status of civil justice reforms nationwide; 2) to identify barriers preventing effective change from occurring; and 3) to consider novel approaches to reform that respond to the current and future needs of Canadians. The final session of the Conference challenged participants to think about the future. What immediate and long-term objectives should be set? What avenues or mechanisms for reform hold the most promise? What is needed in order to move forward with reform at this juncture? Who should take leadership? What are the next steps? These questions elicited significant talk about the need for more research — for quantitative and qualitative empirical data that will help us to better understand the civil justice system, identify the public needs and expectations, point the direction that reforms should take, garner support for concrete change and evaluate the success of the initiatives that are undertaken. During that session participants took part in an exercise to demonstrate the many networking links that had now been formed among participants. As string passed back and forth among the participants, linking some many times to others an impressive web was formed – one that did not exist ten years ago. 

The CJSP was only one part of the commitment to change and collaboration that created this climate of networking among the Canadian civil justice community, but the web showed that it was an important factor. Collaborative action is always challenging, never easy, but the CJSP experience convinced stakeholders that it is well worth the effort and the way to a future in which the goal of a civil justice system that is accessible, affordable, fair and efficient can be achieved.

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“Open Studio Process”: A Community Development and Transformation Participatory Research Project Proposal

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This project will replicate the Chicago-based Open Studio Project (Block, D., Harris, T., & Laing, S., 2005) using community-based participatory action research and art-based educational research paradigms in its theoretical framework and methodology. Artmaking becomes an instrument of personal transformation.

Introduction

It has long been understood that art expresses the ineffable of human experience, that sublime nature of existing, of being, itself, as well as individual life-space narrative. Many people struggle with their individual life-space narratives (Smith and Sparkes, 2008; Pals, 2006) as they wrestle with their respective angels over what seems an eternal question: Who am I? Perhaps that question is what informs the power of name (Gilligan, 1994), or that the Hebrew god Yahweh would call Himself “I am who am”.

I consider life-space narrative a process of conscientization, but one not strictly limited to a political paradigm. That is, conscientization encompasses the whole of life-space, and narrative is its empowering instrument. I consider art-making and narrative one and the same. Through the art-making process, we come to know ourselves at least with a little more clarity (Allen, 1995).

It was through many years of studying the philosophy of art and culture and eventually the mind while I concurrently struggled with my own life-space narrative of forty years, it occurred to me that a connection exists between art-making, narrative, and conscientization. Art-making as therapy has long been used to empower at-risk youth to come to terms with their individual life-space narratives (Block, Harris, & Laing, 2005; Golub, 2005; Hanes, 2005; Hartz, Adrian, & Thick, 2005; Hocoy, 2005; et al), albeit such a function perhaps not having been specifically stated in that manner.

And so I come to the principal research question: What informs the individual at-risk youth’s life-space narrative evolutionary process as that youth engages in the art-making process? This project explores this question with youth at a local alternative high school.

The theoretical framework for this project is founded on life-space narrative from a holistic, psychosocial, constructivist perspective (Smith and Sparkes, 2008; Pals, 2006). “Holistic” refers to the Circle of Courage (Brendtro, Brokenleg, & van Bockern, 2005) and establishment of a “culture of courage” in which the researcher and project participants interact. Social action often informs art therapy praxis (Block, Harris, & Laing, 2005; Golub, 2005; Hocoy, 2005); its implications will be explored as they relate to this project and to ethics in research questions they raise.

Project Design

Project methodology will centre on the art-making process as pioneered by Block, Harris, & Laing (2005) and Allen (2005), called the Open Studio Process (OSP). The OSP is a four-step process: intention, art-making, witness (writing), and sharing. Envisioned as a longitudinal, art-based social action outreach programme initially serving at-risk youth and later including other marginalized populations, this project will use artmaking as an instrument of personal transformation and conscientization, primarily through the vehicle of art and art-making as narrative. Participants will be afforded the opportunity to use the art-making process (painting and sculpture with found objects) as a vehicle to narrate and give expression to their lives.
The relationship of the researcher to the participants will be as artist-in-residence (artist-in-residence model) so as to minimize power differentials that might otherwise encumber the participants’ (and researcher’s) narrative building process and in the interests of social action. The researcher will also facilitate focus groups and individual interviews in an effort to triangulate participant narratives.

The project will culminate in a public exhibition of the participants’ and researcher’s pieces. The public exhibition is a crucial component of life-space narrative evolution and community building (Block, Harris, & Laing, 2005).

**Logistics**

There is a considerable logistical component to this project:

**Travel.** The researcher has discussed this project with Block, Harris, and Laing. They noted that travel to Chicago (the OSP is based in a Chicago suburb) for training and consultations with them is required in order to proceed with the methodology. Given the travel time between Kamloops and Chicago, consultations and training with OSP requires four days.

**Workspace.** The project and participants must be afforded a dedicated physical space of their own. This physical space denotes a location of safety (safe environment) in which the youths can individually explore the art-making and narrative processes. Ideally this space is located within the youths’ “world”, i.e. where the youths live and work, where they “hang out”, but also visibly within the existing social fabric so that the space is a part of the community, not geographically removed and remote (and subsequently “out of mind”).

**Materials.** Materials for art-making will be required.

**Exhibition.** A public space for exhibiting the youths’ pieces will be required, although this space could be the same space used during the art-making process. An alternative location may be a public art gallery, which could additionally empower the community building process by coupling the youths’ narratives with a publicly acknowledged/known art-exhibition space.

**Ethics and Social Action**

Ethics in research with youth and vulnerable populations will be addressed in accordance with established protocol but specifically with questions and observations raised by Leadbeater et al (2006). Of primary concern is the deployment of art-based therapies as vehicles of social action (Golub, 2005; Hocoy, 2005) and the implications that social action-based art therapies could potentially raise in a small community. The assumption underlying this concern is that youth respond to unmet developmental needs (Circle of Courage), for which situation the dominant culture is at fault; society is the problem, not the youth. This concern is best expressed in the question, “Do we use art-making as therapy in order to acculturate at-risk youth to a dysfunctional culture (which, in all likelihood, is the source of the youths’ “deviant behavior”), or do we work to change that very culture?” What are the (long-term) implications for the youth involved? What does this question imply for the relationship of the researcher to the youth and to the community?

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Increasing Awareness of Future Selves: a Longitudinal Field Exploration

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This project is a four-year, community-building initiative to explore the relationship between 9th-grade students’ perceptions of their future possible selves and the subsequent quality of their school engagement, and the use of possible selves mapping structured interview methodologies.

Introduction

“They’re not bad kids, and they’re certainly not dumb; they just don’t seem to care about school. They have absolutely no ambition, no inner spark for excellence.” So spoke the Principal and Vice Principal of a local secondary school about the school’s one class of 9th-grade students. The class grade point average is the lowest in the school. I offered to facilitate a 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens seminar to this class as a community-building initiative in an attempt to build a relationship with the students and perhaps increase the quality of their school engagement. Having begun to facilitate the material with these students, I observe that yes, they are quite “chatty”, but they are in fact “good kids”; they are clearly thoughtful and intelligent but nevertheless appear completely disengaged from school. I reasoned that integrating a two-pronged approach into the initiative could increase the efficacy of the praxis. This approach envisions embedding a possible selves mapping exercise into the present facilitation and creation of a class blog to explore the 7 Habits and possible selves concepts from an individual narrative perspective.

There are many potential influences and explanations for school disengagement in general (Legault, Green-Demers, and Pelletier, 2006; Yeunga and McInerney, 2005) and in particular for this group of 9th-graders. I think it is important to attempt to understand how these students’ perceptions of their possible selves interact with their levels of school engagement and how their perceptions change over time. In this manner I hope to gain a better understanding of the students’ perception of their relationship to their school, community, and the future. For example, these students appear to demonstrate no conception of future time or how their present actions impact their future possible selves; they “live for the moment”, as it were. Perhaps they do not consider their current school engagement relevant to or efficacious in affecting future outcomes. My assumption is that these students do not appreciate the direct relationship between present actions and future outcomes (school engagement and increased possibility of obtaining positive future opportunities), and they are subsequently disengaged from school.

A number of scholars have demonstrated that orientation of present actions to obtain future outcomes relative to perceived future possible selves is directly related to students’ perceptions of their future possible selves (Oyserman, Gant, & Ager, 1995). Leondari (2007, pp. 17-18) summarizes the concept and function of the possible self:

The possible selves construct is one way of conceptualizing the temporal dimension of self-concept, based on past experiences and projecting visions of the self into the future. To the extent that individuals value and desire the positive or hoped-for possible selves, they adjust their behavior to increase their chances of realizing those selves. To the extent that individuals are repelled by the negative or feared possible selves, they devise behavioral patterns that decrease their chances of realizing those feared selves. In other words, the choices that people make in the present are based on their desire to develop toward the person they hope to become and away from the person they fear becoming.

Possible selves appear to be a powerful motivator of current action, although additional research is required to understand how perceptions of possible selves interact with other variables to influence present actions and goal
Project Design

Theoretical Framework

For purposes of community-building, a “whole-person” paradigm is used in initiative design and delivery and facilitation of possible selves mapping exercises and conduct of debriefing interviews. Five concept categories form the foundation of the initiative’s approach: Community development, youth empowerment, and adult-youth relationships; the Circle of Courage; principles of human interaction as defined in the 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens curriculum; youth transition to adulthood; and life-space and identity narrative.

Community development, youth engagement and empowerment, and youth-adult relationships. This initiative seeks to build the community-university relationship through the use of research as a community-building instrument. In this case the community as defined by the school requesting the intervention (“school” refers to school officials, school district officials, teachers, and students) and the researcher work closely together to define and address areas that negatively impact student learning. By engaging all key stakeholders in the process, it is hoped that a greater sense of community ownership and empowerment will be cultivated.

Circle of Courage. Legault, Green-Demers, and Pelletier (2006) performed three studies in an attempt to discern factors underlying student amotivation in high school. They state, “...it seems that amotivation is itself an entity, a complex and multifaceted process, which is not so much an absence as a broad effect of unmet needs” (p. 580). This project frames its methodology and researcher-participant relationship within the Circle of Courage, which comprises four growth needs of childhood: belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity (Brendtro, Brokenleg, and van Bockern, 2005). Meeting students’ growth needs by establishing an environment of courage empowers healthy self-actualization (van Bockern, Wenger, & Ashworth, 2004, p. 152).

Principles of human interaction as defined in the 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens course, and the whole-person concept. The researcher will facilitate to the student participants material introducing the 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens (adopted from the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People): Habit 1, “Be Proactive”; Habit 2, “Begin with the End in Mind”; Habit 3, “First Things First”; Habit 4, “Think ‘Win-Win’”; Habit 5, “Seek First to Understand, then to be Understood”; Habit 6, “Synergize”; and Habit 7, “Sharpen the Saw”. Habits one through three comprise what is termed the “private victory”, the participant’s mastery of her/himself. Mastery of these habits enables the participant to practice habits four through six, or the “public victory”, which enable the participant to more effectively interact with others. Practicing habit seven enables the participant to renew her/himself within the four dimensions of the person (whole-person concept): body, mind, spirit, and emotion. The whole-person concept and the Circle of Courage complement one another. “Body” corresponds to “independence”; “mind” corresponds to “mastery”; “spirit” corresponds to “generosity”; and “emotion” corresponds to “belonging”.

Youth transition to adulthood. This initiative seeks to inform current knowledge around the youth transition to adulthood experience. This transition has long been recognized as problematic (Pollock, 1997; Horowitz & Bromnick, 2007), and it is important that we more fully understand this transition as it impacts youth mental and physical health (Clark & Mathews, 2007).

Life-space and identity narrative. This initiative approaches narrative and narrative identity processing from a psychosocial narrative perspective (Smith and Sparkes, 2008; Pals, 2006). Pals (pp. 1080-1) refers to narrative identity processing as a lifelong process by which:

(a) identity in adulthood takes the shape of a coherent narrative or life story that integrates interpretations of the past with the present self and provides life with meaning and purpose, and (b) the processes of constructing, revising, and living in accordance with this narrative identity over time are central to personality functioning, development, and well-being (McAdams, 2001; Singer, 2004; Singer & Blagov, 2004)...narrative identity processing is used here to refer to the ongoing task of narrating and interpreting past experiences and incorporating them into the life story as lasting narrative products (Singer & Blagov, 2004).

According to Smith and Sparkes, “identities are considered to be an internalized life story that develops over time through self-reflection” (p. 9). According to Pals (2006), “changes and new developments in how people interpret their lives may trigger corresponding changes in enduring patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving—i.e., personality traits—over time” (p. 1105). In this project narrative becomes an instrument of praxis as well as personal transformation as participants negotiate the learning process within a “7 Habits framework” both through interaction with the researcher and each other during classes as well as through a class blog established for this project (please refer to the...
methodology section). Use of narrative as emphasized through the methodology also facilitates a clearer understanding of the participants' life-space experiences, hopefully more proximal to their point of view then might otherwise occur (Daniels and Arapostathis, 2005).

Assumptions

The major tasks of the researcher in this paradigm of research are to (a) build a relationship of trust with the participants, (b) facilitate the learning process regarding the 7 Habits material, (c) facilitate the acquisition of concepts foundational to life-space/possible selves mapping, and (d) facilitate the narrative process as participants learn to explore their life-space through narrative. Thus the researcher is an active participant in the narrative process and part of what may become an evolving participant-researcher community. The researcher may not be removed from and will probably be affected by participant experiences as they are embodied in participant narratives.

The researcher’s previous experience and literature reviews indicate that relationship is a key motivational (protective) factor that positively impacts student persistence in school (Knesting & Waldron, 2006). While persistence in school per se is apparently not the issue (no students in the participant group are known to be in danger of dropping out of school), relationship is again a key factor in student engagement in school. In this later case, however, engagement becomes a much more complicated issue. Daniels and Arapostathis (2005) use the term “reluctant learners” to describe students who “possess the ability to achieve. They do not struggle with reading or math on most school assignments. In spite of their abilities, however, they choose not to participate in school learning experiences. They often have failing grades even though they demonstrate linguistic and/or mathematical competence on the playground, in extracurricular activities, or at home and in their communities” (p. 35). The preceding statement could have been spoken by the Principal and Vice Principal of the participant group under consideration in this project. Daniels and Arapostathis go on to note, however, that for the population they studied, “The relationships between students and teachers influenced the levels of intrinsic motivation and the amount of effort students were willing to exert...Students who trusted their teachers and felt that their teachers understood them saw their education as a partnership rather than a dictatorship” (Deci, 1995) (p. 51). Knesting and Waldron (2006) and others note the primacy of relationship as a positive motivating factor in student engagement. Thus this project is conceptualized as primarily a relationship-building exercise in which (a) a genuine sense of community is cultivated, (b) the participants acquire skills used in effectively negotiating relationships within the context of this evolving community, and (c) the participants acquire a future-time perspective within this same context.

Sample and Research Methods

The population under consideration is the 9th-grade class of twenty-one students attending a local secondary school in Kamloops, BC. The population consists of twenty Caucasian students and one Southeast Asian student. All students are from a middle class background. Participants will be selected from this population via a volunteer process, namely using the consent forms.

Participants will be administered a baseline measure adapted from Oyserman (2004). The researcher will then facilitate a two-part group exercise focused on future time perspective concepts. The first part of this exercise will focus on mind mapping techniques; the second part will focus specifically on the individual student's possible selves perspectives using possible selves mapping methodologies adapted from Marshall and Shepard (2002). Following the group exercise, the researcher will schedule and conduct one-on-one possible selves mapping structured interviews with each of the participants, again using methodologies adapted from Marshall and Shepard (2002). These individual interviews will complete the process begun during the group exercise.

Data obtained from the baseline questionnaire will be analyzed using coding procedures developed by Oyserman (2004) for that questionnaire. Data obtained from the one-on-one interviews will be reconstructed and coded using the possible selves process model of self-regulation (Oyserman and James, in press) and the data coding procedures used for the baseline questionnaires.

Participants will be invited to participate in a class blog to explore 7 Habits and possible self concepts through an arts-based narrative process. Use of this blog is intended to be longitudinal at least over the life of the project. The blog is further intended to provide a vehicle of exploration that is relevant to the students’ experiences and to provide a means of interaction beyond the one hour per week students-researcher face-to-face time.

Expected Outcomes

This initiative is primarily an intervention implemented at the request of school officials; hence the “theoretical framework” is keyed to that effect vice strictly research-specific. That said, the researcher will maintain a neutral, objective approach to participant narratives and input during the initiative, but will be an active participant in the students’ narrative processes and part of what may become an evolving participant-researcher community. The
researcher may not be removed from and will probably be affected by participant experiences as they are embodied in participant narratives. I expect the initiative to evolve over its four-year lifecycle.

I expect to find data similar to that which has been obtained in similar research (Marshall et al., 2002). As the students will have been keyed to future selves concepts as a result of having participated in a 7 Habits facilitation, however, I will be interested to see if the participants demonstrate greater introspection around the concept of their future possible selves.

References


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More than just a bed: Art Education students’ service-learning experience of designing privacy panels for the beds of a homeless shelter

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Students from the community art education program at Concordia University, participated in a community-based project that involved designing privacy panels for the beds of a homeless shelter in Montreal. This paper will present the students’ learning experiences with this project.

Introduction—More than just a bed
How do we define homelessness? What does it mean to be homeless? Who are the homeless? What do we share in common? How can we make a difference? These questions and many more, surfaced and were contemplated by students from the community art education Program at Concordia University, who embarked on a service-learning project that partnered the University with The Old Brewery Mission, a shelter for homeless men in Montreal. Students participated in a community-based project where they designed privacy panels for the beds of this homeless shelter. This project which became known as the Dream Screens was created by architect Amie Neff from the firm Grenier + Richards Architectes, after she was requested by the Old Brewery Mission, to redesign the bed system in the shelter, to allow for more privacy for the men. Community artists, university art education and design students and various community organizations contributed panels for this project. The purpose of designing these panels, according to the Old Brewery Mission, was “…to provide a more humane environment for them [the homeless] as they transition through the healing process on their journeys through and out of homelessness” (http://www.oldbrewerymission.ca/dreamscreens.html).

Students enrolled in the community art education program at Concordia University are required to complete four semesters of teaching art in the community. Through service-learning, students develop needs assessments of their populations and design art programming suitable for various community sites such as nursing homes, community centers, drop-in centers for the homeless, women’s support centers and centers for special needs populations. Our program supports a philosophy of service-learning as defined by Taylor and Ballengee-Morris (2004):

Like community service, service-learning engages students in working with the community and contributes to the development of their civic responsibility. Though learning undoubtedly occurs during community service, service-learning is a structured and theoretically grounded practice in which service experiences are directly connected to academic objectives. (p. 6)

In keeping with the philosophy of service-learning, as instructors, we chose to expand our students’ community service to include involvement in a public art project, in this case participating in the design of the privacy panels. To prepare our students, mostly young women, to embark on this initiative, we asked them to research/visualize homelessness through various assignments, listen to guest speakers and visit the Old Brewery Mission to meet and interview the men about the kinds of images they would like to see on their panels. Jeffers (2005) describes service-learning as a “project of exploration” (p. 15). She goes on to say:

It is the project of weaving, of knitting together the many voices, the many perspectives and interests, to produce a dialectical fabric that is folded again and again, yet is made meaningful wrapped around a world of shared experiences, a world that is both revealed and rendered in the images and texts that are constructed by the many. (2005, p. 15)
The panel project from beginning to end, took the students on a journey of learning through both challenges and successes. What follows are the narrative accounts of the students’ experiences related to making art “for” others and “with” others. Some of the students’ issues/concerns related to how to begin this project, choosing content/themes as well as dealing with technical aspects.

Making art for others

Getting Started:

To prepare our students for this community-based project, it was essential to sensitize and educate our students (and ourselves) about some of the sociological, political and historical issues that surround homelessness in North America. Our class discussions centered on our own perceptions of homelessness and how distant this reality was from our own daily lives. Students examined their own biases, prejudices and personal experiences with the homeless. Their comments revealed a lack of real knowledge and understanding, a discomfort and sometimes a dislike towards the homeless. We wondered how could our students overcome these personally held notions? Could their participation with this project, change their perceptions and somehow benefit a group of homeless men? Gablik (1991/2002) notes the importance of finding “new forms” that will help us to connect with others:

> The psychic and social structures in which we live have become too profoundly antiecological, unhealthy and destructive. There is a need for new forms emphasizing our essential connectedness rather than our separateness, forms evoking the feeling of belonging to a larger whole rather than expressing the isolated, alienated self. (p. 6)

When we were first approached to participate in the Old Brewery Mission project, we were extremely excited; it appeared to be the ideal project for our community art education students. The philosophy behind the Old Brewery panel project of creating art made by the community to be used within the community, seemed to epitomize the very essence of what we teach our students – Community giving back to the community. We invited Alan Spitzer, the Director of The St. James Drop in Centre, a day center providing a variety of services for the homeless, to address the students and to try to help them understand the social and political complexities of homelessness in Montreal and also to help dispel common stereotypes of what is a homeless person. The students listened and yet at the end of the class, a question that was heard often during the preparation stages of the project was “but what can ‘we’ do, what do ‘we’ have to offer?”

Visualization:

As a class, we discussed what basic human needs were. What would be the needs for a person without a bed or a place of their own to call home? Students concluded that a warm, safe place that afforded shelter was necessary for a person’s well-being. Some concluded that home was an abstract concept, something that we carried within ourselves. To further sensitize our students to the state of homelessness, we developed an assignment that asked the students to walk familiar paths in their neighbourhoods but to “see” differently. Bearing in mind the basic needs we had jointly decided upon, the students were to walk around the city or their neighbourhoods at night and try to find a place that they felt would be safe and would afford them shelter. They were asked to see their community with different eyes. Some students thought that this was going to be easy. One student, Martha, wrote that she thought it would be a breeze, just do the walk and then get back into the warmth of her apartment. She said that she was uncomfortable doing the walk; she came to realize that the things she valued, such as her safety and privacy were missing. She wrote that she realized while it was uncomfortable for her, it was probably extremely anxiety-producing for someone actually looking for a place to sleep at night and wondering if they were going to wake up in the morning.

Another student, Carolyn, wrote that as she walked, she began to think about the sort of experiences that a homeless person might have in a city that generally doesn’t respect them. She felt disturbed and overwhelmed at the idea of taking the perspective of a homeless person, but soon realized that this was not the goal of the exercise. She wrote that when she took her walk through her neighbourhood in early January, she began to understand that for her, this project had become an opportunity to make a gesture of care, to make a statement to the community that the homeless are not invisible and that they are worthwhile. Carolyn’s realization was that the art was not to be made for the general public but for special people. She came to understand, as did many of the students, that the neighbourhood walk assignment was not in fact about finding a bed, but to help them start their own process of thinking about homelessness.

In response to her walk in the community, Marcela wrote that “homelessness is a reality which as a society we turn our heads away from, a problem we ignore, and that no matter how much we ignore it, sooner or later, we will have to face it and that once we are aware of the problem, we can find different solutions and strategies to fight it.”
The Visit:

Following the community walk assignment, students had been given an outline of the goals set forth by the architect, seen the blueprints for the renovated dorms and read up on the history and the services offered by the Old Brewery Mission. The students were informed that the panels were destined for the dormitory for the men in a program called the 90-day program. This is a program that takes the men off the street, teaches them the skills necessary for job interviews and then helps them find a room or apartment where they can live. A visit was planned to the Mission so that our students could meet and speak with the men for whom the panels were being made. One student noted, “On the day we visited the Old Brewery Mission, I was placed into a reality that was not my own” (Melissa, journal).

Our students were ushered into a room, where the resident care specialist, gave us an overview of what we would be seeing, the daily routines of the men and how the Mission is managed on a day-to-day basis. This was the first time many, if not all our students, had been in a homeless shelter. Our tour began in the dorms, recently vacated by the transient men who pass the night there. We continued through the narrow corridors, looking into rooms left empty for those not suitable to sleep in the more open dorms. We passed a room for smokers that would soon be closed under Quebec law. Some students thought this was unfair considering that smoking is one of the few releases these men have. We saw the new laundry room and an area that would eventually become a TV room with computer access. Inside the main dorm, the beds were neatly made with mismatched, children’s bedding. This was quite disconcerting considering who slept in these beds. The air had a distinct antiseptic smell of the newly cleaned. One student noted,

- I always think I know what something is going to be like before I experience it and then it is never quite like I thought it would be. The Brewery Mission was no exception. I never imagined so many beds crammed into one room. And I can’t imagine sleeping well in such a situation, though the alternative is even tougher. (Christine, journal)

After visiting the larger empty dorms, that become occupied only in the evenings, we visited the dorm that was being renovated, where we found some of the men for whom the panels were being made. The students felt like intruders as they entered. Some men were very surprised to see a large group of mostly women, walk in. The coordinator made introductions and gradually, the more confident students relaxed into conversations with the men. Following this encounter, we were invited to have lunch with the men in the cafeteria. We noticed that most of the students were still reticent to sit with the men and vice versa. One student noted,

- The men were let into the cafeteria earlier because of the cold. Some were friendly. Others seemed uncomfortable around us. There were several men grouped as if family. I felt like I was violating their space. (Angela, journal)

- Small conversations ensued between the students and the men in the cafeteria. When asked what kinds of images they preferred to have on the panels, one man stated he would like to see something thoughtful, not depressing, not too colourful or bright, but warm. He said he didn’t want to see a city scene and that he grew up in the country; maybe a remembrance of that – trees, fields and open spaces. One student remarked,

- Our visit to the shelter helped us to understand the importance of this project. After speaking to some of the men staying at the shelter, I realized that I underestimated just how meaningful this project had the potential to become. What I feel was most revealing about our encounter that day, was how urgently some of these men wanted to be heard. (Tracey, journal).

Some students mentioned that they found the visit to be very helpful, that knowing where the panels would go and meeting firsthand the people they were being made for, made the project more real, not just something that was to be done in class but something important for someone outside of the class, in the real world. Marcela wrote, she had been confronted with a reality that she often tried to deny and for which she now felt ashamed and that was, her dislike of the homeless she used to see on the streets every day. Marcela realized how the visit to the Old Brewery Mission had opened her eyes and helped her to gain a sense of how the homeless men live. She wrote that she had been touched to see how the establishment had no personality at all. In her journal she added:

- As I walked out of the shelter, I could not help my tears to fall down my frozen cheeks. Mixed emotions, new perspectives, eyes wide open. But most importantly…..thankful.

- Carolyn’s response summed up what most of the students felt after having left the Old Brewery:

- It was helpful to observe the environment, particularly the sleeping quarters. The men whom we met at the site were kind and enthusiastic. They received us with grace and gratitude; I was very impressed, and maybe a little surprised that the men were so willing to share their space with us.

She added that during the visit she had confronted her own preconceived notions of what homelessness is, and
The Panels:
The visit to the mission and the subsequent conversations with the men gave the students an invaluable resource for the panel images. Some doubts remained, however. The students were confronted with the challenge of making something ‘special’ for a population so outside of their lived experience:

What would the men want to look at? Would they prefer a landscape or a symbol? How do we make it meaningful? We are a bunch of girls making artwork for men.

(Jennifer, journal)

Between the time of the visit and the arrival of the panel canvases, the students undertook a process of reflection and journal writing. The images that were finally developed revealed a deep empathy and compassion for the men they met at the Mission:

Conversations with the men from the shelter, class discussion[s] and personal reflection led me to consider a certain set of needs as well as social values that could help to develop the visual form for the panel image. (Tracey, journal)

The students embraced the opportunity to create meaningful interpretations of the thoughts and wishes expressed by the men they met at the Old Brewery Mission. Tracey’s panel used the tree as a symbol of dynamic strength and growth after her extensive conversations with the men in the transition program about the challenges of re-entering society.

I see the tree as a metaphor for the cycle of life and peace that suggests spirit, growth, solidity and wisdom. These values that I feel are important in rebuilding relationships with the exterior world have to do with human spirit, empathy, care, compassion, reflection, hope and forgiveness.

The idea of cyclical patterns of rebirth represented by the tree, seemed like a perfect meeting point between my intent as the artist and the concerns of the men who are going to see them everyday. (Tracey, journal)

Christine drew upon her personal experiences with First Nation’s culture and her own spiritual belief to design her panel. She chose the Medicine Wheel as a symbol of the journey towards health:

The concept of the Medicine Wheel was familiar to me and an idea which many people could relate to. It is a symbol of healing, common among many traditions.

Christine used braided deerskin “to remind us of our relationships with other creatures of the Earth.” A small mirror represented introspection and the “individual connected to the divine.” Colour was also used symbolically. This panel also contained needlepoint tree silhouettes:

Trees, to me, signify our connection to the earth and the heavens. They are a symbol of our need to be grounded. (Christine, journal)

After the visit to the Brewery Mission, Martine wrote about her empathetic approach to understanding the men she met, and how this experience provided the underpinnings of her image-making. She found that “the majority of men hoped for pleasant images that spoke of comfort, that are serene.” Martine’s panel consisted of six doorways that she described as “pathways, as possibilities, as positive intentions.” Each doorway revealed a different symbol representing basic human qualities. This was an interactive piece that Martine hoped would “engage people and will [would] encourage contemplation.”

Conclusion and implications
Carol Beer made a return visit to the Old Brewery Mission to see what had become of the panels and to bring closure to the project:

I was surprised by the amount of original panels that were missing and replaced by blank panels. I went to the supervisor and asked her opinion about the project and the changes. She felt that the most successful part of the renovation was the panel project. She said that the pride and joy that the men felt was immense. The men were amazed that the students had made all this art for them.
Most of the men had never been in close contact with art before and the sense of joy was palpable. Many of the men took their panels with them when they left. For some, it was the first piece of art that they had ever owned. She said that many of the men have children and showed their children the works saying, ‘look this was made for me.’

I also asked about the works that were left, why hadn’t anyone taken them. She explained that some of the men had not yet graduated from the program and so each night they carry their panel to the bed they’re going to be sleeping in. The beds all have numbers and the men lose their identity. The panels give them a new identity.

This project proved to be a challenging, yet worthwhile, learning experience for our students. Students learned about civic responsibility and what it means to belong to and be part of a community. The homeless residents were granted some privacy by the addition of the painted panels created by the students. Taylor (2002) mentions that some of the goals of service-learning include “making a difference” (p. 135) and “fulfill[ing] a community need” (p.36). These two characteristics were certainly evident with this project but most importantly this project helped to dispel some of the students’ previously held beliefs and attitudes about homelessness. They learned what these men were going through in their lives, their struggles and their dreams. The resulting privacy panels depicted themes of hope, change, transformation and growth and represented the making of knowledge as defined by Freire (1970/2005):

Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other. (p.72)

References:
A Study on the Filipino Women Inmates: Towards a Community-University Partnership

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The research is a background study on the psycho-social attributes and orientation of inmates at the country’s Correctional Institution for Women (CIW) finding out what led them to commit crimes, analyzing on how they cope with lives in incarceration and inquiring on how the University’s Rehabilitation Through Education Program can be extended.

Introduction

The Problem Setting
Filipino women dream of a happy life, a happy marriage and a well-brought up children. A successful home crowns their achievements as women more than anything else. The family then becomes the center of their lives. An ideal woman in Philippine society is someone who is willing to forego her personal development and, if necessary, suffers all kinds of hardships for the sake of children and spouse. She is someone who is kind, hardworking, loving, and always supportive of the plans and aspirations of her husband. She is considered as the weaker sex because of her being non-assertive and meek. In the Philippines, the legitimization of male dominance in the household, in work, in politics, in other areas of life is rooted in people’s belief that men and women have distinct biological traits, which are decisive in defining their roles and status in society. These biological factors support prevailing cultural tradition that mandate to do “light work” and engage in “less risky” occupations. (Sobritchea, 1990). Cultural practices regulating the physical mobility of women also find justification in the belief that women are weak and cannot protect themselves from physical harm. (Ligo, 2001). Studies have revealed that many of the Filipino women were breadwinners and mothers. Inside the prison walls, they don not lose their motherly instincts. Perhaps, the biggest burden that women convicts face is the daily anxiety about who will take care of their children. (Soriano, 2003). Despite the good ideologies of domesticity accorded to Filipino women, many might be wondering why they commit crimes, which lead them to be incarcerated in jail. Are there some moves done to save them from this ordeal of being imprisoned? Many battered women never leave their home for fear that children will be the one to suffer the consequence. They might as well sacrifice their own feelings for the sake of the children and the preservation of their marriage relationship. It is very ironical that these types of individuals would ever be engaged in crimes that would destroy not only their own selves but mostly their children and families. What may be are the factors that contribute to this? Obviously, the government’s programs as well as the different projects undertaken by the civic group designed to alleviate this social phenomenon on Filipino women in prison are inadequate. This raging issue moved the researchers to dig deeper on the prevailing issues that lead women to commit crimes and find out to what extent the social and psychological factors that contribute to the commission of the crimes that lead them to jail and to get a concrete view of life transition and struggle for survival.

Related Studies. Related literature and studies shared with this research the objective of looking into the facts and circumstances underlying the lives of women in jail. Alley and Simonsen (1998) who focused on the effects of incarcerating on male prisoners and suggested that the female inmate to remain as a “forgotten offender”; Pollock-Byrne (1991) who found female offenders treated more leniently than men in the criminal justice system and considered as a forgotten population in research and in reality; Bureau of Justice (1991) who found out that majority of women arrests are for drug offenses and crimes to support a drug habit, particularly theft and prostitution. Flanagan and Maguire (1989), found out that women in their sample supported their habits with their variety of crimes and addition to property...
crimes to raise money; and that drug dealing was one of the criminal activities in crime was committed out of poverty and in connection with prohibited drugs; and Cherukuri (2003) who explained women’s crime in India: family, culture, sexuality, and resistance to change.

Research Locale

The Correctional Institution for Women (CIW) is the country’s national penal facility for Filipino women offenders founded on February 14, 1931 under the supervision of Bureau of Corrections of the Department of Justice. As mandated, women convicts are kept for custody for the protection and security of society, as well as for their rehabilitation and preparation for a better life upon finishing their term. The Institution is under the supervision of the Bureau of Correction of the Department of Justice. It is situated at Nueve de Pebrero St., Mandaluyong city. As of January 2006, CIW’s population of inmates figures to 1,320 where 681 are of indeterminate sentence; 367 of Life Imprisonment; 240 of Reclusion Perpetua, and; 32 of Death Penalty.

The Respondents. The study involved a total of 45 inmates distributed into 31 (68.89%) with life penalty and 14 (31.11%) with death penalty who were randomly selected from dormitories.

Research Design

This study used the descriptive-normative survey, which involved describing, analyzing and interpreting the conditions of the inmates. These include their profile, family background, factors which made them commit the crimes, their coping mechanisms, their psycho-social dimensions, as well as their aspirations and plans for the future.

Paradigm of the Study (IPO Model)

1. Profile of the women inmates
2. Family Background
3. Factors that led them to commit crimes
4. Coping Mechanisms
5. Description in terms of psycho-social dimensions
6. Aspirations and plans for the future

Conduct of questionnaires & interviews
Analysis of the psycho-social attributes of the women inmates
Proposed psycho-social interventions to alleviate the plight of women in jail

FEEDBACK

Results of the Study

1. Among the 45 inmates, 42 (93.33 percent) were with ages ranging from 32 to 46 years old, married and Roman Catholic; 20 (44.44 percent) were residents of the National Capital region; 37.78 percent were of secondary educational level. Two-third (2/3) worked prior to imprisonment; majority (31 or 68.89 percent) committed drug-related offenses and were sentenced to life imprisonment. A big number (15 or 33.33 percent) have been serving for 4 years; 13 (28.89 percent) for 3 years; and the rest have just started. Thirty (66.67 percent) held respective cases on appeal for affirmation or reversal and 12 (26.67 percent) of “floating status”.

2. In terms of family background, a big number of 15 (33.33 percent) parents of the inmates attained elementary education; wherein most of them are self-employed; 62.22 percent with binding relationship of marriage and with average (5-7) number of siblings. Comparatively, majority of them are coming from female-dominated families. More than 50 percent surveyed women had self-employed husbands while others were employed. Six (6) out of ten (10) single respondents were presumed to being single parents. About 24 (33.33 percent) raised an average number of offspring ranging 3-5 while ten (10) maintained an ideal number of either 1 or 2 offspring.

3. Factors that led the women to commit crimes are primarily poverty-related in low-income families with many surviving members. They also attributed the significant role of their immediately environment committing crimes from bad “barkadas” dysfunctional families and tempting neighborhood / community. A few number of inmates referred to their own personal / character weakness.

4. On the coping mechanisms of the women in order to live and survive while in jail. Praying is the most frequent mode of coping undertaken by almost all of them. A great majority indicated coping by compensation and atonement
Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. A typical inmate is of middle age, married, Roman Catholic, of urban origin, attained secondary education, with self-employed parents, binding relationship, and with average number of siblings;

2. Poverty, which is the primary influencing factor to committing crimes, is a product of various disadvantages among women, both personal and family of many surviving members; The perceived weaknesses of character among Filipino women critically survive in a conducive environment of family, peer group, neighborhood and the community at large; The unabated problem in illegal or prohibited drugs threaten the normal pattern lives;

3. The strength of the women inmates are seen in their innate religiosity where praying is the prevalent mode of coping among them, in holding defense mechanisms to work at their advantage such as avoidance, by compensation and atonement; in their unbent self-concept amidst their present predicament, and; being internal achiever where they look at their situations as a matter of self-determination;

4. While most women submit themselves easily to the consequences of their previous actions, some of them resist claiming that they were victims of unlawful arrests of abusive police enforcers and unfair disposition of justice; While most of them admitted the wrongness of their offenses, they are divided into whether they have to be punished or not for offenses committed;

5. In the midst of incarceration, the women remained optimistic in their plans and aspirations, still hoping of a better life for themselves and for their families.
Recommendations

Among others, the study recommended the following for UPHSD:

1. Conduct of follow-up studies on Filipino women in jail which may utilize case analyses on the lived experiences of the women inmates.

2. Partnership with CIW in coordination with the non-governmental entities such as private organizations or groups. NGO’s and civic groups for project ideas dwelling on the following sub-themes of yielding significant outcomes among women population in jail: distance-learning programs; in-house educational projects; socio-recreational activities; psycho-social intervention

3. Consideration of the possibility of establishing an Extension School within the Correctional Institution, similar to that of the UPHSD Extension School in the New Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa.

4. The Community Outreach Programs of the school, as participated by its various colleges, may also consider the inclusion of women in jail to its target beneficiaries.

References


Poverty Reduction through I/NGOS

Hari Tiwari
Social Welfare Council
Mahesh Raj Pandey
Sudip Raj Panta: Clinic Nepal, Damak Chamber of commerce

Agricultural programmes focus on alleviating poverty and improving food security, nutrition and environment. Many I/NGOs also include providing technical assistance to early technology adopters in creating demand for business services.

In Nepal 80% of the total population are based on agriculture. Agricultural programmes focus on alleviating poverty and improving food security, nutrition and environment. Many of international and national non-governmental organisation (I/NGOs) are talking about business development services (BDS) or value - chain approach. The emphasis of the BDS approach includes building capacity of supply chain enterprises to manufacture and distribute agricultural equipment and inputs that are suitable for smallholders, and establishing market in the private sector. The I/NGOS are involved in building capacity of private enterprises to provide embedded training services for farmers with sale of inputs or purchase of outputs. For example, micro irrigation equipment dealers train farmers to use irrigation system that they sell and also provide advice to system buyers.

The approaches of many I/NGOs also include providing technical assistance to early technology adopters in creating demand for business services. These approaches also include strong Public Private Partnership (PPP) with the government to ensure supply of public goods such as market information, infrastructure, research, policy, water source development and other public services to improve sub-sector performance.

External Market Focus

Nepal is in a unique position to rapidly increase agricultural incomes through development of high value commodities for export markets. Nepal has comparative advantage in high-value commodities due to agro-climatic conditions that allow for off-season/ low-cost production for the vast South Asian market. Despite having identified this strategy 15-18 years ago Nepal lags behind in integrating smallholder farmer for tapping export opportunities. Nepal remains a net importer of many commodities for which it has comparative advantage. Most of the I/NGOs are taking lead to develop systems that enable smallholders to take advantage of the export opportunities.

For example, one I/NGO has launched agriculture income and improvement of food security and nutrition programme covering 40 out of the 75 districts of Nepal. The programme coverage has been directly affecting 85,000 households (600,000 people) to escape poverty and establish invigorated sub-sectors that will be sustainable and provide new opportunities for millions of poor smallholders in the future.

Despite the difficult conditions because of insurgency, the year 2004 was tremendous for the agriculture sector with expanded program activities and funding, developing new initiatives, and having a very strong development impact. High level visitors to the field sites recognized the I/NGOs work directly affected thousands of households in increasing their annual income by about $100.00 per household and establishing supply chains and market channels.
Peace Building Support

One of the major causes fueling conflict in Nepal is lack of economic opportunities and failure of the government and donor-supported development programs to reach the disadvantaged communities and rural poor. A recent survey for NDI found that the Number 1 concern of the Nepali people was lack of economic opportunity followed by increased violence. These I/NGOs are working to provide business opportunities to the poor and disadvantage households. Opportunities such as horticultural production are well suited to the rural poor who have surplus labour relative to land resources as non-timber forest products and crops such as coffee and tea and livestock that use marginal land. These programs are activating the government to deliver services to the rural poor and are showing that markets can work to help the poor and disadvantaged to escape poverty.

Micronutrient Initiative Support

Some I/NGOs have initiated activities to address micronutrient deficiencies in rural diets by applying agriculture as solutions. The wide impact of micronutrient deficiencies on cognitive development and human health is one of the most pressing problems for the poor in Nepal and developing countries. It is now recognized that micronutrient deficiencies and poverty are mutually reinforcing, with micronutrient deficiency being a major cause as well as a result of poverty. These I/NGOs participated in different International Conferences on micronutrient deficiency in Kathmandu and development linkages with effects to address this major problem. Some I/NGOs are working to introduce the research results into supply chains that serve smallholders such as appropriate micronutrient soil amendments; varieties with greater micronutrient content and developing more diversified diets. Increased vegetable production has also reduced local vegetable prices enabling many poor households to increase their vegetable consumption and improve their nutritional status.

Support to Linking Clean Energy to Agriculture

I/NGOs are partnering their clean energy programmes to agriculture activities. The I/NGOs are working to develop and apply appropriate solar drying technologies for horticulture production, gasification technology for application of heat in distillation processes and drying, and use of electricity for irrigation pumping. A few programmes are also collaborating to establish Internet information service kiosks in remote areas.

Agriculture Markets

The I/NGOs took a lead in applying ICT solutions to link smallholder to markets. The Nepal Tree Crop Global Development Alliance (NTC-GDA) assisted in the development of a tea promotion website for an industry association (www.nepalteacom.np); business Development Services-Marketing and Production Services (BDS-MaPa) is working on the same for an non-timber forest products (NTFP) industry association; smallholder Irrigation Markets Initiative (SIMI) has linked with government and community radio to provide price information that is helping smallholders make decisions and disseminating market information (www.agripricenepal.com.np) and to develop trade matching e-commerce services.

Agriculture Programme Success

The I/NGOs have directly benefited thousands of households with training and assistance. Each of these households represents success stories of families that have increased their income and better realized their potential.

Off -Season Vegetables Production

Off-season vegetable cultivation has a high potential in the mountain areas. Vegetable crops have added significance due to involvement of women in all aspects of production. Off-season production of vegetable command price is two to three times higher than the main season production of the same. The successful cultivation of off-season vegetables in Nepal has made a significant impact on the local economy with the supply of vegetables in the domestic markets. The main fresh vegetables in high demand during off-season are tomatoes, cauliflower, cabbage, capsicum, chilies and cucumber etc.

Case Study: First Organic Model Village in the Country

Women farmers of Thaligaon village have made commitment to convert the whole village as organic village by avoiding chemical fertilizer and pesticides. For this, they have begun getting training on organic management, use of compost and urine. The concept and initiation behind this case goes to DADO, Kathmandu, which helped to link this program with FtF Nepal and developed a SOW to build capacity of the cooperatives and increase knowledge and technical know how about organic farming. Furthermore, a volunteer cooperation from FtF programme enhanced the strength to move further towards organic village.
Actually this is not the case in other remote villages. This village is just 11 kilometre from Kathmandu city and 25 minutes ride from the nearest road head. With the initiation of the women 28 members of the cooperative established the Panchakanya Krishi Sahakari Sastha Ltd in early 200 with awareness and concerns about food safety and family health. Members of the cooperative, particularly women, were concerned about the health and financial benefit of organic farming and hence determined to grow their produces in organic way and establish the cooperative.

With their commitment, major improvements took place in the village. Government supported in the construction of 10000m road to transport vegetables by providing NRs. 470,000 (US $ 6714.00). The local agriculture office provided organic training, developed resource persons and provided continued backstopping. Likewise, volunteer from FT smooth program provided expertise in organic farming and organic certification. FT also helped the cooperative to establish linkages between the “National Cooperative Development Board (NCDB) and the Department of Agriculture (DoA). Due to this the cooperative received NRs 100,000 (US$ 1428.00) credit from NCDB to build a cooperative organic centre in the village and the construction of the same is underway. NCDB has also committed to support the cooperative through training and organizational development. With all these support farmer of this village are confident to grow organic vegetables. They are aware of systematic management, can differentiate between organic and inorganic and capable of packaging, grading and marketing of organic vegetables. They have also increased income from NRs. 3000-4000 (US$500.00 -700.00) to NRs. 5000-7000 (US $ 750.00- 1050.00) per 512 square meter of land after organic management. Now they are also capable of providing input to other groups as resource persons. Such type of commitment to be organic grower will have positive impact on health, income, and the environment. The learning from this cooperative will be an example for sustainable production.

**Micro Irrigation**

I/NGOs working with IDE have demonstrated the value of micro irrigation in allowing smallholders to control water resources enabling them to take advantage of market opportunity in horticulture/NTEP products. In Nepal, I/NGOs promoted micro irrigation technologies including the treadle (foot) pump for Terai and drip irrigation, sprinkler, and low cost water storage in the hills. These very low cost technologies were developed by partner IDE and are produced entirely by the private sector in Nepal. I/NGOs and IDE focus on developing supply chain for micro irrigation equipment providing generic promotion those private sector suppliers cannot afford to initiate.

**Water Source Development**

In the Nepali hills SIMI has identified the effectiveness of linking micro irrigation to small-scale community water development through multi use piped water systems that supply water for domestic use, livestock, and micro irrigation. SIMI is working with communities to develop 16 such systems in 3 hill districts. IDE–developed water storage tank options have reduced the cost of these systems. The averages cost for SIMI piped water systems are about $ 80.00 per household. In hill micro irrigation, the users’ first year returns exceeded $ 100.00 including equipment cost. This means the communities can recover the entire cost of their water system within one year.

**Historical Roots Research Programme**

The I/NGOs are maintaining the historical roots in agriculture research with the programmes working with the research community focusing on linking research results with agro inputs supply chains for such products as pheromone traps, micronutrient applications, hybrid tomato seed development, soil solarization, hailstone protection, post harvest technologies, coffee pulps, distill technologies, and drying technologies.

**Sustainable Agriculture**

The I/NGOs’ projects are working to introduce IPM technologies into the supply chain and have developed certification systems for smallholders in organic tea and aromatic oils. They have pioneered an effective approach to aggregating the smallholders’ produces. Farmer groups have established marketing committees that develop collection centers. The centers have linkages with consumers and traders. Many management committee members are women and that include treasurer and chairpersons. These centres are now formal cooperative and are saving funds for infrastructure improvement.

**BDS: Business Development Services**

**ICT: Information Communication Technology**

**NTC-GDA The Nepal Tree Crop Global Development Alliance**

**BDS-MaPa: Business Development Services-Marketing and Production Services**

**NTFP: Non-Timber Forest Products**
CUexpo 2008
Campaign for Justice: A Successful Partnership Between University and Community-Based Civil Rights Organizations

John N. Tsuchida
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A successful university-community partnership, where a trilingual professor provided pro bono legal service with cultural sensitivity, was one of the factors contributing to the settlement of a class action seeking reparations from the U.S. Government for former Peruvian Japanese internees.

Wartime Internment of Japanese Peruvians

It is well known that during World War II, 120,000 Japanese Americans were incarcerated in American concentration camps without due process of law as guaranteed in the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. However, it is less known that the U.S. government also caused many Japanese Latin Americans to be deported from their adopted or native countries for internment in detention centers in Texas run by the U.S. Justice Department. At the behest of the U.S. government, thirteen Latin American nations arrested 2,264 innocent men, women, and children of Japanese ancestry, confiscated their property, and deported them to the United States between 1942 and 1944, for the purpose of exchanging them for American prisoners of war held by the Japanese. Eighty-three percent of these Latin American Japanese came from Peru. Over 800 Latin American Japanese abductees were sent to Japan in two POW exchanges between 1943 and 1944. However, approximately 1,400 remained incarcerated in the Crystal City and Kennedy internment camps in Texas and the Santa Fe internment camp in New Mexico for the duration of the war (CWRIC, 1983), since Japan had refused to recognize them as bona fide POWs.

After the war, the U.S. Justice Department determined that the internees from Latin America were deportable because they had entered the United States “illegally” without visas or passports, most of which American military personnel had confiscated aboard the transport ships en route to New Orleans. As most Latin American nations did not allow these expatriates to return, over 900 of them were deported to war-devastated Japan, whereas about 365 internees were rescued by ACLU attorney Wayne Collins and paroled out prior to their imminent deportation. An additional 100 Japanese Latin American internees were eventually permitted to return to Peru and other countries in Latin America (CWRIC, 1983).

Almost half a century later, the U.S. Congress enacted the Civil Liberties Act (Public Law 100-383) in August 1988, to apologize for the fundamental violations of Japanese Americans’ civil liberties and constitutional rights during World War II, and to provide surviving internees with reparations. By June 1998, the Office of Redress Administration provided 81,664 former internees with presidential letters of apology and $20,000 each in personal compensation, or a total of over $1.63 billion (DOJ Press Release, June 12, 1998). However, only a small number of Japanese Latin Americans were eligible to receive such apology letters and reparations.

Unlike their Japanese American counterparts, Japanese Latin Americans were initially determined to be ineligible for redress under the terms of the Civil Liberties Act. Section 108 of the Act excluded from eligibility any individual of Japanese ancestry who was not a citizen or a permanent resident of the United States between December 7, 1941 and June 30, 1946, and any individual who, between December 7, 1941 and September 2, 1945, returned to a country which was at war with the United States. With the exception of some 60 children born in the internment camps prior to June 30, 1946, who were automatically U.S. citizens and thus qualified for redress, none of the Japanese Latin Americans were citizens or permanent residents of the United States between December 7, 1941 and June 30, 1946. Furthermore, more than 860 Japanese Latin Americans shipped to Japan for hostage exchanges in 1943 and 1944 were specifically made ineligible.
When Japanese Latin Americans filed claims for reparations pursuant to the Civil Liberties Act, the Office of Redress Administration rejected their claims, and the Assistant Attorney General denied their subsequent appeals. Fortunately, however, approximately 200 of those former Japanese Latin American internees, who had avoided deportation and subsequently adjusted their status to that of permanent residents pursuant to the Immigration Act of 1952 (Public Law No. 82-414), had their adjustment dates made retroactive to the dates of their entry into the United States, and received an official apology and $20,000 in personal compensation.

Japanese Americans and Japanese Latin American were similarly situated in that both groups of people were interned and deprived of liberty in the American concentration camps without due process of law. The U.S. government thus violated the constitutional rights of both Japanese Americans and Japanese Latin Americans. All persons, regardless of their citizenship or immigration status, who are physically inside the United States, are all entitled to the fundamental rights embodied in the Bill of Rights. The U.S. Justice Department violated the Japanese Latin Americans’ Fifth Amendment right to due process and equal protection, by denying them a presidential apology and individual compensation while providing redress to the similarly situated Japanese Americans. Moreover, any statute whose strict enforcement produces absurd, unanticipated results is defective and likely to infringe upon some people’s constitutional rights to due process and equal protection. Such legislation must be amended by the legislature, or declared unconstitutional or void by the court.

Mochizuki v. United States

In August 1996, Carmen Mochizuki, along with two other named plaintiffs—Alicia Nishimoto and Koshiro Henry Shima—brought a class action against Attorney General Janet Reno and Dede Greene, Director of the Office of Redress Administration, seeking the same redress as Japanese Americans on behalf of former Japanese Latin American internees, under the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. The named plaintiffs in the class action invoked the Fifth Amendment right to due process and equal protection to request that the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California enjoin the Justice Department to make all members of the class eligible for all benefits provided by the Civil Liberties Act. The plaintiffs also argued that the Court should decree that the members of the class were permanent residents of the United States under color of law at the time of their incarceration (CWRIC, 1983). Where government officials misuse their power or engage in illegal acts to bring citizens of another state to the United States against their will, the U.S. government may not disclaim responsibility or treat them as illegal entrants.

In the wake of the Mochizuki case, the Japanese American Citizens League, the National Coalition for Redress and Reparations, the Japanese Peruvian Oral History Project, and the American Civil Liberties Union jointly organized the Campaign for Justice to help Japanese Latin Americans receive long-denied redress. While supporting and publicizing the class action, the Campaign for Justice successfully carried out legislative and media campaigns in an effort to pressure the Congress into amending the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 to make Japanese Latin Americans eligible for redress. The Campaign for Justice sent several delegations to Washington to lobby sympathetic legislators and held many press conferences not only to educate the public but also to seek the mainstream media’s support of Japanese Latin Americans’ cause. Most major newspapers across the country carried editorials unequivocally supporting redress for Japanese Latin Americans.

University-Community Partnership

In order to have Mochizuki v. U.S. certified as a class action, the Campaign for Justice had to identify, locate and persuade many other surviving Japanese Peruvian internees, who had not received any reparations from the U.S. government, to join the class. Robin S. Toma, then Associate Director of the Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission, decided to go to Japan to seek potential class members in collaboration with the Japanese Peruvian Association (Peru-kai) in that country. Although he was fluent in Spanish, he would not be able to communicate well with the great majority of Japanese Peruvians residing in Japan, because most of them were aging former immigrants who had forgotten any rudimentary Spanish they might have spoken while living in Peru, or their Peruvian-born children who had already forgotten their native language after deportation to Japan in the 1940s. Some members of the Campaign for Justice, who knew my background, contacted me at California State University, Long Beach, where I was a professor and the chairperson of the Department of Asian and Asian American Studies. They asked me to go to Japan with Toma to explain the concept and purpose of a class action, which was little understood there at that time; to persuade many Japanese Peruvians to join the class action; to assist them in filing new reparations claims with the Office of Redress Administration; and to conduct in-depth interviews with representative former internees who had been deported to Japan during and after World War II, in preparation for the trial and for the sake of historical preservation.

Born and educated in Japan through university I was fluent in Japanese and competent in Japanese culture. Since I had studied in Mexico, Spain and Brazil, and earned a Ph.D. in Latin American History at the University of California at Los Angeles, I was fluent in Spanish and familiar with Latin American history, culture, and geography. As a professor of Asian American
had they ever entertained any hope of getting reparations from their own government for such egregious acts. Even they had never openly discussed or complained of the discriminatory measure taken by President Manuel Prado, nor nation. Since the Japanese community in Peru was small and sometimes vulnerable to anti-Japanese sentiments, for the duration of World War II, and their struggle to re-build their lives again after returning to this South American Peruvians who had specifically been excluded from the benefits under the Act. The Japanese Peruvian community U.S. government under the Civil Liberties Act of 88, and print and electronic media in Lima. I presented a historical overview of the wartime detention of Japanese Americans and Japanese Peruvians in U.S. concentration camps, the reparations and presidential apologies offered by the Our mission in Japan was so successful that the Campaign for Justice and the National Coalition for Redress and Administration had rejected their earlier claims filed under the Civil liberties Act, and their subsequent appeals would be eligible to file reparations claims with the Office of Regress Administration, but that if the death had occurred had passed away after President Ronald Reagan signed into law the Civil Liberties Act on August 0, 88, their heirs attended our information session. Toma and I explained in Spanish and Japanese, respectively, that if the internees in August 0, the expiration date of the Civil Liberties Act. This meeting was aired on local TV and NHK assigned reporters to produce a special documentary on the tragic experience of Japanese Peruvians who were unfortunate and unforeseen victims of the war between Japan and the United States. Toma and I answered many questions from the media, and the wide publicity we received made it easier for us to persuade former internees in the Fukuoka area to join the class by filing claims against the U.S. government. We had to explain how the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 provided over 80,000 Japanese Americans with reparations but denied Japanese Peruvians any redress, and why the class action might force the U.S. government to award them the same benefits under the theory of due process and equal protection violations.

In November 1997, Robin Toma and I went to Japan, where we joined Mitsuaki Oyama, an English-speaking leader in the Japanese Peruvian community in Japan. In Fukuoka, we held a big press conference with major local and national newspapers and TV stations including NHK, the biggest semi-governmental TV station which practically every Japanese citizen watched on a daily basis. Besides covering, in its national morning and evening news programs, the Mochizuki case and our visit to Japan to identify potential class members and help prepare their claims, NHK assigned reporters to produce a special documentary on the tragic experience of Japanese Peruvians who were unfortunate and unforeseen victims of the war between Japan and the United States. Toma and I answered many questions from the media, and the wide publicity we received made it easier for us to persuade former internees in the Fukuoka area to join the class by filing claims against the U.S. government. We had to explain how the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 provided over 80,000 Japanese Americans with reparations but denied Japanese Peruvians any redress, and why the class action might force the U.S. government to award them the same benefits under the theory of due process and equal protection violations.

Toma, Oyama and I then flew to Naha, Okinawa, where the largest number of deported Japanese Peruvian internees resided. The majority of prewar Japanese immigrants to Peru had come from the islands of Okinawa. We met with the governor’s chief of staff and asked him to help us publicize in Okinawa that eligible Japanese Peruvians had to file their claims by August 10, 1998, the expiration date of the Civil Liberties Act. This meeting was aired on local TV and widely reported in the print media. Consequently, over 200 Japanese Peruvians and their children and grandchildren attended our information session. Toma and I explained in Spanish and Japanese, respectively, that if the internees had passed away after President Ronald Reagan signed into law the Civil Liberties Act on August 10, 1988, their heirs would be eligible to file reparations claims with the Office of Regress Administration, but that if the death had occurred prior to that date, the heirs would have no claim. Many former internees were doubtful about the possibility of receiving any reparations from the U.S. government over half a century later for their wartime incarceration, since the Office of Redress Administration had rejected their earlier claims filed under the Civil liberties Act, and their subsequent appeals had been denied by the Assistant Attorney General. After we explained the advantage of a class action and the U.S. mainstream media’s support of reparations for Japanese Peruvians, as well as the legal theories under which the lawsuit was filed, most, if not all, attendees expressed more optimism and agreed to refile their claims.

Our mission in Japan was so successful that the Campaign for Justice and the National Coalition for Redress and Reparations (NCRR), which was later renamed as the Nikkei for Civil Rights and Redress, asked me to go to Peru, partly because I could speak to former internees in Spanish and Japanese. Toma was unable to go due to his other professional commitments. Japanese Peruvian community representatives and I attended a press conference with the print and electronic media in Lima. I presented a historical overview of the wartime detention of Japanese Americans and Japanese Peruvians in U.S. concentration camps, the reparations and presidential apologies offered by the U.S. government under the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, and Mochizuki v. United States to seek redress for Japanese Peruvians who had specifically been excluded from the benefits under the Act. The Japanese Peruvian community leaders talked about their experiences of being suddenly uprooted from Peru for internment in the United States for the duration of World War II, and their struggle to re-build their lives again after returning to this South American nation. Since the Japanese community in Peru was small and sometimes vulnerable to anti-Japanese sentiments, they had never openly discussed or complained of the discriminatory measure taken by President Manuel Prado, nor had they ever entertained any hope of getting reparations from their own government for such egregious acts. Even

Studies and a lawyer, furthermore, I was knowledgeable about the wartime internment of Japanese Americans and Japanese Peruvians. I authored and edited, among other publications, American Justice: Japanese American Evacuation and Redress Cases (1988) and Reflections: Memoirs of Japanese American Women in Minnesota (1994), respectively. Given my academic and professional background, I felt I would be credible even though I would address as a stranger groups of potential class members, media people, and local politicians in Japan. In the belief that I would be able to contribute to the Japanese Peruvians’ struggle to seek justice, I readily agreed to provide pro bono legal service and academic expertise for this worthwhile cause. Prior to my trip to Japan, I met in Southern California and the Bay Area with the leaders of the Campaign for Justice, the Japanese Peruvian Oral History Project, and the National Coalition for Redress and Reparations, individually and in meetings and receptions. I also visited and interviewed many Japanese Peruvians who had remained in the United States since their release from the internment camps, or who had immigrated to this country after several years of residence in Japan where they and their families had been deported. I became acquainted with such individuals as the three lead plaintiffs of the class action; Seiichiro Higashide, one of prewar Japanese Peruvian community leaders who wrote Adios to Tears: The Memoirs of a Japanese Peruvian Internee in U.S. Concentration Camps, and his wife Angelica; Elsa and Eigo Kudo, the Higashide’s daughter and her husband, who are prominent leaders and spokespersons of the Japanese Peruvian community in the United States; and many of these people’s friends and relatives. In September 2007, I attended the seventh biennial reunion of the Peru-kai (Japanese Peruvian Association) held in Las Vegas, where I met scores of former Japanese Peruvian internees from Japan and Peru. As I was properly introduced to key members of the group and gained their trust, they subsequently referred me to many of their friends and relatives in Japan and Peru to facilitate my pro bono work there.

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then President Alberto Fujimori, the son of Japanese immigrants from Kumamoto, strictly refrained from discussing this undeniable incident in the history of Peru, or the issue of reparations by the Peruvian or U.S. government. His silence on this subject may be attributed to the fact that he had to distance himself from anything related to Japan or the Japanese Peruvian community, because at that time he was busy fighting charges that he was not a Peruvian-born citizen, but that he was born in Japan prior to his parents’ immigration to Peru.

In addition to the press conference and individual interviews by various reporters thereafter, I was interviewed live on the phone by a radio reporter and appeared on two daytime TV shows to talk about the class action filed in the United States and the possibilities of reparations for Japanese Peruvian internees. I used these opportunities to encourage potential class members to file their claims or to contact Tomás Hayashi, a well-known businessman and community leader. When a magazine reporter, who was a known critic of President Fujimori, interviewed me for her article, I had to exercise caution not to be misquoted by her. With a view to putting him in an awkward position, she was trying to have me state that those Japanese Peruvians who had been forcibly removed from Peru for incarceration in the U.S. should demand indemnity from both the Peruvian and American governments. I explicitly expressed my view as an attorney that the former Japanese Peruvians internees had no legal basis for demanding damages from their own government, simply because Peru had no law comparable to the Civil Liberties Act under which Mochizuki v. United States was filed. As a result of the extensive media coverage and the Japanese community’s well-coordinated efforts, we were able to meet with over 600 eligible claimants. I personally assisted a dozen people in preparing their claims, several of which I brought to the United States to be mailed through U.S. Postal Service, because the claimants did not trust Peruvian postal service.

Outcome of the Class Action

Mainly thanks to the Campaign for Justice’s effective strategies, coupled with the media support, the Justice Department, in June 1998, offered to settle the class action suit by providing Japanese Latin American claimants with President Bill Clinton’s letter of apology and $5,000 in personal compensation (DOJ Press Release, June 12, 1998), a fourth of what their Japanese American counterparts had received. In January 1999, the Court of Federal Claims, where Mochizuki v. U.S. (CIV. No. 9659-8655L) had been transferred, approved the settlement. Approximately 600 Japanese Latin Americans filed their claims before the expiration of the Civil Liberties Act. Several Japanese Peruvians rejected the settlement, opted out, and filed individual lawsuits against the U.S government, seeking the same redress as Japanese Americans. Although the Civil Liberties Act’s ten-year life ended in August 1998, and the Office of Redress Administration closed in February 1999, the Congress passed new legislation in May 1999 to appropriate additional funds to implement the Mochizuki settlement (Public Law 106-31).

All nations have a moral obligation to recognize their mistakes, particularly egregious human rights violations, and to rectify them in order to compensate the victims of such governmental misconduct and misjudgments. Truly democratic and great nations will be courageous enough to fulfill their obligation to make the victims whole.

As a trilingual pro bono lawyer and Latin American historian, I worked closely with the Campaign for Justice, the Peruvian Japanese Oral History Project, the Peru-kai, and the National Coalition for Redress and Reparations, to help Japanese Peruvians living in the United States, Japan and Peru, in their quest to seek justice and reparations under the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. I had sufficient time, academic and legal interests in their struggle, linguistic skills, and cultural awareness and sensitivity to persuade many potential claimants to file their claims in time, thereby contributing to strengthening the class action. Such community-university partnership where all parties complement each other with different skills and expertise to achieve our shared goals will produce positive change in our society.

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Partnerships between Society and Scientists through Science Shops and Science Communication in Belgium.

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Since 2006 we have in Belgium -thanks to the support of the Flemish authorities- a network of university based Science Shops consisting of a central contact point, Wetenschapswinkel.be, and five regional university based Science Shops.

In this paper we present you a definition of science communication wherein the concept of Science Shop is structured and we discuss about the unique situation of the Belgian-Flemish Science Shops.

Science Shops in Belgium

Belgium, 1 country, but for many – political matters divided into 3 regions, namely Flanders (primarily Dutch-speaking citizens), Brussels (Dutch-speaking and French-speaking citizens) and the Walloon provinces (primarily French-speaking citizens). Overlapping on this, the country is divided into three ‘cultural’ communities (essentially language-based): a Flemish one, a French-speaking one, and a small German-speaking one. Education, and most of the research, is a policy-matter of the communities. Hence, Science Shops fall under the responsibility of the communities. Currently, Belgium only has a Science Shop network in Flanders and in Flemish part of Brussels. As such, the main stakeholder is situated in the Flemish part of Belgium.

Before 2002 there were no Science Shops in Belgium (apart from a short period initiative at the university of Leuven in the eighties of the previous century). In 2002, thanks to the attention of the European Commission for the concept of Science Shops, awareness was created for community based research. Moreover, we were lucky that a member of Parliament urged the universities to bridge the gap between universities and the community through Science Shops. As a result, the Vrije Universiteit Brussel and the Universiteit Antwerpen introduced a common pilot project to find out what kind of science shop model would work in Flanders.

The Flemish government set up a period 3 years to determine the best possible integration of community based research into the Flemish universities. For this, a mini-network of 2 Science Shops (one in Brussels and one in Antwerp) and one central support unit was established. The Flemish twin network started on the 1st of January 2003. After 33 months, in 2005, a final report on how to set up a science shop network in Flanders could be presented.

The main ambition was to continue the work of the existing Science Shops and to create new Science Shops in the other Flemish universities. This led to the unique situation of a central-regional model; one central contact point which is in charge of global communication and of dispatching the research questions received from society to the regional Science Shops. The main benefit of working with a central unit is that with a minimum of expenses it can give a maximum service to the non-profit organizations throughout the region and assist the ‘young’ Science Shops in their tasks.

This network of 1 contact point and 5 regional Science Shops is for the major part (90%) financed by the Flemish Government.

Dark Clouds in the Sky

However, in politics everything can change in a glimpse of time. A new Minister of Science Policy and changes in the
Minister’s cabinet brought new struggles with it. The Science Shops had to overcome again the sceptic arousing from the new entourage.

For the continuation of the existing twin network and of its enlargement, three obstacles needed to be overpowered:

1. A new Minister of Science who’s sceptic about Science Shops
2. Scepticism within some other universities about the priority to finance Science Shops
3. And, in general, a less favourable time for Science Shops. There were a lot of closures in the Netherlands, and less direct attention of the European Commission for Science Shop activities.

Four arguments were used to convince the Minister of Science Policy:

1. In present society, Science Shops are necessary for the community
2. A Science Shop can integrate perfectly into the structure of a university
3. A Science Shop is "science communication"
4. The Science Shop and its international and regional position

**A Science Shop is Necessary for the Community**

For the 1st argument some relevant information was collected, such as:

a) Facts and figures through a need study. The Science Shop of Brussels therefore performed a survey among 5420 clubs and Ngo’s. 586 responses were received. Within that set, 44% from Flanders and 71% from the Brussels Region reported that they encountered societal questions and problems of the kind that could be interesting for Science Shop research.

b) Emphasizing the democratic, social and economic value of bringing the community closer to research, and research closer to the community:

- Science Shops help the researchers to show some interest in the topics that the community is interested in;
- Democratizing knowledge: emphasize that Science Shops help the community to obtain objective scientific answers or solutions to local problems or basic society-based problems;
- Research-based answers to societal questions help the community with critical reflections;
- Increase civic engagement in the agenda-setting of research topics (community as starting point for research) so they can have access to knowledge & research results that concerns them;
- Community can use the research results to position them in this new knowledge society.

**A Science Shop can Integrate perfectly into the Structure of a University**

In general, universities have three responsibilities related to governmental funding: research, education, societal services. Within the latter part of the mission the Science Shops are situated. Also; universities have a responsibility to share knowledge with society.

Finally, the integration into the structure of a university can happen with minimum expenses because there is a large potential of research.

For example; the Science Shops in Belgium work with students who don’t need to be paid for. Master students have to write a masterwork anyway. So why not consider to do a research for an organization?

**A Science Shop is Science Communication**

This was an important argument as it linked Science Shops to an essential aspect of the science policy of the government.

The policy plan includes among others an action plan “Science Information and Innovation”. Within the policy of the Ministry much attention is given to the popularization of Science and Technology. For the implementation of this action plan the government has input from and collaboration with different partners. It is within that action plan that the Belgian Science Shops fit in and in the concept of science communication. But what does “science communication” comprehends?

The definition handled by the government is “Science Communication = sharing information/constructing a dialogue about science in an (inter)active way through different strategies adapted to specific target groups in order to produce the following responses: awareness, increasing knowledge, opinion-forming, attitude-change and behaviour-change”

How do science shops fit into this definition of science communication?
A science shop is a service to connect knowledge (=research at a research institution) with society (=civil society organizations). Non-profit organizations (as a specific target group) get introduced and even involved in the process of research. It is an interactive process in which the organizations brings in their expertise of their work field within plain society, and the researchers, on their turn, initiate organizations into elements of research.

The ultimate goal of such a process is not only to help out the organizations in giving them a(n) (partial) answer to their question, but also to show a glimpse of what research actually is.

With the research results, the organizations gain a lot and so does the research institution. Not seldom are research questions, coming directly from society, totally new and explorative.

**Strengthen your Case through a Network Position**

*International position:* Thanks to the LK-network Belgium is put on the map as one national contact point.

*Regional position:* In Flanders ‘Science Shop’ was the first project in science communication where universities work together as a team. Next to the network of universities there is also a strong network with the community.

**The Decision**

After consideration of the arguments (and some lobbying from our part) the Ministry of Science Policy decided to implement the Science Shops into a bigger contract with the Flemish universities on Science Communication.

Since the 1st of January 2006 the network has expanded. Each university in Flanders has now its own regional science shop.

The Flemish government coupled the funding of the network of Science Shops to the realization of various other objectives related to ‘science in society actions’ and to science communication. These other objectives include contributions to the realization of the Lisbon objectives and enhanced science communication.

**The Contract**

The most important case to fight for is a structural finance plan so service towards society is assured and time to roll out the whole central-regional model is granted. For the government, on their hand, it was important that Science Shops are embedded in the governmental science communication policy.

This led to one contract between the Flemish government and higher education concerning the realization of a pole of expertise for the popularization of science, technique and technological innovation. It demanded that universities engages themselves in improving communication of science with society.

This contract contains some requirements:

- every university and schools of higher education had to sign the contract (all-or-nothing approach),
- there had to be a uniform understanding about science information and science communication among the universities, the associated institutions and the government,
- there should be a uniform agreement about the main assignments of science communication
- every university had to create a ‘pole of expertise’

This should result in:

- a general mission statement on science communication
- a general ‘work plan’ (with a number of core tasks)
- a general funding scheme
- a general evaluation matrix with output-indicators

**Why Ask for Financial Support to the Government?**

.. and why wouldn’t universities invest in Science Shops themselves?

- universities primarily invest in research and education
- government has a responsibility to support the 3rd mission of the university (societal service)

**Advantage.** The financial support guarantees the continuity of the service to the community, specifically as science communication and science shop activities are not-for-profit activities!
Disadvantage. A big administrative workload: writing budget proposals, making reports, etc. Keeping your financer satisfied: pressure on diversification for science shop activities from the human sciences towards more applied sciences. Pressure on the amount of science shop reports to ngo’s.

Warning. The focus of your service determines the choice of your stakeholder. But this goes in two directions! The choice of your stakeholder also reflects upon the focus of your service. So be aware!
Earth Science for Society – Partnering with Educators to Build a Scientifically Literate Society, from the Children up

Eileen Van der Flier-Keller
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To heighten awareness and engagement in Earth science topics, such as water, natural hazards, resources, environment and energy, in the K-12 education system, Earth scientists and educators are partnering to research constructivist, hands-on and field based learning in Earth science.

The Role of Earth Science in Society
Earth science is the study of the Earth and the interactions and connections between the land, water, air and life that make up the Earth’s system. Earth scientists are the primary resource for what we know about the Earth’s past, critical in our search for understanding about the planet’s future. We humans live on planet Earth and depend on it completely for all of our raw materials, water and energy, and it is Earth scientists who find these resources. Earth scientists are also committed to research on natural hazards, finding ways to understand processes and potential responses to natural geological phenomena such as earthquakes, volcanoes, floods, landslides, tsunamis and sea level changes. Earth scientists contribute to the wellbeing of society in many diverse ways and are “the largest living database of information about the past and present of planet Earth that has ever existed” (ESSF 2003). To communicate what we are finding out about the Earth and to see this knowledge used to make the Earth a safer, healthier and wealthier place for our children and grandchildren, the United Nations have declared 2007-2009 the International Year of Planet Earth, subtitled Earth Sciences for Society (www.esfs.org).

Meeting a Need - Development of the Partnerships and the Research Question
A study by the International Geoscience Education Organisation (www.geoscied.org) showed that Earth science is represented at a variety of levels in the school curricula of many nations. In Canada, Earth science is part of the K-2 science curriculum, and is also taught through Geography and Social Studies. In some provinces there are stand alone Geology or Earth science courses in the upper grades, however they tend to be offered in only a small proportion of schools.

My interactions with teachers and Earth science initially came about through my two children. Many times, the initial parent teacher meetings of the year yielded requests to come and do a presentation on Earth science in the classroom. I was happy to oblige, and further discussions often resulted in pleas for Earth science teaching resources, help with organizing existing school resources, admissions about the teachers own lack of Earth science or science background, and often accompanying this their lack of confidence in teaching their students the Earth science that was designated in the curriculum. Many teachers expressed that they had been overwhelmed in the past when they had mentioned to the class that they would be doing Earth science and the whole class would bring in rocks for them to identify. Perceived negative experiences such as this coupled with lack of background, have often led to teachers not teaching Earth science to their students, and not covering the Earth science content in the curriculum.

In response to the needs identified by teachers, and requests from school boards and the BC Science Teachers Association to begin to fill the gap in professional development opportunities in Earth Science, geoscientists from university, government (federal and provincial) and the private sector, have been working together with educators in both the school system and universities to develop research solutions.
The Research Mandate

To bring geoscientists and educators together to develop Earth science experiences for teachers and their students, which will

- Provide classroom teaching resources such as rock samples, field guides, posters and other materials for pre and in-service teachers
- Develop hands-on activity ideas for teaching Earth science
- Base these activities on constructivist teaching pedagogy (Gabler and Schroeder 2003)
- Develop ideas and activities for outdoor and field based Earth science learning
- Build teacher confidence with Earth science topics
- Encourage teachers and build their enthusiasm for Earth science topics in the curriculum
- Demonstrate the possibilities to integrate Earth science topics into other areas of the curriculum such as language arts, math and the other sciences.
- And to research the effectiveness of these experiences in changing teachers attitudes to Earth science and bringing about long term change in their teaching practices with respect to Earth science.

While the original mandate was to work with in-service teachers through EdGEO workshops, it quickly became evident that pre-service teachers were also interested in these opportunities. “Let’s make good teachers now as opposed to fixing them later” EOS 120 Education Lab student 2005. In 2005, a research partnership between the Faculties of Science and Education at the University of Victoria was developed through Pacific CRYSTAL to establish an ‘Education Lab’ in a first year Earth science course. Earth science workshops were also offered through the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Understanding Science (CETUS) for Education students in the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria.

EdGEO Teacher Workshops

EdGEO was established in the 1970’s to support Earth science educational opportunities for today’s teachers and through them their students, to cultivate a heightened awareness and appreciation of our planet. EdGEO (www.edgeo.org) is a Canada wide program operated through the Canadian Federation of Earth Sciences (CFES) and the Canadian Geoscience Education Network (CGEN). In 2007, for example 287 teachers (including 108 pre-service or student teachers) attended twelve locally developed workshops across Canada supported by EdGEO funding of $13,982.

The first EdGEO workshops in Victoria were held in 1998 and focused on the Grade 2/3 (rocks and minerals) and Grade 7 (plate tectonics, earthquakes and volcanoes) Earth science topics. These grade levels were chosen in consultation with teachers and also the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria based on their experience with student teacher practica, where supervising teachers frequently asked their pre-service students to teach the Earth science topics at these grade levels. Subsequently, when Grade 10 Science became a provincially examinable subject, workshops for Grade 10 Earth science (plate tectonics and effects on continents and oceans, Earth history, fossils, rocks, stratigraphic principles) were added. Teachers and school boards asked for assistance with teaching this component since many teachers were teaching it for the first time and others who had been reluctant to in the past, now were obliged to teach it. Other EdGEOs developed include field based workshops to demonstrate and practise how field activities could be incorporated into Earth science teaching. Field sites focused around building stones, deciphering Earth history (e.g. igneous events, evidence of plate collisions, evolution of life through fossils, ocean floor events and rock types and glacial history), and weathering (from gravestone observations and analysis). The activities are based on the EDU model (Blades 2006). The workshops are typically developed and delivered by a combination of geoscientists and teachers to ensure that the activities can be effectively used in the classroom. Workshops are one day or two hour sessions, generally accommodate up to 25 teachers, and have been presented at School District conferences, Catalyst (BC Science Teachers’ Association) conferences, and on province wide professional development days with the assistance of the professional development organizers for the School Districts.

Evaluation of the success of the EdGEO workshops has so far consisted of all attending teachers filling out an evaluation form at the end of the workshop to answer the following questions; What was right about this workshop? What was wrong about this workshop? Overall rating of the workshop (Outstanding, Excellent, Very Good, Good, Moderately Good, Fair, Poor), and General Comments. Presenter observations and anecdotal comments are also recorded. Overall teacher response ratings are consistently in the excellent to outstanding category. Responses on the evaluation forms suggest that teachers value the hands-on aspect of the workshops, the teaching resources they are given (first to work with in the workshop and then to take home to their classrooms), the constructivist activity ideas and lesson plans, the links with the curriculum, the field components, the knowledge they gain, the contagious enthusiasm of the presenters and the teacher insights into use of the activities in the classroom. Other aspects that are perceived as
beneficial are the collaborations between teachers and the brainstorming and sharing about additional ways to use the activities or extensions to activities. Teacher comments show that teachers now look forward to teaching the topics to their students and are enthusiastic and engaged by the workshops (Van der Flier-Keller and Haidl, 2000).

“I feel empowered to lead my 10’s through the maze of PLO’s directing Earth Science. Bring it on!”

“Lots of great hands-on activities that can be applied to many different grades, and lots of AMAZ-ING materials! I’m excited!”

“This workshop brought together just the right mix of experts in the field, resources that we can use in the classroom and guidance from another teacher who knows what is currently going on with the Grade 10 curriculum. It is a very rare thing indeed to find this balance in a professional development workshop – I was very pleased. The modest prices also helped, especially given today’s budget for education”

“Thank you so much for the resources and the inspiration to teach geology”

“Useable destinations that I can take the kids on”

“I’m preparing to teach Earth science for the first time and am thrilled with some of the activities and ideas that you’ve provided me with”

“It was great to get out and see the ‘real thing’ in our local setting. Great value, and so good to get excited about our own surroundings” (Example Teacher Comments)

Pacific CRYSTAL and Earth science opportunities for pre-service teachers – the ‘Education Lab’ and CETUS workshops

‘Education Lab’ in EOS 120 Introduction to the Earth System II Pacific CRYSTAL (Centres for Research in Youth Science Teaching And Learning) http://www.educ.uvic.ca/pacificcrystal/, is one of five centres funded by NSERC (Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada) as part of a pilot five year research initiative to examine potential approaches to improving the teaching and learning of science in K-12 for Canada’s young people. As part of this initiative, an ‘Education Lab’ for students intending to become teachers was developed and has been run as a pilot for three years (2005 to 2007) in a first year course offered by the School of Earth and Ocean Sciences - EOS 120 Introduction to the Earth System II. The goal of the ‘Education Lab’ was to cover the same science content as the regular lab sections, but in a way that would facilitate learning of earth science using a variety of teaching techniques and hands-on interactive activities transferable to the K-12 teaching environment. During the ten weeks of labs, student teachers worked with teaching resources such as rock, mineral and fossil kits, books and posters, which they will be able to bring with them into their future classrooms. Value of each resource package given to these future teachers was approximately $180. Funding for the resources was provided in part by EdGEO, as well as in-kind donations of maps and posters from the Geological Survey of Canada. Twenty students are enrolled each year. This lab represents a collaborative effort between the Faculties of Science and Education to encourage student teachers to teach earth science using a hands-on, field based, constructivist approach. Many of the activities and demonstrations used in this lab section were developed by teachers and scientists working together in prior EdGEO workshops.

The impact of this new approach was measured using pre and post course surveys of the entire class, student group interviews (‘Education Lab’ and a regular lab), student reflections, researcher observations as well as course grades. Preliminary results show that students in the ‘Education Lab’ had greater significant gains in knowledge and elimination of misconceptions, as well as a significant positive change in attitude to earth science compared with the rest of the EOS 120 class. The Education lab was a highly energetic, interactive learning environment. In spite of a concern among some of the Education students that they were having too much fun to be learning science, final course results in 2005 showed that the ‘Education Lab’ students averaged final marks over 5% higher than the course average. Although the 2005 Education lab students came into the course with generally less interest in earth science, over 50% said the their interest had increased greatly. These students also registered a marked increase in how relevant to society they felt earth science to be (e.g. Van der Flier-Keller, Blades and Demchuk, 2006). As part of this research project, we are carrying out a longitudinal survey of participating students to evaluate the long term impact of the ‘Education Lab’ experience on their teaching of Earth science in the classroom.

“The amount of material we received was priceless. So many useful tools to study and use with our potential students down the road. I really enjoyed the way we learned, I especially liked the EDU models. I would definitely recommend this lab to anyone going into education, it makes the information SO much more relevant to what we are studying. I personally think it would be a huge benefit if most pre-requisite classes for the education program have this option. I know the
other classes that didn’t, I did not enjoy as much as I did this one”

“I enjoyed the emphasis on group work, and the way things were related to teaching was excellently done”

“I think this workshop was great! I loved doing all of the hands-on work; it made everything a lot more interesting and fun to learn. I also believe that the lab helped me a LOT in regards to the final exam, and I believe that this was because of the hands-on learning that we did”

(Example Student Comments 2005 to 2007)

CETUS Earth Science Workshops

In partnership with CETUS at the University of Victoria, and in response to requests from pre-service teachers in the Faculty of Education, Earth science workshops have been offered annually since 2005. Hands-on activities and interactive learning of two Grade 7 curriculum topics; “Rocks, fossils and earth history” and “Plate tectonics, earthquakes and volcanoes” are presented in two hour workshops. Classroom teaching resources to a value of $95 were provided to each participant. Pre-service teachers evaluate the workshops with a short questionnaire and several are also part of the longitudinal study being carried out as part of the Pacific CRYSTAL research program.

“Awesome job! Way better (by far) than any of my classes!!

“Fantastic presentation and learning both of material and how to teach it”

“It was a great intro full of lots of ideas. It made me excited and more confident about teaching rocks and fossils. Resources are amazing!

“Great activities, very interactive, visual. Made it easy to understand difficult concepts”

“Practical demonstrations were fun. Good way to teach our students”

“Thank you so much for the resources! And for the inspiration to teach geology!”

“We followed the EDU model. We are learners too! It makes sense that we do hands-on activities to learn”

“Very practical resources and ideas, I can’t wait to try in a classroom” (Example Student Comments 2005 to 2007)

Other Partnerships and Development of Earth Science Literacy Resources for Teachers

Other partnerships are being established to promote an interdisciplinary approach to teaching science, for example with Seaquaria, a community partner with the Pacific CRYSTAL. Seaquaria uses salt water aquaria in schools and field based teaching, to facilitate learning of marine ecology and biology. We are initiating a Pacific CRYSTAL study of ways to integrate biological and Earth science in K-12 teaching and learning environments to promote science understanding, interest and literacy. Teaching resources (e.g. Young 2004, Van der Flier-Keller 2005) developed by members of the CRYSTAL Pacific team will be used in this project. Another collaboration, with CBC Learning, resulted in co-authorship of a teacher resource guide to accompany the CBC series Geologic Journey http://www.cbc.ca/geologic/teacher.html.

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Achieving Equity in Community-University Research Partnerships

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Findings from a multi-project collaborative research initiative on early childhood share mid-point lessons on the influences of the policy context, the ambiguous role of “community”, and the importance of understanding the phasing of research on partner roles and perceptions. This project is like a Rubric’s Cube; you change one little square and the whole thing changes. We have to keep that in mind when we think about how the projects fit together.

At the mid-point of the five year longitudinal project, 19 academic-based researchers, including research assistants (RAs) and community partners, including staff and executive directors were interviewed on two topics on collaboration:

a) What can you contribute to the other projects in terms of your own project’s findings and work?

b) What can you learn from other projects?

These projects were part of a total of ten projects in the CHILD (Consortium for Health, Intervention, Learning and Development). CHILD is a community-university research project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). The reflections in this paper are not only about single-project collaborations, but about multiple community and university member partners sharing across several projects.

The three projects, Parent Counselling, Income Assistance, and Child Care Policy, whose members contributed to this paper, share a common interest in the ways families receive and are supported through government programs and policies. As one person said, “The focus is on how participants see their own lives, on the different stories, so it’s helping us to understand the journey from their perspectives.” In all three of these cases, the changing policy context profoundly altered the ability of the research projects to accomplish their stated research objectives. Each project also highlights the diverse nature of community partners, the skills of university researchers in working in and with community at both the agency level and the client level, and the resilience of community partners who were under extreme stress. It was a unique learning opportunity!

From their generous reflections on what worked and what did not, four themes emerged:

1. Different roles, responsibilities and perspectives of the community and university partners.
2. Administrative and other barriers to collaboration between and within studies.
3. Shifting collaborations across different phases of the research process.
4. Potential collaboration and learning in sharing findings, concepts, literatures and methods.

Community and University Roles and Responsibilities

The discussion of what can be shared raises questions about who has what to share and what different parties are interested in. Are we talking about agency-to-agency collaboration between community partners? Or university-to-university partner sharing? Or project to project? Given the different interests of community and university partners and their respective relationships to communities, this is a question about who is looking for what outcome in terms of between-project collaboration.

From the community side, there was limited interest in collaborating with other projects. The reasons arose out of the structure and mandates of community partners. Community partners, especially publicly-funded agencies, must rationalize their engagement in projects by its relevance to their mandate. Community representatives explained that they could not justify the time needed to attend full day seminars or explore the potential relevance of other projects.
Projects which focused on clinical issues were too far from these partners’ policy and planning mandates to justify staff involvement. This provides an interesting challenge to building collaborative policy-clinical knowledge around early childhood, and suggests a needed translation role for the university partners.

Many of the community partners explained that they were interested in digestible pieces of information, such as short reports on research issues, the “CHILD Talk” papers which summarized the progress of other projects at our quarterly meetings. One participant also noted that she could share short items with other staff in her department. In this way the whole agency could be involved, including superiors who were responsible for project involvement. Most of the community partners looked forward to the day that results would be forthcoming from their projects; the process was a means of getting there. These community partners affirmed that the overall exploration of collaboration was valuable, but saw it as the responsibility and capacity of the university partners to develop the overall collaborative vision.

From the university side, interest was expressed in sharing both the process of the research as well as data or findings. These interests in sharing the tasks of research with colleagues were topics that were not mentioned by community partners. Since research can be a lonely endeavour, this raises the potential for large multi-project endeavours to serve as professional development for university-based personnel. Students in particular found learning about doing community-based research rich. It is not surprising that community and academic objectives might be different, but attending to this difference may help articulate the different needs of the partners.

Troubling the Notion of Community.

In addition to talking about “what” could be shared, many interviewees also reflected on how they could share with each other, including how community was represented within the studies. One of the intentions of a community/university partnership is to work more closely with community, but each of the community partners here represents a very different aspect of “the community.” Some partnering agencies were community-based policy and advocacy agencies, while others had official duties of representation. Although individual community staff brought particular in-depth knowledge from experience, they were also themselves translating community interests. This raises questions about how university partners understand and negotiate the representativeness of their community partners. While respecting the years of experience that community partners bring, university partners rightfully must ask questions about what else there is to know about “the community”, independent of community partners’ expertise. In one study the university partners clarified that although they have a community partner that provides services to clients, they see the study participants as “the community” and the agency as similarly sharing an interest in “the community” of clients. This characterization implies that both university and community are partners in the sense that they share an interest in similar communities from different perspectives, rather than that one partner “represents” the community and the other does not.

Students had a unique position within both community partners and universities. At least one student had worked in a community agency, where she got to know the lead investigator, and then moved into graduate school. Two graduate students, one who had worked with a partnering community agency, graduated and became faculty members, continuing their work from the academic side. One student who started on the academic side graduated and was hired by one of the community partner agencies, and became the partner representative on the same project she had worked on as a student. These cross-over roles, and in addition, the cross-over roles that occurred when students worked on more than one project, were very important to not only educating students, but also for communicating between partners. The students’ work tended to take them into the community where they did interviews, recruited study participants and so on, so they became invaluable members for translating the nature of the work context. Students seemed to be key players in aiding and benefiting from productive collaboration.

Overall, roles of agencies, universities and individuals were complex and multiple. Stereotypes about the “ivory tower” did not seem to always hold true, but the following section on administrative barriers highlights the very real impediments to productive collaboration.

Administrative and other Barriers

Both community and university partners reflected on institutional barriers to participation such as financial structures, mandates and accountability mechanisms. This was exemplified by the attempt to equilaterally share “time release.” In the academic setting, release stipends are used to free up a portion of a person’s time by providing for a “substitute” person to cover other duties. Community partners pointed out, however, that as research tended not to be the core job duty of any (but one) of the staff members, and only two agency partners had research capabilities, providing a release stipend did not (a) either adequately reimburse the agency for their expertise, and (b) could not, under the circumstances, temporarily replace an essential staff person. One agency pointed out that at their usual per diem rate, the entire stipend would have been used in one month. As a result, the staff added tasks like engaging in correspondence, attending meetings, assisting research assistants and so on to their regular job duties. Dedicated
Phases of the Research

A key finding of this investigation was that community and university roles changed dramatically through different phases of the research, with implications for understanding both productive tensions and feelings about collaboration. (For a complete diagram, see the conference hand out.) Three phases of research were identified, plus a pre-research application phase. In this pre-research phase, key community partners were involved in identifying the problem and drafting the original application. This was an exciting phase, and most of these key community partners carried on in the Executive advisory body of the collaborative “CHILD Central”.

**Phase 1: Negotiating Community Partners and Beginning Data Collection**

The initial phase of partnership within projects involved setting goals and beginning participant recruitment and data gathering. At this point there was close involvement between university and community partners. Community partners facilitated access to data, participants, or community sources of information. Meetings were frequent. Individual roles within projects developed but also changed during this phase. Initially, senior academic and community partners established the focus and parameters, but once data-gathering began, responsibility often shifted to research assistants and less senior agency staff. As roles shifted, it was important for members to communicate clearly within their own entity (agency or university setting) as well as across partnerships within the project. Communication gaps were sometimes evident where, particularly for community partners, an Executive or council or Board approved involvement in a project, but the daily responsibilities were assigned to a staff person.

**Phase 2: Analyzing Data and Developing Findings**

After the intense partner involvement in data acquisition during Phase 1, the university team members “went away” with the data to process it. In these three projects, this was partly the result of the extremely stressful policy context the community partner agencies were facing (one agency closed). Although originally in these teams it seemed that the whole team would share fully in the analytical work, the ability of community partners to do this varied with the time and expertise they had. As a result, university-based personnel generally did the preliminary analysis, and then took the findings to the community partners for assistance with interpretation. The validation of preliminary findings by participants or key informants is an important aspect of doing community-based research, but the team roles were changed in this process so that community partners became “consultants.” Also, the community partners experienced long lags with an absence of activity. This was a relief, but at the same time, the pressure to “share” with both other projects within the multi-project collaboration and with community agencies, grew.

The Child Care Policy project team members were able to resolve some of this tension with novel “Dinner-Data” meetings. In these meetings, the academic team presented preliminary findings, while their community partner helped bring together other community representatives to provide feedback. This helped fulfill some of the community partner’s needs for information and involvement. However, given that academic output is the key job focus of the academic partners, presenting incomplete work was stressful. It also entailed an extra stage of work and raised questions about the sheer volume of work for the university members.

**Phase 3: Producing Reports and Disseminating Outcomes**

At the time of these interviews, mid-point in the project, this phase was yet to come. However, input suggested that articulating community and university interests and objectives so that it was clear what would satisfy each partner was critical. This was partly as a result of institutional constraints. As one university partner who had been on the community side said; “It’s significantly different now that I’m in a tenure track position; I need to produce (publish).” In
other words, the kind of output the projects were going to generate was dictated to some extent by the expectations of the institutional environment. This probably drives the continuous involvement of individual university-based personnel throughout all phases of the projects, compared to the discontinuous involvement of community personnel.

In addition, though, this phase suggests potential for renewed within-project collaboration, as the products and the community partner interests in information begin to merge again. There is opportunity for community partners to produce unique products, and to shape the involvement strongly. However, there is also the possibility that after the phase of analysis, where the partners worked more separately, that the roles will not re-organize. That seemed especially possible in these cases where there had been so much organizational stress.

Conclusions: Opportunities for Collaboration

In order to move forward on collaboration, it appears that the concrete issues of time and money, and the difference between the mandates of community and university institutions needs to be understood and supported. Community partners cannot participate beyond what is financially supported and within the mandates of their organizations; it is important to heed the request for relevant meetings that fit within working times in order to encourage productive participation. Although the goal of the CHILD project has been to involve all parties equally, their unequal ability to be involved highlights the need to move to an “equitable” platform for participation, one in which each is supported in a way that suits its restrictions and capabilities.

Researchers’ interests in sharing the process of research highlights the way collaborations are an opportunity for professional development for students and faculty researchers. These conversations may not interest community partners, as they particularly pertain to the details of research as work. The interest in the challenges of collaboration suggests that an important by-product may be learning about the process of collaboration and the challenges of community research, especially in politicized contexts like these projects experienced.

A number of participants emphasized the importance of the potential role that “CHILD Central” could and should play in facilitating collaboration within and across studies. As one person said, in her experience of doing research at a distance, you need one person to develop relationships, one to hold hands, one to make friends in the community, and one to do research. The funder, SSHRC, may need to consider the model of the MCRI model in more detail so as to better support the overall aims.

Returning to the list of “what” could be shared, and considering partner differences and timelines, several points are important to remember. The first is that community and university partners are not as explicit with each other as they could be. There is a tension in trying to be explicit without being dogmatic, as the nature of research is meant to produce an outcome that cannot be exactly predicted. Also, the community contexts can change drastically in the course of longitudinal research. However, this also provides an opportunity for learning between projects by sharing challenges, discussing complexities, and perhaps, when needed, providing for unpredicted needs. The challenges can contribute to a richer understanding of the subject matter, which may ultimately be one way to incorporate the “many voices” that a collaborative project has to offer.

For more information on CHILD, see [http://www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/CHILD/](http://www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/CHILD/)
Exploring Ethical Dilemmas in a Community-based Participatory Research Project with Youth

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The following provides a case example of ethical dilemmas that developed during a community-based participatory action research project with youth. These ethical dilemmas and potential solutions are discussed in relation to social work research and practice, and the role of “community” in identifying research ethics.

Introduction

The ethical issues in community-based participatory research have not been explored or reported substantially within social work literature. Many social science books throughout the last three decades focus on the basic ethical questions of confidentiality and anonymity, and respecting and protecting the interests of those participating in the research (Bower & de Gasparis, 1978; Israel & Hay, 2006).

Some research has explored the importance of considering the impact of research on specific communities and the subsequent ethical questions that arise as a result. Weijer, Goldsand, and Emanuel (1999), for example, describe ethical considerations specific to Aboriginal communities. Further examples demonstrate that specific population groups require different ethical considerations when conducting research. For example Martin and Meezan (2000) identify the need to take further exploratory measures to protect participants from harm and to ensure findings are relevant to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and/or transgendered population groups. Similarly, Williams (2005) has articulated the significance of incorporating the historical and present processes generating negative outcomes for racial and ethnic minority research participants in the ethical framework of a research project, and Walsh and MacMillan (2006) developed recommendations for ethical research practices with maltreated youth. Furthermore, conducting research alongside students has resulted in further considerations for ethical review boards. In particular, some literature discusses the implications of power and knowledge in such collaborative projects (Olitsky & Weathers, 2005).

These concerns are significant and inform work with target groups, but do not address the implications on community, when community is addressed in geographical terms. The discussion intends to provide an overview of ethical issues that developed throughout a community engagement project with youth selected to participate based on their community of residence in Calgary, Alberta.

Methods

Research methodologies consisted of traditional social science methodologies of quantitative and qualitative data collection combined with a participatory action research component. A total of 11 youth, ranging in age from 13 to 17 years, participated in the project. Two of the participants were female; six of the participants lived within the community targeted for this research and the remainder lived in adjacent communities that were part of the catchment area for the social service organization partnered with to conduct the research.

The action component of the project consisted of two primary activities. First, the youth worked as a group to identify a community development project that would address concerns they had about their social-spatial environment. The youth collectively identified graffiti and littering as the primary issues and suggested painting garbage cans with graffiti art to promote awareness about littering in their community. Six out of the 11 youth attended this event and each of them decorated a garbage can with assistance from a community development artist and art students at the University of Calgary. The second action activity facilitated the presentation of their artwork, photographs and reflections, and
engagement process at an images exhibit in the community. For this final stage of the research design the ethical considerations consisted of informed consent (as with other stages of data collection identified above) and, in particular, informing participants that their participation would be considered public, as confidentiality and anonymity could not be provided given the nature of the task of presenting and the level of community involvement.

Researchers were interested in determining the nature of change experienced by youth involved in the community development project. Data collection included pre and post test instruments, comprised of demographic questions and questionnaires assessing participants’ sense of community, Sense of Community Index (SCI) (Chavis, Hogge, McMillian, & Wandersman, 1986, as cited in Chipeur & Pretty, 1999) and neighbourhood disadvantage, Neighborhood Environment Scale (Elliott, Huizinga, & Menard, 1989 as cited in Crum, Lillie-Blanton, & Anthony, 1996).

Finally, the use of reflective journaling by youth was encouraged throughout the project and qualitative interviews were conducted upon completion of the participatory research project. The field guide sought to capture the nature of the experience for the youth. Questions included, “How do you think being involved with the project has affected you?, How did being involved in the project make you feel about your community?, and “Do you think this project has had an effect on your community?”

Ideally ethical issues unique to participatory action methodologies must be anticipated, identified and solutions developed prior to engaging in research in the community. This however, is not always the case. The following section describes some of the ethical dilemmas that emerged during the data collection and action stages of the research program related to the community, participant selection, and the research process.

Discussion
Throughout the process of data collection several ethical issues developed. Initially concern was raised related to the selection of community. For instance, the community targeted to carry out this project was selected for several reasons, all primarily based on a subjective understanding of the community by the funder, a provincial real estate foundation. It may be that participating in this project has done little to address the negative perceptions of this particular community. The ethical consideration then becomes whether the research team has increased the level of stigmatization attached to this particular community by targeting the community for the research project, or if the risk of identifying this community as ‘in need’ was outweighed by the possible positive outcomes experienced by the participants and the wider community. One of the youth participants questioned the intention of conducting this research in their community by drawing attention to the fact that violence and crime (two of the considerations for selecting this community, among other social indicators) are present in all communities to varying degrees.

The initial focus of the research project was also a source of ethical consideration as the program of research was unfolding. The intention at the beginning of the project was to focus primarily on a problem or area for change in the youth’s community and facilitate a youth engagement project that addressed this concern. When this idea was presented to the youth, one of the youth questioned the agenda of his neighbourhood needing to be fixed and identified that while commonly held perceptions of the community were negative, other communities had similar problems and their community shouldn’t be singled out. The youth expressed the importance of showing both areas for change and strengths of the community to counter the stereotype. This concern about further stigmatization shifted the focus of the project resulting in the youth taking pictures of what they considered to be the positive and negative aspects of their neighbourhood and reflecting on both dimensions. This particular lesson learned by conducting this research demonstrates the significant implications for the community when perceptions of stigmatization are a leading construct determining the focus of the research program. Also, providing greater importance to understanding the ethical implications of conducting community-based research driven by funder expectations rather than guided by the expressed needs and consent of the community.

Related to this idea of facilitating a continued process of stigmatization and community consent is that this particular research project received a substantial amount of media attention. The youth were interviewed by a local television station, a radio station, two major local newspapers, and were featured on a morning television news program. These experiences, as reported by the youth participants, allowed their voices to be heard and also made them feel valued for the work they had completed. This activity was viewed by many of the research participants as a positive component of the activities that they were engaged in throughout the research program. Beyond these positive implications, though, the attention given by the media was spun in a manner that described ‘at-risk’ youth from an ‘impoverished’ community participating in something positive, essentially further stigmatizing, or utilizing community stereotypes to sell papers or get ratings.

Beyond the ethical dilemmas that emerged at the community level several ethical considerations arose with the participant group. For instance, the initial intention of the research program was to engage and involve youth that could be considered to be at risk. The use of the term ‘at risk’ has three primary ethical dilemmas. The first is consideration of the extent of the negative implications of labeling these participants as at-risk. The second relates to the problem with
identifying specific populations of at-risk youth in general. Increasingly youth are engaged in high-risk behaviours during adolescence, which means that in some ways, essentially, everyone in their adolescent years can be considered to be at risk (Gross & Capuzzi, 2006). The second consideration is the extent to which the participants were actually at-risk. There were no measures to identify whether a participant could be considered to be at-risk (whether this is based on socio-economic status or other variables that may impede the development of opportunities for youth). For example, if youth from economically disadvantaged families had employment obligations after school or had to take care of younger siblings because families could not afford childcare, they would have been excluded from participating in this research since it was offered in the evenings. This suggested overall, that the research may not have targeted youth who may have benefited the most from participating. It may also be that youth participants were defined as at risk because of the social-economic disadvantage of their community, while they themselves may not have been.

Related to this notion of at-risk youth, the issue of diversity created ethical considerations. While youth in this community are very ethnically diverse and we had hoped to work with youth from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, participants who were recruited were not representative of this ethnic diversity. We made an effort to engage as many ethnically diverse participants from local schools and broader sections of the community but those efforts were largely unsuccessful. In particular, we had no way to identify if we were reaching those who do not typically attend these programs and no way of knowing the reasons for the failure to recruit youth from diverse backgrounds.

A further challenge we faced was trying to avoid running a program that utilized youth participants most likely to take a leadership role in such a project. This was sometimes difficult to avoid since often the same youth volunteered repeatedly to carry out tasks on the project. It became an ethical dilemma during the media related activities in two respects. The first is that some participants were uncomfortable speaking to the media, so their voices were essentially not given equal opportunity. For the collaborative purposes of the research it would have been useful to hold meetings amongst the group to create a collectively determined message that would be passed on to the media, rather than a presentation to the wider community that consisted primarily of the insight of two participants. The second was the constraints to the ‘voice’ of one participant who was allowed to participate in all aspects of the project but was not allowed to be photographed or engage with the media for fear that he would be stigmatized.

A final ethical consideration relating to the participant group is addressing the expectations of research participants in relation to their perceived outcome measures. This ethical question emerged and became apparent at the end of the project during the culminating event when one participant became overwhelmed with the overflow of garbage from his designed can. This youth remarked that even though they had put in so much effort, the larger community did not seem to care about the issue of littering. At that point it became important for the research team to point out that community change can be a long process but that all efforts can act as incremental steps towards change in the long term.

Amidst these community level and individual level ethical considerations several dilemmas arose relating to the overall process of the research program and the intended and actual outcomes. For example, it is recognized that “[y]oung people’s participation in addressing community problems is not only possible and useful, but fruitful” (Pittman, Irby, Tolman, Yohalem, & Ferber, 2005, p. 7) since “every young person, like every adult, has unique abilities and experience that can expand the capacities and outcomes of [community change] efforts” (Mohamed & Wheeler, 2001, p. 11). After analyzing the post-test scores, though, it was found that three respondents (of four correctly completed post-tests) had a higher perceived level of neighbourhood disadvantage than they had at pre-test. This raises the question of whether this research made the participants more aware of disadvantages or problems in their community. If this was the case, did the project provide enough of an ‘action’ component to counter the awareness of negative issues within the community? If the research provided a heightened sense of neighbourhood disadvantage then it likely resulted in more risk to the individual by undertaking this process than that which was originally apparent prior to commencing the project.

The social action related events were primarily organized by the coordinators of the research (e.g., the university team and the social service organization partner). This point and the fact that involvement in this project resulted in an increased awareness of the negative factors that have been associated with the participants’ neighbourhood requires a deeper reflection on the role of the researcher in facilitating the social action process and the level of involvement that should be given to those members of the community. We are essentially asking the question of possible harm after the research has reached the point in which the researcher is no longer involved. This is a difficult ethical question to answer because while researchers can move on to work on other projects, participants are left to face the same issues.

Two final ethical considerations require identification. The first is the use of disposable cameras for youth to document positive and negative images they find in their community surroundings. Giving disposable cameras suggests a short-lived impact, and essentially demonstrates that they are not being provided with real tools or opportunities to achieve long term, sustainable goals by participating in this project. This then leads into problematic discussions of what the participants are to do after the research program ends, the researchers leave, and they do not have the equipment to further develop the skills that they had been acquiring over the prior three months. This point, though, is related to the final ethical dilemma.
The original budget to conduct this research included money to provide honorariums for research participants. This, of course, was related to the fact that the targeted youth were those who could be considered of a lower socio-economic status. The social service organization collaborating with the university research team requested that honorariums not be offered throughout the project as it sends a message that individuals should be paid to participate in other capacity building activities and the organization could not sustain this once the project was completed. It also creates a dilemma for university researchers who believe that youth participants as with other members in the research endeavor should be compensated in tangible ways. Further, even providing ‘real’ cameras could be considered an incentive to participate beyond the intended personal development impacts on participants. This also results in a dilemma for researchers who advance that the skills, knowledge and expertise of youth or other members of the community should be recognized in meaningful ways.

**Conclusion**

The discussion of this community-based participatory research project has demonstrated how several additional ethical issues developed beyond those anticipated prior to the onset of the project and thus not specifically included in the protocol submitted to the University's ethics review board. This is a crucial point as it brings attention to the complexity of conducting community-based participatory research projects in ethical ways and raises awareness to those concerns that may arise. As social work practitioners working in the field of community development we are involved in programs and projects with the overall intention of generating positive outcomes for those involved. Often we work in communities that are marginalized and socially excluded and thus potential negative consequences arising from ethical dilemmas are potentially associated with even greater harm. In many instances where these projects are being conducted by community-based organizations these projects do not have that initial formal ethical review and do not require formal ethical revisions during the research process.

The discussion presented here was intended as an initial exploratory informing process. It enlightens research practice with marginalized groups or stigmatized communities and also informs community-based social work practice. It is evident that when working at the community level ethical issues develop. McAuliffe and Coleman (1999) suggest that ethical dilemmas in fieldwork develop rather quickly and require an immediate response to address or rectify a particular situation. To what extent, though, are these issues informing social work practice at the community level? Or, alternatively, are there methods of addressing these ethical issues in the community development process that can inform community-based research? From the experience of conducting this research, it would seem that the ethical lens would need to transcend beyond the relationship between the researcher and the participant and provide assessments of community level risks and greater clarification of the intended impacts and outcome measures of community work on participants.

**Selected References**


Housing And Home:
Making The Connections For Women Who Are Homeless

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Homelessness is increasing at alarming rates. Qualitative research was completed to determine the requirements of home for homeless women. The project emerged and was facilitated through a number of partnerships including between: the university and community, disciplines conducting the research, and the researchers and participants.

Introduction
Homelessness and poverty in Canadian cities have been increasing at alarming rates (Layton, 2000). In Calgary, the 2006 homeless enumeration estimated 3436 homeless people, an increase of 32% in a two-year period (City of Calgary, 200). Although homelessness has become progressively more prevalent in Canadian cities proposed solutions are often carried out with no input from those directly affected. Further, it is apparent that homeless women have dramatically different needs than do homeless men (Novac, Brown, & Bourbonnais, 1996). One of the major solutions advanced to aid homeless individuals has been to increase the amount of available shelter space. However, long-term solutions such as permanent, stable housing with appropriate social and health supports are needed to reintegrate individuals into society (Dordick, 2002).

As the problems encountered by communities are becoming increasingly complex it is more necessary for multiple stakeholders to develop alliances. Participatory research is commonly used in the realm of public health research to develop alliances for health research (Shoutza et al., 2006). Sale (2006) advanced underlying goals of participatory research including the need for fundamental and structural change for the lives a wide range of oppressed or exploited people, and for the researchers or those outside of the situation become committed participants to the process.

In 2005, the University of Calgary Faculties of Nursing and Social Work and The Salvation Army, Centre of Hope (TSA), a large multi-service homeless shelter, developed a partnership, the Downtown Community Initiative (DCI), to advance opportunities for co-learning. Under the auspices of the DCI, in collaboration with the Faculty of Environmental Design, the Home: Perspectives of Women who are Homeless study was conducted. It explored the meaning of home among women who were homeless to understand the best ways to support women towards appropriate longer-term housing and homes. A secondary objective was to use and document community-based participatory research methods to enable and empower the participants to share their concerns and advocate for their needs. This paper will discuss how the various partnerships facilitated the inclusion and empowerment of women participants.

Methodology
We used a variety of qualitative research methods, digital storytelling, interviews, photovoice, creative writing and a design charrette, to engage, empower and generate a sense of ownership for participants. We recruited 20 participants who gave informed consent and were provided a $50 gift certificate upon completing the research. We provided childcare, food and transportation when necessary.

In teams of two researchers, we conducted nine individual, 45 minute interviews with women at mutually convenient times and locations. One researcher acted as the primary investigator and the other collected notes and made additional inquiries, when necessary. The open-ended field guide enquired about the meaning of home, the experience
of homelessness and suggestions for long-term housing. We used additional probes to encourage participants to expand upon areas of interest. Transcription took place concurrently with the interviews in order to do purposive sampling and to seek women who might have contrasting perspectives of home and homelessness.

We held a workshop in TSA with two participants. The workshop began with the facilitators reading of a poem entitled Coming Back to My Little Home, by Atef Ayadi. The participants conducted a free write, in which women wrote their feelings about the poem. We then encouraged the women to begin writing their own poems, while indicating that they would likely require more personal time to complete the task. We had a brainstorming session with the participants to discuss themes that might be important to a collective poem about home. We requested that the participants write their personal poems and return them us if they desired; one woman did.

Digital storytelling is an amalgamation of visual elements (photos, movie clips and video techniques) with text, music and first person narration to convey a story of particular personal significance (Tucker, 2006).

Facilitators from the Centre for Digital Storytelling from Berkeley, California along with faculty members from the Faculty of Social Work conducted the workshop with six women and three student participants. During the workshop, the facilitators gave computer tutorials to teach the participants how to use the necessary software to make the movies, helped the participants develop their stories, write their scripts, complete voice recordings and obtain the necessary images and videos for the movies. As many of the participants did not have photographs of their own, especially those depicting the subjects of their stories, the facilitators aided the participants by photographing images with them. The session ended with a screening of each of the digital stories.

The purpose of the design charrette was to have each participant draw and then construct (using graham crackers, icing and candy) their ideal transitional housing structure. Overall it was our hope that each participant would develop and articulate the programmatic and physical requirements of shelters. We organised the design charrette into three distinct parts. First, we gave the participants a brief introduction to plan, section, and elevation drawing types that may have been useful to them in expressing their design. We then asked them to draw their shelter designs using any of the drawing styles previously suggested. Once the participants were satisfied that their drawings contained all of the essential concepts, they began construction on a graham cracker 3-dimensional version of their design. We had not specified whether they attempt to build the entire structure, a plan version of it, or a small section of the design, but seven of the eight participants attempted to convey their structure in this way. In the final hour of the charrette we held a review of each design, during which each woman spoke about both their model and their drawings and received feedback from the other participants and student researchers in order to clarify some of the reasons behind each design decision.

The photovoice workshop had four 2.5-hour meetings and took place at Calgary Urban Project Society (CUPS), an local agency serving the population of homeless people, particularly women and children. Throughout the workshop, the student researchers co-facilitated with a woman who was a participant in a previous photovoice project on poverty.

We described the research project, established rules of the workshop and explained study forms. We provided participants with a description of what to photograph, photography directions and a consent form to gather permission to photograph other people. We distributed disposable cameras with notepads and pens to allow the participants to maintain notes and records if they wished. During the second workshop, we facilitated a discussion of the individual and group goals of the participants. As the participants returned their cameras at a staggered rate, it was difficult for participants to speak about their photos. Instead, they chose to speak about their experiences with homelessness. During the third workshop, the participants had a discussion about their lives and the meaning of their photos, if the photos were available. To ensure that texts were developed for the participants’ photos, we interviewed the participants individually and asked them to further describe their photos, thoughts and experiences. We audiotaped these sessions and made written notes. During the fourth workshop, we presented the photos and transcribed texts to each participant. The participants had opportunities to discuss their own materials and share each other’s photovoice products. We discussed the future of the project with the participants and ideas for disseminating their work.

Data Analysis/ Interviews and discussions from each method were recorded and converted to MP3 files using an RCA Digital Voice Recorder Manager and then transcribed verbatim in Microsoft Word. We used ATLASi 5.0 to complete data analysis on all of the obtained texts: digital story text, interviews, recorded discussion in photovoice, photovoice texts, creative writing discussion, creative writing texts and recorded discussion during the design charrette. Previous research suggested that using an iterative process of discussion, reflection and negotiation whilst coding the texts for codes and themes has increased the quality and accuracy of the analysis (MacQueen, McLellan, Kay, & Milstein, 1998). We adopted this process for our research purposes. We coded the texts to develop a list of potential codes. After completing the initial data analysis, we reviewed and revised the code list and developed a common coding system as has been done in previous studies (Rhodes et al., 2007). Two researchers coded each of the texts independently, compared their coding and then organised the codes into families or categories.
Results

Twenty women participated in one or more study methods. Participants ranged in age from 22 to 64 and they were either Canadian-Caucasian or Canadian-Aboriginal. The majority of the participants were homeless at the time of the study, though one was homeless prior to the study and was at the risk of becoming homeless during the study and two participants described themselves as previously homeless. Several of the participants have been homeless on more than one occasion.

The research project was designed and was dependent upon many partnerships, which affected the approach and the outcomes of the research. They included the community partnerships between the University of Calgary and TSA to maintain the DCI, the interdisciplinary aspect of the research in which students from three disciplines worked together to engage the participants and conduct the research, and the relationships that the students developed with the participants to complete the research.

Community Partnerships and their Effects on the Inclusion of the Participants

The community-university partnership provided by the DCI enabled the student researchers access to the population and a suitable on-site environment in which to engage the participants. This allowed regular access to clients of TSA, where the clients could come at will to socialize or discuss issues of importance to them. By doing this, we began to develop a rapport with the clients. As well, we held regular times when we would attempt to engage the women clients on the women’s floor. This also helped us to develop rapport with the clients and to make them aware of the research project. The DCI also allowed for increased coordination and access to resources. By being affiliated with the university we were viewed as credible in terms pursuing research and in a less threatening manner since as students we held no authority over clients of the social service agencies. However, it was at times difficult to work within the different structural systems, where bureaucracy and different approaches and paradigms made it challenging to do the necessary work.

Interdisciplinary Research. The coordination of three disciplines in working on the research project greatly enhanced the resources, knowledge and abilities to conduct the research. The social work and nursing student had a greater understanding of the contextual factors concerning homelessness and ways in which to engage members of vulnerable populations. The environmental design students had the education to facilitate the charrette to extract the physical requirements of shelters and to utilise the gathered information and transform it into language and ideas that local government and policy makers would understand. However, we completed all of the activities of the project as a team, increasing our understanding of each profession and learning how to implement our various understandings of the problem to develop a more holistic solution to the research question. This posed many challenges to the student researchers who were working in their own professional discipline and were now required to relate to the perspectives, approaches and techniques of the various disciplines. The interdisciplinary aspect of the research helped improve the inclusion of the participants because of the increased opportunities of engagement that we provided. The methods allowed the participants to communicate their ideas differently and to consider the question posed to them in different ways.

Relationships between the Researchers and the Participants. We engaged the participants with the perspective that they were ‘experts’ in experiencing homelessness and that they understood what services, supports and characteristics of shelters they required. It was important to develop a rapport with the clients to gain the trust necessary to engage the participants. However in developing rapport we were often hearing stories and exposed to situations for which we were unprepared. We used the relationship we were developing with each other and the support of our supervisors to work through these challenges.

In allowing relationships to develop between the researchers and the participants of the study, we became more involved in the research and found ourselves acting as advocates for the participants. We observed that the participants became increasingly motivated to be involved in the research and to voice their concerns and aspects of their lives. With photovoice in particular, some of the participants did experience the development of a community amongst themselves, as well as increased awareness of homelessness from other perspectives. Other participants also became more involved in community awareness activities, such as rallying to help inform people about the issues of women and homelessness.

We were careful not to take on a counselling role but to refer the clients to the appropriate services either within or outside of TSA. Engaging the participants in therapeutic conversation to incur some sense of understanding, equality, and trust was potentially coercive and may have led some of the participants to see us as friends or confidantes rather than researchers (Paradis, 2000). Throughout the project, it was important to us to consider the effects of the relationships that we developed with the participants. We referred to our roles as research students and openly shared that the project would conclude at the end of the summer. Some participants indicated that they were interested in maintaining relationships with us after the conclusion of the research project. Although our major purpose was to conduct research we were also sincerely interested in the well-being and lives of the participants. In some cases, we developed closer relationships with the participants, within our roles as student researchers. It was difficult to
separate our roles as researchers and wanting to actually help people with whom we interacted from our professional perspectives. It is important to note that clients of TSA and participants in the research generally could relate to at least one person on the research team. Through reducing the use of structured interviewing techniques, which participants could perceive as being more coercive or insincere, we were more able to authentically relate to the women.

Conclusion
During the research project, we utilised various methodologies and partnerships to understand the meaning of home for women who are homeless in order to document their requirements for transitional housing into homes and to partner with women to make these concerns known. Working within a homeless shelter helped the researchers better understand the problems of homelessness and learn how to meaningfully engage with women service users. Each researcher and each discipline brought important knowledge and ways of being involved in and partnering with women in carrying out this research. Respecting the voices of the participants and partnering with them to find ways to advocate for our shared concerns was critical in meeting the goals of the research project. Subsequent to the research, some of the participants and other women who share these concerns have continued to pursue goals of disseminating the research findings and advocating for increased opportunities for social inclusion and engagement for these women, some of the most marginalized members of our society.

Relevance
The findings of this study related to partnership building are important to researchers working with members of disenfranchised communities. It is only through carrying out research in careful, responsible ways in partnership with those most affected by the relevant issues will meaningful change be possible.

References


Community Empowerment Study: Preliminary Analysis

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This study is based on the Community Development Survey administered by communities across Canada involved in the Federal Government's homelessness program, Supporting Community Partnership Initiative (SCPI). This paper describes some early findings of this survey which indicates that there has been considerable success coalescing SCPI communities to address the needs of homeless people.

Introduction

Near the end of 1999, the Canadian Government announced the launch of the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI). The cornerstone component of NHI was another “initiative” called the Supporting Community Partnership Initiative, SCPI.

SCPI was created, in part, as a reaction to the process of competitive grants and contributions. This process requires non-profit groups and organizations to vie for limited government funds, and this had contributed to creating a fractional and inconsistent level of services for homeless people. This approach was costly to a variety of groups; non-profit organizations that needed to expend financial resources and time in the competition for resources, to homeless people who could not access all the services they needed, and to governments as the fractionalized service environment weakened the effectiveness of all services in general. At the same time, a heavy-handed approach to standardizing services would have created its own inefficiencies, as it would not have recognized the different arrangement of services that already existed in different locations and that the various nature of homelessness across the country.

Borrowing from the US “Continuum of Care” Homelessness Assistance Program, SCPI aimed to foster local collective strategic policy and planning in order to get communities to work together to develop shared values, objectives and priorities in addressing homelessness in their community. Community plans that outlined the assets and service gaps were required in order for communities to receive federal funding and, as such, these plans acted as the basis of a contractual arrangement between the federal government and a community.

Sixty-one communities - which represented about 75% of the Canadian population - took part in SCPI. Some were very small communities, such as Thompson, Manitoba (population 13,446), but some were large metropolitan cities like Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver. Each community set up its own “entities” to manage and plan its homelessness program. Some used existing community structures, including municipal governments, to facilitate administration and some decided to create new organizations and steering committees.

The Supporting Community Partnership Initiative was originally a three-year, $305 million initiative, but it was renewed in 2003 for an additional $253 million over another three years and in 2006 extended for an additional year. The program was sunsetted in 2007 although, to a large degree, continues to operate under the new Homelessness Partnering Initiative. This paper focuses on the second phase on SCPI (2003-2007) and reflects on the state of the communities approximately six years after SCPI was first launched.

Theoretical Approach

While the focus of this paper is to provide descriptive data on the Community Development Survey, it is part of a broader analysis of community empowerment. By community empowerment, I mean a “social process” that provides a community with enhanced control or influence over determinants relating to their health and well-being. There are a
number of features that are often associated with community empowerment: identity (Obst and White, 2007; Chavis and Pretty, 1999), a sense of belonging (Mannarini et al, 2006; Israel et al, 1994), social cohesion (Jacquier, 2005; Gilchrist, 2000), knowledge (Foster-Fishman, 2001; Lincoln et al, 2002), skill development (Ohmer and Beck, 2006), access to financial resources (Hardina 2003; Ritchie et al, 2004,) a positive attitude or motivation (McNeely, 1999; Messias et al, 2005), and participation and social action (Hur, 2006). Most of these aspects are touched on by the survey.

Methodology

The findings of this paper are based on secondary analysis of the Community Development Survey. The survey was distributed by community organizations in 51 communities across Canada. Through emails, meetings and telephone calls, I was able to get permission from, and access to, data from 47 communities.

For a variety of reasons: to ensure the ease of collecting the data; enhance the willingness of communities to participate; as well as to ensure the confidentiality of the individual respondent I was provided with pre-defined “worksheets” from communities rather than individual responses to the questionnaire. The worksheet specified how many people responded to each category for every question. This allows for analysis at the community but not at the individual level.

This raises a number of methodological issues and suggests that some caution is needed in the interpretation of the data. First, data was not collected in a uniform manner. Because of the different nature of communities, the method by which the survey was distributed (e.g., electronic mailing, distributed during committee meetings, etc.) varied.

Another issue was the quality of the coding of information onto the worksheets that were used as the basis for this paper. I was able to find mathematical errors in 15-20% of the worksheets. Because the worksheets formally laid out the process for summarizing the data most, if not all, math errors were detected and corrected. Errors of inputting data were less easy to detect. However, there were patterns in the responses to certain questions as well as some internal logic (number of responses can not exceed the number of people surveyed), that helped identify two or three such issues.

While 47 communities provided data, 12 were based on less than 10 respondents to the survey (this is a reflection of the size of communities and the amount of resources – compared to the number of and projects - undertaken in that community). For the purpose of this study, those communities have not been included.

Two types of scores are used in this paper: the percentage of communities (n=35) that agreed with the question; and the mean score (ms). Mean scores are based on a 4-point scale with 1=“strongly disagree” and 4=“strongly agree”. References to standard deviations (SD) in this paper are based on the 4-point scale.

Findings

Strategic Planning. The first three questions of the Community Development Survey focused on community strategic planning. The three questions related to: awareness of the Strategic Plan; a sense of shared purpose; and whether there was regular evaluation of progress against the plan.

Seventy-three percent of communities suggested that they had developed integrated goals and objectives to help in planning services and supports for homeless people. On a scale of agreement (1 to 4), this question had a mean score (ms) of 2.98 but with a standard deviation of .36 it suggests a wide distribution of responses.

The second question related to whether individuals and organizations in the community involved in the prevention and reduction of homelessness have a shared sense of purpose and similar values. As noted, the idea of requiring a community plan through the Supporting Community Partnership Initiative was, in part, meant to enhance coordination and facilitate a shared vision. Eighty-two percent of communities agreed that they had a shared sense of purpose and values. On the scale of agreement, this question had a mean score of 3.19. There was a significant correlation between the two variables of .772, suggesting a relationship between planning and sense of a common vision.

The next question focuses on whether there was regular evaluation of progress towards strategic goals-addressing homelessness. Here we find less agreement than in the previous two questions. Only 55.6% of communities agreed that there were regular evaluations. This question had a mean score of 2.76 and a high standard deviation of .357.

Inclusion. Getting all of the community players involved in addressing homelessness and working collaboratively was a key objective of the Supporting Community Partnership Initiative. As with strategic planning, there were three questions that related to the issue of inclusion.

Question 4 asked whether there was a greater representation of people from various services and sectors participating in efforts to address homelessness than there were a few years ago. This question is very important in measuring the general success of SCPI, which aims to create greater collaboration among community organizations. Eight-two percent of communities agreed that representation was greater than two years ago. On a scale of agreement, this question had a mean score of 3.26 and a low standard deviation of .233, suggesting a high clustering around the mean.
The next question asked whether efforts have been made to include the homeless or formerly-homeless people in the process. Only 54.2% agreed that efforts had been made. The mean score was 2.7 with a high standard deviation of .348.

The final question in this group asked whether the leaders in that community, who are involved in addressing homelessness, represent diverse groups and are representative of the population. Around 60% agreed that leadership was representative, with a mean score of 2.78.

**Quality of internal relationships and external partnerships.** There are two questions in this survey that speak to the quality of the relations between groups involved in homelessness. The first question (question 9) asks whether there is a strong sense of cooperation in the community to address homelessness. Almost 70% of communities agreed with that statement, with a mean score of 2.93. The second question (question 10) specifies whether there are good working relationships between organizations and agencies addressing homelessness. Here we find strong agreement (83.3%, ms=3.17) that there exists a good working relationship between community organizations and agencies.

As with the questions related to internal relationships, there are two questions about the quality of external partnerships. The first question (question 12) asks if there are strong relationships between governments, non-profit groups, representatives of the private sectors and community agencies. Close to 63% agreed that there are strong relationships, with a mean score of 2.78. The second question asked whether the community works well with its funding partners. Here we find a stronger sense of agreement with 79% agreeing that they work well with funding partners for a mean score of 3.1

**Knowledge and Skills.** Three questions related to knowledge and skills were posed in the Community Development Survey. The first asked about general knowledge relating to homelessness; the second about having the skills to work with the homeless, and the third solicited responses about participation in formal skills development programs related to addressing the problem of homelessness.

Question 14 asked whether, over the past few years, there is has been a better understanding of the problem of homelessness, its causes and its solutions. Communities were generally strongly in agreement (82.5%, ms=3.12) that, in fact, there is a better understanding of the problem of homelessness. A low standard deviation (.25) suggests that this was true for most communities.

There was also strong agreement (80%, ms=3.07) and consensus (SD= 2.35) about whether, over the past few years, people in the community have improved their knowledge, attitudes and skills related to working with people who are homeless. However, on the issue of whether the community has enhanced its ability to address the problem of homelessness through relevant skills development (workshops and training) there was certainly less agreement (55.5% agreement, ms=2.75).

**Resources and Sustainability.** The Community Development Survey had two questions related to resources. Question 19 sought information about whether, over the past few years, there had been an improvement in the coordination of resources to community agencies working in the homelessness sector and 70% (ms=2.93) agreed that things had improved. This is in stark contrast to (Question 20) which asked whether there are enough funding partners to ensure adequate on-going financial resources to address homelessness. Only 10.5% agreed that there are enough funding partners (ms=1.7).

The survey posed one question (Question 17) on resilience and sustainability by asking communities if agencies and organizations are able to more easily adapt to situations of limited resources and high demand for services than a few years ago. Only 42.4% (ms = 2.48) of communities agreed that they are able to more easily adapt, with a slightly high standard deviation of .347

**Empowerment: collective capacity, motivation and sense of influence.** Question 21 of the survey asked if the community has the capacity to develop strategic solutions to address homelessness; and Question 11 posed the question whether the community has drive and enthusiasm to follow through with solutions to prevent and reduce homelessness. On the former, 83.6% agreed (ms=3.15) with a very low standard deviation (.206). On the latter there was also strong agreement (72.4%, ms=3.05).

Question 22 explored whether communities believe that they have been able to influence local and regional government policies to support efforts to address homelessness. Only 51.3% agreed (ms=2.61, SD=.34). When asked whether, generally, citizens in the community believed that their local efforts can help to prevent and reduce homelessness, agreement amongst communities was a bit higher at 59.4% (ms=2.73, SD=.296).
Conclusions

Over the life of the Supporting Community Partnership Initiative, while there is room for improvement, it appears that much progress has been made in terms of building collaborative communities. Despite some weaknesses in the strategic planning process, overall, the results suggest that: communities believe they have a shared set of values and objectives; that representation and coordination of community organizations involved in homelessness has improved; and that both internal relationships and relationships with external partners (and funders) is generally good. The communities also suggest that there have been improvements in knowledge and awareness of issues related to homelessness; and suggest their capacity and motivation to address homeless is strong.

Despite the strength of these attributes, a sense of control and influence (empowerment) among communities seems relatively weak. While financial resources relative to the problem of homelessness in communities may constrain the level of social action that they can pursue, it is likely that there are other factors affecting communities’ sense of empowerment. Further examination of the relationships between collective control and variables such as capacity, identity and social cohesion is needed. The next phase of this study on community empowerment will seek to do just that.

References


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This paper will highlight the emerging understanding of the Internet and how it can enhance the function of collaborative research networks to benefit their members. In this context two IGLOO communities, PolicyNet and UCP-SARnet, will be discussed in greater detail.

Introduction
Throughout our lives we rely on the communities we belong to and the networks we create to assist us in our pursuit of personal and professional goals. On a personal level, we derive a sense of belonging and pride in being a member of a certain community or network (Wellman, 2001). Professionally, we utilize our networks to collaborate on projects we value, to remain informed of the latest developments in our fields of interest, and to inform other members of the network that we are, and continue to be, interested in the same issues. Remaining outside such a network can limit the resources we have access to, both with regards to information and possible partnerships.

Professional networks become even more important in light of the recent increase in scientific collaboration spanning across international borders, institutions and disciplines (Walsh, Kucker, Maloney & Gabbay, 2000). Many of the world’s current problems can only be addressed by international teams of multidisciplinary scientists working together effectively, offering their unique perspectives and expertise. The need for sustained, long-term collaboration (Cane, Babeu & Bamman, 2007; Ellisman, 2005) among people working in multiple disciplines challenges the notion of traditional networks in that they are required to include more people with diverse backgrounds and skills in their collaborative partnerships.

This paper will discuss how the Internet can enhance the function of collaborative research networks for the benefit of their members, and the importance of such networks to post-secondary students. It will briefly describe the emerging understanding of the function of the Internet as it relates to scientific collaboration and the increasing need to involve faculty and students in collaborative online communities. Within this context, two examples of communities from IGLOO (International Governance Leaders and Organizations Online), PolicyNet and the University-Community Partnership for Social Action Research Network (UCP-SARnet), will be discussed in greater detail.

The Internet is a social as well as a technological phenomenon. It is a social space in which we can discuss ideas, exchange information and share knowledge across many different boundaries - often a crucial requirement in the highly dispersed scientific community (Sooryamoorthy & Shrum, 2007). As academics and practitioners came to realize the potential of the Internet as a tool for scientific collaboration, a new term was coined – cyberinfrastructure. Several other terms are used internationally to define this concept, such as e-Science and e-Infrastructure. For the sake of consistency, the term cyberinfrastructure will be used throughout this paper.

Cyberinfrastructure
According to a report published by the American Council of Learned Societies Commission (ACLS) on Cyberinfrastructure for the Humanities and Social Sciences (2006), cyberinfrastructure is a “tangible network and means of storage in digitized form” with a “more intangible layer of expertise and the best practices, standards, tools, collections and collaborative environments that can be broadly shared across communities of inquiry” (p. 6). The report refers to the online environment as a cultural commonwealth; a place in which “knowledge, learning and discovery can flourish” (p.2).
While it is common for mathematicians, physicists and other scientists to use computers in their work, it has been much more difficult to convince social scientists and scholars in the humanities of the benefits of cyberinfrastructure. The culture of scholarship in the humanities and social sciences is almost entirely focused on the "solitary scholar"; however, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the future of research is in collaboration (Carlson, 2006). It is important that social scientists not lag behind the scientists and engineers, but become part of the design and building process so that the infrastructure reflects their needs as well (Cane et al., 2007; American Council of Learned Societies Commission on Cyberinfrastructure for the Humanities and Social Sciences [ACLS], 2006).

Networks built using cyberinfrastructure have the potential to create and empower communities of researchers; they can make collaboration more feasible and encourage debate across boundaries, both physical and financial (Williams & Jacobs, 2004; Walsh & Maloney, 2007). Furthermore, given the interdisciplinary character of many current research topics, cyber-networks can open the community to researchers from different fields, thereby providing additional intellectual stimulation and expertise that could prove to be key elements in solving complicated questions (Cohen, 1996; Bement, 2007; ACLS, 2006).

These cyber-networks are extensions of the traditional physical communities scholars have long relied on. They add a digital dimension that allows for novel partnerships and discussions within a much more diverse group of individuals (ACLS, 2006), in essence following a model similar to the global business networks in Friedman's *The World is Flat* (Ellisman, 2005). According to Friedman (2005) open-source intellectual collaboration and the formation of global communities online are among the forces that have contributed to "flattening" the world we live in.

Cyberinfrastructure promotes interaction between individuals who may never otherwise have the opportunity to meet (Cohen, 1996). Furthermore, participation in cyber-networks helps strengthen the essential ties (Walsh & Maloney, 2007) between scholars and/or practitioners who may already be in a network but due to geographical distances are unable to meet and discuss common interests often enough to keep the relationship thriving. Not only does cyberinfrastructure provide a common platform for discussion and work, but it is asynchronous, simplifying the joint work of individuals residing in different time zones. Perhaps most significantly for science, however, the remarkable aspect of cyberinfrastructure is its power to bridge the divide between academics, students and the general public.

It was with this thought that IGLOO was created. As a project of the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI), the network has had a focus on governance that continues to this day, but its structure and the lessons learned during its development are relevant to all similar networks. IGLOO was conceived as an incubator of collaboration in which researchers, practitioners, educators and students would form virtual communities to explore governance issues and develop thought leadership – a compelling vision with the additional advantage that both membership and a community toolset would be free and open to anyone.

**The IGLOO Network**

When the IGLOO Network was created in November 2004 it centered around three key objectives:

i. to create a virtual platform and infrastructure for research and dissemination of information;

ii. to develop partnerships that enable CIGI and the academic environment in Ontario to conduct research activities by creating global electronic communities to widen participation for the purpose of excellence in research; and

iii. to transfer the innovative infrastructure to the market place for commercialization.

If the number of participants and communities is a measure, it was a vision with merit; IGLOO has grown to 8,000 members in just over three years.

Dozens of communities are part of the Network, from development-oriented projects such as Governance Village, to the Trudeau Foundation and the Portal for North America. All focus on governance issues, bringing together scholars, practitioners and students from around the world, offering a platform for knowledge exchange, resources and the potential to become part of a new professional network.

Two IGLOO communities in particular have been established with the purpose of connecting university students and faculty. PolicyNet is a global network of schools and institutions dedicated to advancing the study of public policy. UCP-SARnet is a community of practitioners, students, university faculty and staff working on initiating multicultural collaboration addressing local and global community issues.

Universities could uniquely benefit from the creation of such communities (Allen, 1999). By establishing an interactive online presence, a university can maintain long-lasting relationships between its graduates and staff, providing access to a dynamic knowledge base that evolves as former students become practitioners and scholars. This does not, however, come without cost; Allen (1999) notes that the faculty needs to contribute to the community by managing the knowledge created within.
PolicyNet

PolicyNet’s vision is to provide a link between schools that provide public policy programs around the world. Initially, despite the availability of technical tools, the interaction between students, educators and researchers within the community was a challenge. However, as the project has progressed, new concepts and ideas have begun to take shape. The Crawford School of Economics and Government at the Australian National University, has proposed a series of virtual seminars held through video conferences. The school felt that exposing students and faculty to other member schools and their pedagogical cultures would develop an environment of knowledge exchange and foster greater online activity by having participants meet each other through a real-time medium. The virtual seminar series would give students an opportunity to interact with peers from around the world (Williams & Jacobs, 2004), while simultaneously working on issues of interest to them and learning about various international perspectives.

As the project progresses, five additional partner schools (Peking University, Tsinghua University, University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University and the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University) have confirmed their interest in participating and topics and themes are being discussed, as well as the format of earlier interaction between students on discussion forums. The hope is that this PolicyNet project will contribute to the community by adding facilitated discussions on specific topics between students, during which new knowledge will be constructed in a supportive learning environment (Allen, 1999). Furthermore, all the schools involved are seeking opportunities to establish closer ties with the other partner schools, which may in the future lead to exchange programs and other joint faculty or student projects.

The virtual seminar series promises to be an appealing program that will benefit both students and faculty. The exposure to new perspectives and the possibility of having well-known faculty members interact with students internationally is in itself a significant advantage of the series, the established relationships between schools and potential future benefits are also noteworthy. PolicyNet provides a platform for the series, as well as for the already established network of like-minded schools. As noted by Williams (2004) with regard to blogs, this program has the potential to capture knowledge and become a transformational tool for teaching and learning. However, it is important to remember that without the strong initiative from the Crawford School and its willingness to take on a leadership role in the project, the venture would have never come to fruition. A further addition is expected to consist of facilitated discussions between students during which new knowledge will be constructed in a supportive learning environment (Allen, 1999). Furthermore, all the schools involved are seeking to establish closer ties with each other, which may lead to exchange programs and other joint faculty or student projects in future. With new initiatives such as the virtual seminar series, the network of PolicyNet schools will be able to flourish beyond its online presence while still using the community’s tools to augment the more traditional learning and collaborative environments (Bement, 2007).

UCP-SARnet

UCP-SARnet was created with the mission of becoming a resource for ideas, learning and teaching opportunities and a source for solutions for practitioners, faculty and students worldwide. A project of Arizona State University (USA), the Centre for Community-based Research (Canada) and the Warsaw School of Social Psychology (Poland), the network now includes student editors and faculty from around the world.

With an official launch scheduled for early 2008, the community has already trained hundreds of students in the use of community tools. Using student editorial staff encourages critical and analytical thinking and empowers students to voice their individual perspectives. Current plans include creating a group of regional assistant editors whose role will be to create regional networks of students interested in community leadership. These editors will facilitate the exchange between the regional student networks and the international network of people interested in global issues and community governance using the UCP-SARnet community. Students in Geneva and New York will coordinate the work of the group. The engagement of students in facilitating and editing content, in the network creates opportunities for them to be autonomous, creative and cooperative (Williams & Jacobs, 2004), attributes that are increasingly important in the modern world of multidisciplinary research and communication.

In a concerted effort to reach out to new faculty and institutions, the project plans to establish a “train-the-trainers” online workshop for academic faculty teaching community-related courses. Workshop topics will include the basics of participatory action research methodology and a basic knowledge of peaceful conflict resolution strategies. There will also be instruction on how to use UCP-SARnet in class.

As with other IGLOO projects, the progress made to date in establishing this network would not be possible without the dedicated efforts faculty members, and community organization staff who facilitate the work of the network and build relationships among members by preparing conferences, launching events and training programs for those involved. Furthermore, the built in reward structure for student involvement guarantees that dedicated students are also working towards success of the community.
Conclusions and Future Challenges

As networks such as IGLOO develop, we constantly find ourselves faced with obstacles. Surprisingly, most of these are social rather than technical (Schroeder & Fry, 2007). To reap the benefits of cyberinfrastructure we have to commit to a change in the deeply entrenched academic culture, especially within the context of the social sciences (ACLS, 2006). In opening ourselves to the possibility of using these new resources we make research more readily available, more inclusive, more sustainable, and more visible (Sherer, Shea & Kristensen, 2003). Furthermore, we add an additional dimension to the attributes provided by traditional physical networks already nurtured by scientists.

For universities, the challenge lies in ensuring that staff and students engage in these communities, thus opening themselves to the learning and creativity they offer, and in establishing a framework within their institutions that encourages the use of cyberinfrastructure in research collaboration (Ellisman, 2005). Only if institutional policies are implemented and academics are rewarded for their innovative and experimental usage of online networks can we hope that more scholars will take the time to become part of the landscape. There needs to be a push for transforming the current practices of collaboration and communication to include new levels of interconnectedness (ACLS, 2006). Programs should be created that connect research and education at all levels and in a variety of fields (Atkins, 2006; Bement, 2007), to complement the natural ties between the current and next generation of scholars. Naturally, the establishment of such learning communities does not come easily and, as noted in the examples cited earlier, requires conscious effort on the part of staff and students, and the provision of the necessary resources and leadership (Allen, 1999; Atkins, 2006). But the maintenance of any network requires work on the part of its members.

One of IGLOO’s challenges is to make the global network truly global by extending access to communities that may need low bandwidth access and/or speak other languages. Another challenge is the need for more concrete assessments of the project. IGLOO is searching for partners to help work on evaluating and further researching the sustainability, usability and importance of networks. With more data and continued work, we are confident that online networks such as IGLOO will become a natural extension of many professional networks created by their members.

Whatever the challenges and needs for the future, as noted by the ACLS (2006), we believe that “digital scholarship is the inevitable future of the humanities and social sciences, and that digital literacy is a matter of national competitiveness and a mission that needs to be embraced by universities, libraries, museums and archives” (p. 34).

Selected References


Taking it to the Streets: Investigating Social Problems and Improving Student Outcomes through Community-Based Research

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Taking it to the Streets was a unique approach to develop, support, improve student learning and well-being through hands-on community-based research and engagement. Students enrolled in a combined freshman level social problems class and a writing class focusing on community-based problems and activities, followed by the opportunity to participate in community-based research on the annual Homeless Census and Survey in Jacksonville. Taking it to the Streets encompasses three primary goals: first, to increase the levels of civic engagement among students. Second, to create a healthier atmosphere for the students in the project. And finally, to keep the students from the project civically engaged in the Jacksonville community after the FIG class.

Introduction

College is a time of great transition for millions of young adults across the United States. It is often at times of such profound transition that significant problems and stress emerge. Consequently, many college students find the stress to be overwhelming and suffer psychological problems including, but not limited to, anxiety and depression. In fact, studies across the nation indicate that the rate of psychological distress is increasing among college students (CASA, 2003). The University of North Florida (UNF) counseling center is noting similar increases in psychological distresses among its student body. The majority of students seen by the Center exhibit clinical symptoms of depression and anxiety and usually suffer from suicidal thoughts and panic attacks (UNF Student Affairs Annual Reports, 2001-2002, 2005-2006). While the services provided to struggling students by the counseling centers are invaluable, it is clear that students are in need of additional intervention strategies to help in the transition to college. One promising strategy is the use of community engagement as a means of getting students to gain a better understanding of their situation. Indeed, as Harward suggests, "...by involving them in demanding service-learning and community-based research experiences, the academy could force them to consider their own privilege; challenge their assumptions of entitlement and self-indulgence; help them recognize that learning has implications for action and use; help them develop skills and habits of resiliency; and make them aware of their responsibilities to the larger community" (Harward, 2007, p.10).

The Course

The Taking it to the Streets Project was developed to combine classroom-based learning with community-based research and community service to improve student academic outcomes and personal well-being. Taking it to the Streets partnered a freshman learning community classroom-based study of social problems within the Jacksonville community and participation in hands-on research examining homelessness in the community and the conditions homeless persons are experiencing. Students were recruited during summer orientation sessions to enroll in a Freshman Interest Group (FIG) learning community for fall semester that included an entry-level sociology class and a Freshman level writing course. Special emphasis was placed on examining the issues of poverty and homelessness in Northeast Florida. In addition to classroom activities, students also took part in a number of community service activities, including working in a soup kitchen that feeds the poor and homeless, collecting donations for a children’s holiday party, and collecting donations for toiletry bags for the annual homeless census and survey. In both courses students had the opportunity to engage in reflective forms of writing pertaining to their community-based experiences. During the FIG, students were also assessed at the beginning and end of the semester on several measures associated with perceptions of homelessness, community engagement, narcissism, and self-esteem.
Results

The Students. There were 25 students in the Social Problems and Community Engagement course who completed at least one of the surveys. The students were 18 and 19 years of age. More than half (56.0 percent) were female. Almost two-thirds (64.0 percent) of the students were white, 12 percent were Black, 12 percent were multiracial, eight percent were Asian, and four percent were American Indian/Alaskan Native. Twelve percent of the students were of Hispanic descent.

Survey Instrument. The survey instrument contained a number of scales and sets of questions. One such set of questions pertained to the respondents’ perceptions of homelessness, the Attitudes Toward Homelessness Inventory (ATHI). The scale ranges from one to six, with one being strongly agree and six being strongly disagree. Data for two groups of students are presented; overall and paired. The overall results are of anyone completing the pre- or post-tests. The paired results are of those who completed both a pre-test and a post-test.

As seen in Table 1, student responses in the post-test agreed more strongly that government cutbacks and a low minimum wage are exacerbating the homeless problem. In addition, students’ level of disagreement that rehabilitation programs are too expensive and there is little that can be done for people in homeless shelters increased in the post-test. Students were also more likely to disagree in the post-test with the statements basically blaming the homeless population for their situation, such as homeless persons being substance abusers and the relationship between homelessness and their childhood. Interestingly, the mean for the statement that a homeless person cannot really be expected to adopt a normal lifestyle decreased, which represents more agreement. Finally, the differences in the pre-and post-tests means for the statements in regard to contact with homeless persons illustrated more favorable feelings.

Students were also asked a set of questions (12 in all) regarding community engagement. The first five questions examined the importance students placed on engagement. Overall, the respondents found all of the statements to be of high importance (see Table 2). While the pre-test means indicated that many students felt that becoming involved in a program and working toward social justice were somewhat important, by the end of the class these issues were even more important.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Attitudes Toward Homelessness Inventory Pre- and Post-Tests Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviated Survey Item:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government cutbacks in housing assistance have made the homeless problem worse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government cutbacks in welfare have contributed homeless problem in this country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The low minimum wage guarantees a large homeless population.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehabilitation programs for homeless people are too expensive to operate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little can be done for people in homeless shelters… except comfortable and well fed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A homeless person cannot really be expected to adopt a normal lifestyle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Most homelessness in adults can be traced to their emotional experiences in childhood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless people had parents who took little interest in them as children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most homeless persons are substance abusers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable eating meal w/homeless person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I feel uneasy when I meet homeless people.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scale: 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Unsure But Probably Agree, 4 = Unsure But Probably Disagree, 5 = Disagree, 6 = Strongly Disagree
The final seven questions regarding community engagement measured the extent of agreement with individuals’ impact on community. In general, the students were more likely to agree than disagree with these items. Interestingly, although the changes were small, many of the means actually increased, indicating less agreement at the end of the semester. For instance, students were less likely to agree that each individual can make a difference, they influence issues, a collaborative effort can solve society’s problems, and they have confidence or good leadership skills. On a positive note, the students were more likely to agree at the time of the post-test that they have a positive impact on their community.

Another scale included in the survey instrument was the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI). Possible NPI scores range from zero to 40, with higher scores representing higher levels of narcissism. The pre-test NPI mean for the overall group was 19.10 and slightly higher for the paired group at 19.13. The post-test NPI mean decreased slightly for the overall and paired groups to 19.00 and 18.00 respectively. It is interesting to note that the means from this study are relatively higher than those found in other studies with college students. For example, del Rosario and White (2005) implemented the NPI with 175 undergraduates twice during a semester. The mean scores for these students were 14.66 at the beginning of the semester and 14.23 near the end of the semester. Similarly, Raskin and Terry (1988) tested 1,018 undergraduates who had a mean score of 15.55.

Table 2: Community Engagement Pre- and Post-Tests Means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviated Survey Item:</th>
<th>Overall Pre Mean (n = 22)</th>
<th>Overall Post Mean (n = 14)</th>
<th>Paired Pre Mean (n = 11)</th>
<th>Paired Post Mean (n = 11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Becoming involved in a program to improve my community.</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>5.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working toward social justice and equal opportunity for all people.</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering my time helping people in need.</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>4.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding a career opportunity to be helpful to others or useful in improving society.</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>4.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about who I am by placing myself in situations where I am challenged.</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>4.79</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>4.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scale: 1 = No Importance or Not Important At All, 6 = Extreme Importance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall Pre Mean (n = 22)</th>
<th>Overall Post Mean (n = 14)</th>
<th>Paired Pre Mean (n = 11)</th>
<th>Paired Post Mean (n = 11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Each individual can make a difference.</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a positive impact on the community in which I live.</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>1.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have an influence on the issues confronted by society today.</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that if everyone works together, many of society’s problems can be solved.</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I am a very confident individual.</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>1.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I have very good leadership abilities.</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Whatever career, we all have responsibility to promote equality and justice.</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scale: 1 = Strongly Agree, 6 = Strongly Disagree
Finally, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale was also included in the survey instrument. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale is a 10-item scale with a possible score of 40 that measures the degree of self-esteem one has; the higher one’s score, the higher their self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1989). It was believed that students would gain more self-esteem once they had taken the Social Problems class; however, the results indicate a slight decrease in self-esteem for both samples. The overall group had a pre-test Rosenberg mean of 25.41 and a post-test mean of 23.00, a 2.41 point decrease. The paired group dropped one point, going from 24.45 to 25.45.

### Table 4: Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale Pre- and Post-Tests Means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Pre Mean</th>
<th>Overall Post Mean</th>
<th>Paired Pre Mean</th>
<th>Paired Post Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(n = 22)</td>
<td>(n = 14)</td>
<td>(n = 11)</td>
<td>(n = 11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.41</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td>24.45</td>
<td>23.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Personal Journal Blog. Students attending the Social Problems and Community Engagement FIG course were assigned to keep a weekly online journal of their reactions to the class and what was going on in their lives that related to inequality. Many of the topics covered in the blog entries included discussion and thoughts regarding the class projects; the community service projects and a class “scavenger hunt” which required collecting data and physically going to particular locations in the community.

A number of students expressed their thoughts prior to serving breakfast at Clara White. Many wrote that they were “excited” or “looking forward” to serving breakfast to homeless individuals. Some of the students who were excited were also “scared” and “nervous.” One student wrote in her journal, “I still feel scared, nervous, sad, sympathetic, and curious.” Most promising were the comments that indicated changes in the students’ perspectives of homeless people. Students also expressed a new perspective on their own lives and their awareness of how “good” they have it. Not only did the class projects broaden many students’ perspectives, they also seemed to get the students to think beyond the classroom. For example, two classmates began organizing a project outside of the classroom that entailed a partnership between UNF and another local university to provide meals to homeless shelters.

A few students had somewhat negative perspectives surrounding serving breakfast and “attitudes of the homeless.” One wrote, “A lot of them [clients] were complaining about the food… Seems to me…. you’d at least be grateful for the amount of food on your plate, regardless of what it was.” One student’s journal entry was particularly interesting in this regard. She had gone to Clara White to interview clients for UNF’s newspaper. She felt that she “approached all of them [the clients] with civility and respect, and some were just plain rude.” While she wrote that she was sympathetic to their situation, she thought she “deserve[d] some respect from them [the clients].”

Many of the blog entries made at the beginning of the semester were about how they looked forward to collecting donations or ideas of how to obtain the needed items. However, comments concerning projects turned from optimism to frustration and anxiety as the semester progressed. One student said “I don’t think that we will be able to pull it [collecting for the holiday party] off.” The idea of everyone pulling their own weight was the topic of many journal blogs. “My group has literally all of the unmotivated kids in the class, and all the work has been left up to a few of us,” wrote one student. In addition to the hassle of group work, students grumbled about stressors in general. Students wrote about the difficulty and amount of schoolwork they were assigned. They also described the stressfulness of college in general. For example, one student said, “During my first week in school, I thoug[t] to my self man this is boring…. But this week it was like I got punched in the mouth. I’m completely overwhelmed by the amount of things to do.”

While not all of the entries were positive, a majority of the reflections illustrated changed attitudes and gained maturity and expressed gratitude for the opportunities offered during the course. One student wrote, “My opinions of homelessness have changed … I originally felt that one could change their lifestyle quickly if they were homeless but after doing projects… and working at Clara White I realized that it is quite different.” Overall, the journal entries illustrate that the course projects were beneficial to a majority of the students completing journal entries. While group work can...
be a frustrating process, students acknowledged that they had learned from their experiences, which was the primary goal of the projects.

Summary and Conclusion

The project produced some mixed results. On one hand, the project failed to meet all of its objectives. As originally planned, students were to continue to be assessed throughout the remainder of the academic year. This did not occur as a result of the low response rate in the initial assessments. The low response rate also inhibited more detailed analysis. In addition, students from the fall semester FIG were going to be recruited as volunteers to work as part of a Center for Community Initiatives (CCI) research team to carry out the annual Homeless Census and Survey in January. The study consists of interviewing homeless persons at emergency shelters and “on the streets” and other locations where homeless persons are located, using a standard survey instrument. Again, this part of the initial project was not implemented due to the lack of interest from students. On the other hand, the survey instrument and personal journal entries provided some important insight into positive changes that may have occurred to some students over the semester. By connecting community service and the systematic causes of inequality, it is anticipated that these students will be better prepared to fully comprehend the issues at hand and to respond to the needs of their community in the future.

References


Building a College of Public Health to Promote Health Equity and Meet the Needs of Rural Citizens in the Southeastern US

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Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health (JPHCOPH)
Georgia Southern University

The reduced health status of rural residents and need for a public health workforce to improve rural public health is clear. JPHCOPH developed a mission to train this workforce and work collaboratively with community stakeholders to enhance rural public health.

Introduction to Rural Health Issues

There is a growing literature on differences in rural health, urban health and suburban health. This literature frequently highlights geographic location as a predictor of well being or health status and/or the relationship of demographic make up or cultural characteristics as predictors of decreased well being (Phillips and McLeroy, 2004). Regardless of how the issues are presented, the health of rural citizens (NACCHO, 2006), especially children in the Southeastern US (Goldhagen, et al, 2005), is documented as being poorer than those from other areas or regions.

One fourth of all Americans live in rural areas. It is reported that 1 in 3 adults living in rural areas describe their health as being fair to poor (NACCHO, 2006). One half of these rural inhabitants report one or more chronic diseases and they average fewer physician contacts than urban residents (NACCHO, 2006). Rural Americans lack adequate health care access and quality.

The shortage of medical and public health workers in rural areas is well documented (Daniels, et al., 2007; IOM, 2002). There are continually increasing and disproportionate rates of obesity, smoking, drug abuse (especially methamphetamine), cancer, mental health problems, violence, unintentional injuries, poor birth outcomes, hypertension, domestic violence and other public health issues in rural areas of the US (Daniels, et al., 2007; NACCHO, 2006). One consistent finding is disparities in health in rural areas experienced by lower income and African American or Latino residents. There is a lack of health equity and a concern for supporting equity through social justice (NACCHO, 2008).

Though there is an expanding literature into the mechanisms through which these problems listed above are occurring, there remains a paucity of research into how to effectively intervene and support health equity. In fact, there is very little literature on evidence-based or best practices in rural public health. One problem influencing the lack of this literature is that the lens through which public health researchers or practitioners view the issues can limit their scope and lessen the applicability of their research findings.

Probst and colleagues (2004), in an article which helps to highlight this issue, note that different researchers may define the causes of rural health problems from different perspectives. Some may view rural health issues as “compositional” or related to the characteristics of the population living in the rural area — their lack of knowledge about the negative effects of smoking or the nutritional habits of rural citizens. Others may view rural health problems as resulting from “context” because they emerge from the specific conditions in the rural context which can differ in different areas — pesticide exposure in migrant agricultural workers, lack of recreational opportunities or lack of transportation to distant health care providers (Probst, Moore, Glover & Samuels, 2004). This two sided view is a perception or philosophical mindset that may guide research, but it is rarely reflective of reality.
Unintentional injuries or deaths in automobile crashes are an example of how these two perceptions are actually intertwined. Rural roads are notoriously poorly maintained (in poor condition, poorly designed and lack of more costly light sensitive markings) but preventive measures (DUI traps or radar for speeding) may also be less frequently used (Peek-Asa, Zwerling & Stallones, 2004). Consequently, the context within which events occur and the composition of citizens living in the rural environment are both important for understanding and solving rural public health problems. Another example of this combination is poverty.

Poverty may be the largest predictor of the health of residents of an area, but, rural poverty is particularly resistant to change (Carlson, 2006). The Annie E. Casey Foundation released a report showing of the 200 "persistently poor" counties in the US (poverty > 30%), 195 are rural (National Conference of State Legislators, 2003). Children in these areas are more likely to be exposed to substance abuse and have inadequate access to health care (National Conference of State Legislators, 2003). It is clear that poverty can reduce the quality of health and education. Poor health will reduce educational impact and increased poverty can result. It is clear that composition and context are continually reinforcing. Solutions to rural public health issues will need to be developed ecologically (highlighting the whole spectrum of composition and context) in an effort to highlight both. But, these solutions will not come from increasing medical care access.

**Why Develop a College of Public Health with a Focus on Rural Health?**

The need for a concentrated emphasis on research into best practices to reduce seemingly intractable rural health disparities, especially those experienced by various racial and ethnic groups, is well established. To contribute to this end there has been an emphasis on increasing the number of medical or medically trained providers (IOM, 2005) willing to serve in rural regions. However, implementing only disease based medical interventions will not significantly reduce the health disparities or increase the quality of life of people in the rural south. For example, increasing the number of medical providers without improving transportation or social marketing may not increase the health of the rural public. Consequently, there is a need to train a public health workforce which contributes to the research and to translating the research into community based interventions to improve quality of life and health status of people in the rural south.

Being trained in the rural south and experiencing the issues first hand may facilitate the ability of a public health workforce member to see the larger picture, the complexities of rural health and to better understand how to use public health approaches to reduce the disparities. These workforce members would learn both how the composition of citizens and the context in which their experiences take place may increase or impact well being. Engaging in experiential or service learning in this context, and perhaps being a student from a rural area or being a member of a racial or ethnic group living in the rural south, could also influence future practice (Daniels, et al., 2007). This workforce member could help turn this vision into development of appropriate health promotion, policy for protection and assurance of appropriate medical care and preventive health services. However, there are limited opportunities for this training in the US and an even smaller number of institutions with this approach as their mission.

**Creating the Vision for the Jiann Ping Hsu College of Public Health (JOHCOPH)**

The Board of the University System of Georgia provided funding three years ago for a new College of Public Health at Georgia Southern University. The vision was to improve the health status of the rural parts of the state. Many, if not most, of the counties south of Atlanta, GA, are considered rural and have historically been neglected due to their small populations. This funding provided the impetus for developing a focus on these areas through the lens of public health that could further their economic development.

The Founding Dean, Dr. Charles Hardy, and faculty hired the first two years worked tirelessly to develop systems for operating and for moving the new JPHCOPH forward. However, beginning in August 2007 the newly increased number of faculty and leaders from the new organizational structure began the labor intensive process of developing a new mission, vision, values, goals and college level objectives (VVMGO). These VVMGO converge on supporting rural health, serving underserved groups, supporting health equity and eliminating health disparities in the geographic areas in the south of the state and around the region. Efforts in which we engage and decisions we make should reflect this VVMGO.

Our instructional or workforce development goals support developing students and graduates who can further these efforts. These goals also support training the existing public health workforce with competencies to enhance rural health. Our graduates will develop the competencies necessary to be excellent public health workers and to work effectively in rural areas because the curriculum for our MPH and DrPH degrees is grounded in these competencies. Our research goals support developing research and researchers to support rural public health and health equity. The objectives for the research goals hold us accountable for accessing external funding for projects to support these goals and for publishing our results in national journals that highlight public health, health equity, health disparity elimination and rural public health. Our service and practice goals support facilitation of community based efforts to enhance the
public health of our rural region and to support professional public health organizations. We hold ourselves accountable for service to our region through tracking our funded and unfunded applied research and evaluation that reflects the community’s needs and supports the development of evidence-based best practices for rural health.

Emphasis on Collaboration with Stakeholders

This VVMGO development was a collaborative process involving students, faculty, administrators and, most importantly, our public health practice advisory board. This multi county advisory group, representing local and regional public health offices, health care providers, area health education centers, voluntary organizations, rural public health organizations and the faith community from the rural region met with us in person and provided continual feedback through technology at various stages in the process. The members of the group are diverse and represent the populations in our rural region.

This advisory group held us accountable for communicating our goals in language they felt would produce actions to meet the needs of the region. They demanded true collaboration – a partnership in which all parties get what they most need and do not have to compromise away what they need to support consensus. The group is our eyes and ears to both the composition and context – the ecological realities – of the communities in the rural South. They are our bridge to the many participants in and citizens of the rural communities with whom we want to partner. They teach us how to collaborate in communities with diverse cultures and a history of isolation and help us gain entry to support public health – as defined by the communities.

Specific Examples of Collaborative Research and Service to Develop Best Practice

Two specific examples will be described. The first example is an emerging collaboration between a major foundation developed and funded by a local substance abuse treatment facility that has been successfully treating substance abuse patients from around the country for many years. This foundation is funding a Center through our college because they want to develop a program to facilitate success for college students in recovery. We share their vision, but also need to support our public health model through dedicating some of this funding for research into best practices for substance abuse intervention and prevention in rural areas. Substance abuse is a known problem in rural areas.

The collaboration is between foundation directors, treatment facility staff (who help us understand the issues from their perspective), a similar Center in Texas, former students in recovery living in the area, current students in recovery, and public health program developers, researchers and evaluators hoping to learn about and report best practices for rural substance abuse prevention and intervention. The foundation saw a need and provided funding. The JPHCOPH collaborated with the foundation to develop a Center that could both meet the vision of the foundation AND facilitate successful efforts toward meeting our goals and objectives of the College.

The second example is the evaluation of a unique telehealth network growing in the southern half of GA over the last 6 years. This rural telehealth network emerged through a series of fortuitous opportunities, primarily available funding streams. Though the state public health division facilitated some of this effort, the funding was secured to provide training to nursing or medical staff. As it grew it provided a link for patients to specialists (such as asthma clinic or HIV treatment), it helped link clients to many different types of programs such as lactation consultants and nutrition education that they could not otherwise receive, it provided support for the WIC program, provided a platform for staff meetings and provided continuing education for public health. As travel dollars for these education programs, training programs, specialist support, etc. were reduced by the state, the availability of the telehealth network could help insure consistency of services and fill in the gaps.

Currently JPHCOPH faculty members are involved in this collaborative “evaluation” of the network to document its circuitous development process, the technical product as it exists and the cost effectiveness of such a network. In addition the evaluation includes a case study of the building of the telehealth network that will highlight the challenges and barriers to such a system while telling the unique story of how it emerged and the successes it has had. This will be developed through hearing the voice of and documenting the perspective of the people with vision and flexibility who continually nurture the network. With the emerging emphasis on electronic medical and health records throughout the country, evaluating this network while considering how it could link to those emerging types of systems could provide important systems research contributions to the rural area.

Summary

Though the JPHCOPH VVMGO are only one academic year old, our efforts to meet our outcomes and impact the health of the public of our rural region are well underway. We have captured the vision of what is needed from a public health profession perspective (as described in the introduction to this paper), called upon our community partners to help us learn about our communities, documented the vision and voice of our stakeholders and blended these to forge a
course for our new College of Public Health. Rural communities, especially diverse rural communities, have a plethora of needs and problems. But, they also have resiliency, resolve and a history of connection to place. With these communities as our partners we can both learn how to improve the health of our region and document best practices through collaborative research while developing the rural public health workforce and leaders for tomorrow. This will both support other initiatives for improving rural health and help establish our new JPHCOPH as a major contributor to the rural public health world.

References


This paper describes the results and process of how two university researchers worked collaboratively with neighbourhood houses (NHs) in the City of Vancouver in a research project which examined the roles and functions of NHs in bridging newcomers into the community.

Introduction
Having a long history in serving immigrants in Vancouver, neighbourhood house (hereafter NH) is a place-based locally-governed multi-services third sector organization inherent in the Settlement House Movement since 1884 when Reverend Samuel Barnett established the first settlement house, Toynbee Hall, in London’s East End. Following the Toynbee Hall’s noble intention of being a “machinery of connection” of the community (Meagham, 1987), Jane Addams established Hull House in an immigrant neighbourhood in Chicago, hoping that it could nurture a form of reciprocal social relations across different classes and sectors in the community (Addams, 1999). Since then, the Toynbee Hall model has been spread, first across the Atlantic to the United States and Canada, and later to places almost all over the world (Yan, 2002). To examine the historical relationship between settlement house and immigrant and the community building tradition of settlement house, we conducted a study on local NHs in Vancouver. In this paper, some major findings of the study are reported and before the conclusion, learning from the research process, some lessons for university and community collaboration in research are discussed.

Context
In the City of Vancouver, a major settlement destination for immigrants in Canada, NHs have a long history of serving their immigrants. There are nine neighbourhood houses, of which two can be dated back to approximately 1938. Almost all of them are situated in communities which historically have had large immigrant populations; share the same humanistic value and tradition of the early settlement houses; have similar participatory governance structure which is based on local representatives selected from their local community; provide multiple services to wide-ranging groups of people; function as the focal point for local residents; nurture local leaders through numerous volunteer opportunities; and struggle daily for a stable source of funding in the midst of the state control through program funding.

Collaborative Research Process
Conducted on a collaborative basis, this study received full support from all local NHs. Participation of NHs in this study was encouraged throughout the process. Before formulating the research proposal, the researchers visited and met with most of the executive directors (EDs) of the NHs through the Association of Neighbourhood Houses in Great Vancouver. During the meeting, the researchers not only shared their research interests but also generated ideas from the EDs of what they would like to know as service providers serving newcomers. Together we formulated the final research question. The budget was also presented to and discussed with the EDs. To address the issue about the lack of funding in providing support to research activities, the budget included a small sum of money for each NH to hire a part-time
As an exploratory study, it was conducted from April to November 2005. The focus was to explore the roles and functions of neighbourhood houses in bridging newcomers into the community. All (N=9) neighbourhood houses participated in this study. A multi-method data collection strategy was employed to collect data from the service users (survey, N=351), executive directors (semi-structured interview, N=9), key informants (semi-structured interview, N=5), frontline workers (focus group, N=7) and board of directors (focus group, N=4). All data collection instruments were reviewed and pilot-tested by the EDs.

The survey data was analyzed by using SPSS. The qualitative data were transcribed in verbatim manner and coded, and thematic analysis was employed with the assistance of NVivo, a computer-assisted-qualitative-analysis software. The EDs and key informants who were interviewed as major service stakeholders in the City were invited to take part in the data analysis and interpretation. However, taking into consideration of their time and their research skills and knowledge, the researchers prepared and presented the preliminary analysis of both the survey and interview data to them in a community forum which was organized to discuss the findings. Unfortunately, due to technical problem, no service user was invited to the forum. During the forum, questions of the findings were clarified. Participants also provided many constructive feedbacks on the data interpretation and more importantly, suggestions of implications for program and policy.

The final report was written based on both the results of the forum as well as the researchers’ own scholarly interpretation. It is also written in a nontechnical language to minimize the usage of technical terms which may present challenges to readers who have not had formal research background. Copies of the report were sent to policy makers, stakeholders and all EDs. For scholarly interest and obligation, two manuscripts based on technical language were written and submitted to academic journals for review.

Findings

Together 351 non-randomly sampled service users were recruited for the survey through purposive sampling method, mainly by workers who know these respondents in person, from the nine neighbourhood houses in Vancouver. These 351 respondents, on average, have been living in Canada for four and a half years, are mostly women (83.8%), married (83.6%), with children (96%) and mostly unemployed (68.7%), and their average age is 42 (median = 37).

How Effective are NH/Cs in Connecting People? We deliberately asked the survey respondents some questions about social capital, the key concept employed in this study to understand the idea of bridging, that they gain from participating in neighbourhood houses. While we are cautious about overstating the importance of neighbourhood houses, the findings show that they play an important part in generating social capital, in forming ties across ethnic group boundaries, and in facilitating social capital in practice. Nearly 60% of those respondents with extensive social ties, measured by the number of connections they have according to a list of occupations from across sectors (for details of this measurement please refer to Lin, Fu, & Hsung, 2001), have at least one social tie in association with a neighbourhood house.

Meanwhile, many respondents reported feeling that the neighbourhood houses have increased their contact with people from different ethnic groups. Over 82% either agreed or strongly agreed that participation in the neighbourhood houses have helped them make social ties across ethnic boundaries. Although 26.6% of respondents did not make any exchange with people associated with neighbourhood houses, it does appear that the houses do play a role in forging social ties for reciprocal exchange of favors. Over 50% of the respondents made some of these exchanges with people associated with neighbourhood houses, and 20% of them made all or most of their exchanges with those associated with neighbourhood houses. Neighbourhood houses also play an important role in helping newcomers find employment. Of those who used personal contacts to find employment, 28.8% used contacts associated with neighbourhood houses. In brief, the findings of the survey indicate evidently that these respondents have gained functional social ties through participating in activities of neighbourhood houses. In other words, we may conclude that at least in Vancouver, neighbourhood houses may have helped newcomers integrate into the community of their host society in terms of connecting with other people.

How Do NH/Cs Bridge Newcomers to the Community? There was a unanimous agreement among the interviewees that NHs in Vancouver have played a key role in helping newcomers to settle and integrate.

Integrating, bridging and servicing: To serve newcomers and their differing needs, NHs have adopted a flexible approach to service design and delivery, a historically unique feature of NHs. Although each NH is different, most NHs provide multiple services, in accordance with local needs, to cover a wide range of target groups. For instance, festivals
and cultural celebration events provide opportunities for family fun while fostering connections between participants from various different cultural and racial backgrounds. Other programs, including: information referral services; settlement counseling services; language and other skills training programs; and cultural and social events, all enhance integration vis-à-vis network building.

**Hub in the Community:** Key informants note that NHs are almost always within walking distance of most neighbourhood residents and, due to their long operating hours, have naturally become the first point of contact for people seeking help. People walking into a NH are not judged but are welcomed. The proximity of NHs to residents also allows them to be more sensitive to the neighbourhood’s changing needs and to be the connection between formal services and newcomers.

**Networking through volunteering:** Volunteering has long been a major community building vehicle for NHs, and is part of a philosophy of creating opportunities for people to connect with others by contributing to the community as a whole. NHs are directed by volunteer Boards of Directors, recruited (mainly but not exclusively) from community residents; many are former users of the NHs’ services. Volunteers are the service backbone of NHs, supporting the small troop of paid staff in organizing events, service reception, instructing courses, and working on committees and enriching the cultural and linguistic capacities of NHs to serve diverse groups of people. Volunteering opportunities enable newcomers to contribute to the community and improve its quality of life and are also important to newcomers in terms of helping them to overcome many of the major barriers they face when entering the local job market. Through their involvement in NHs at various positions, newcomers learn local ways of living, practice English, establish friendships and, more important, gain Canadian work experience. Working with people from diverse backgrounds, volunteers also establish social networks, which may accelerate their own economic integration process.

**Bridging with multilingual support:** As many newcomers hail from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, access to multilingual services is important. Most NHs have information packages available in a range of languages. Often, staff with multilingual skills are recruited from former service users. Having a multilingual staff is an important tool for breaking down cultural barriers. In addition, NHs often organize multicultural events to encourage inter-cultural group interaction.

In sum, all stakeholders interviewed, individually or as a group, recognized the contribution and importance of NHs in bridging newcomers to the community. In addition to their programming efforts, NHs have inherent strengths – including proximity, multiple and flexible services, committed multilingual staff, volunteer opportunities, and an inclusive and open atmosphere – that facilitate the bridging process.

**Discussion**

Due to the limitations of the research design such as non-random sampling and qualitative interview, we are cautious about generalizing the findings of this study. However, judging from the survey data, we may be able to argue that these nine NHs have effectively helped newcomers in bridging to the community by establishing functional social networks – social capitals. The qualitative data also validate the qualitative data collected both from key informants as well as NHs’ personnel, including EDs, members of their boards and frontline staff who unanimously agreed that NHs are important in helping newcomers through various programmatic arrangements. These findings have concurred with the recent proposal forwarded by some social scientists communities (Giddens, 1998; Husock, 1993; Putnam, 2000; Yan, 2004) who believe that NHs, as a community third sector institutes, are effective social mechanism in bridging diverse interests in the fragmented community. However, as an exploratory study, the findings may only provide a preliminary understanding of how and how effective NHs in bridging newcomers. Further studies are deemed necessary.

For the purpose of this presentation, we particularly highlight a few important issues learned from this collaborative study. First, when we first approached the NHs to initiate this study, they were skeptical of our intention. Many of the EDs told us that most of the time, university researchers tend to treat them as “passive collaborators” who are expected to write letter to endorse their studies, refer “cases” to them, or to help them collect data. Therefore, the idea of having them as equal partners from the beginning of the study had sparked their commitment of their study.

Second, collaboration between university researcher and community organization has always been challenging. The differences in research interest and concerns, social positions and knowledge of research methods have tended to privilege the university researchers as the “expert” dominating the research process. In this study, one of the two researchers had been a social worker working in the community for more than 10 years. Such experience and knowledge had helped breaking the ice easily. This experience also sensitized the researchers of the needs of their community partners. For instance, we made our budget, the most symbolic indicator of control, transparent and explained it fully to the EDs. This helped create mutual trust between the researchers and community organizations.

Third, the community forum, at least in this case, proved to be an effective measure to reactivate the passion and commitment of members of community organizations who are busily occupied by their daily routine. Also, the forum had also brought together almost all constituencies of the settlement service in the City of Vancouver. Through open
discussion, the findings of this study were validated. More importantly the open discussion also generated useful program and policy implications proposed by the participants. The idea of “NH as a site of integration” had been discussed both in departments at the municipal and provincial levels.

Fourth, we recognized that applied social researches are political. This study is particularly political because it was conducted after the first request-for-proposal bidding for settlement service which had triggered many politics among the service providers and between them and the government. In order not to be dragged into the politics which may affect the validity and reliability of the study, the researchers had tried to keep all parties focused on the research question. We repeatedly emphasized the importance of the rules and criteria of social research to ensure the rigor of the study. Upholding these rules and criteria had also helped built a commonly agreed and relatively impartial standard which filtered out some political influences. To ensure a certain level of objectivity, stakeholders including municipal and provincial government representatives and key settlement service providers were interviewed and invited to the forum. With the researchers as the non-interest group facilitator, the community forum was useful in not only generating multiple perspectives in interpreting the data but also allowing different interests to engage in a focused and functional dialogue.

Fifth, as a university-community collaboration, we have to report the findings to different constituencies who may have different interests. In this study, we decided to report the findings of this study in two different formats in order to suit the needs of different constituencies. The final report (Yan & Lauer, 2006), which was tailored for people in the community and governments, was written in non-technical language with most of the statistics reported being confined to a descriptive level. The feedback from the community of this report was positive. However as university researchers, we also had our own scholarly interest. A working paper (Lauer & Yan, 2007) with advanced level statistical analysis was published in the Metropolis British Columbia’s website and a scholarly manuscript (Yan & Lauer, Accepted) reporting the whole study was submitted to and accepted by an academic journal.

In a final note, the study employed a triangulated approach in data collection and interpretation which involved different stakeholders throughout the process. This approach enhanced the credibility of the findings. Consequently, the results of the study had been presented and discussed in the social planning department of the municipal government. The study also generated some interests of some provincial government departments in the functions of NHs. Currently a special grant is created to strengthen the role of NHs in settlement services.

Selected References


Endnotes

1. The *Civil Justice System and the Public* (CJSP) was a collaborative project made possible by the contributions of many individuals. We wish to thank all of the people who have talked with us about their views and experiences of civil justice in Canada. We also thank our Research Partners; Research Directors Lois Gander, Diana Lowe, Teresa Rose and Barbara Billingsley; Research Coordinator Mary Stratton and each
of the Research Assistants who has contributed to the team. We are grateful to the Alberta Law Foundation, Social Science and Humanities Council of Canada, and the Law Foundation of British Columbia who have provided the funding for this project, and the many other justice and community stakeholders who have made in-kind contributions to the success of this project. We continue to collaborate with and learn from people across Canada as we work to bring about positive change to our systems of civil justice. Information about the Canadian Forum on Civil Justice and full details about the CJSP orientation, process, methodology and disseminations are available at http://cfcj-fcjc.org/research/cjsp-en.php.


4. An example of this is the creation of a Living Document for Creating Collaborative Alliances for Change (Stratton, forthcoming) that can provide justice community stakeholders with some concrete assistance in forming and maintaining successful collaborations.

5. Billingsley et al (2006) provide a much more detailed explanation about the evolving recognition, naming and nature of these distinct tracks.

6. The following accounts of these inspiring projects are necessarily brief. Billingsley et al (2006) provides a longer overview of the SHIC project, and a full case study report is pending. Research reports for the SHIC can be found at http://www.lces.ca/self_help_information_research/. The SHIC website is http://www.supremecourtselfhelp.bc.ca/ The SRLM report (Stratton, 2007) and information on the Alberta Legal Services Mapping Project are available on the Forum website. The LInCs webpage is http://www.albertacourts.ab.ca/CourtServices/LinCLawInformationCentres/tabid/275/Default.aspx

7. Details about the Into the Future: The Agenda For Civil Justice Reform are also available from the Forum website.