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Campus and Community in Shared Spaces

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Increasing the possibilities through shared spaces

Guest Editor Heidi Lasley Barajas

In the 2015 State of the Union address, President Barrack Obama stated that as a nation, "we are a strong, tight-knit family who has made it through some very, very hard times." He continued by asking us to consider "who we want to be over the next fifteen years." Urban-serving institutions, along with our urban neighbors, have been through some very hard times, and continue to focus on our commitment to shared work for a more successful future. Moreover, we pay attention and continually reflect on how we occupy the space in which we make decisions and do the work of campus and community partnerships. That is what being a tight-knit family is about—everyone deciding how to pull together, working with mutual respect for mutual benefit. And, although the context above is specific to the United States, many urban-situated institutions across the world share similar concerns and hopes.

Engaging with communities to focus on urban issues represents one way that higher education institutions are transforming into the 21st century. The Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU) member institutions have made intentional and innovative investments in place-based and shared learning spaces. There is growing attention to the role that physical and practical spaces plays in our interactions with communities, particularly as we work to deepen those interactions and search for effective approaches to urban opportunities and challenges. Understanding how we share space calls attention to (and aids in moving away from) transactional or episodic work toward sustained work with measurable results. And, our institutions have both distinctive and common approaches in our design, purpose and operations of spaces intended to enhance shared work and interaction between campus and communities.

The articles crafted for this issue on shared spaces describe the structure, operations and funding for multiple ways of approaching the idea of shared space for shared work. In addition, those who contributed their stories have reflected deeply on impacts, successes, and challenges. My hope is that the experiences and lessons learned in the context of decisions and actions shared by these higher education institutions will help all of us in the work of our urban and metropolitan institutions.

Public engagement and engaged scholarship practices are gaining momentum in many universities, and the idea of shared spaces for this work may serve to increase the depth and impact of interactions in ways that respond to both campus and community questions and goals. All nine contributions to this issue include the idea of building shared physical spaces for shared learning. Our colleagues from the University of British Columbia have provided an interesting frame to approach the idea of shared spaces and learning. They assert that working at the boundary between university and community involves creating different kinds of spaces for knowledge production. In some cases, a place-based, physical space has been established to facilitate knowledge production. In other cases, a shared learning space occurs in some expected and sometimes unexpected spaces. Each space has been built around the context of the institution and community as well as the needs of both.

The place-based approaches are both well established, as long as 17 years, and in new development, as recently as 2 years. The Community University Partnership Programme (CUPP) has been operating at the University of Brighton since 2003. In this article, Davies et al. discuss past and current approaches to the space needs of university-community partnership work and consider physical, relational, and virtual spaces in order to better identify what kinds of spaces are needed for collaborative partnership work to thrive.

Hynie, MacNevin, Prescod, Rieder, and Schwartzentruber describe how internal and external university changes create opportunities and challenges when attempting to build and sustain shared physical space utilized in campus-community work. The Community Engagement Center (CEC), a place-based center in proximity to York University has faced environmental changes. They explain that when such changes occur (policies, funding sources, government, new administrative leadership, etc.), those in the institution may begin to question whether or not a place-based center is the best approach to engagement work. The authors stress the importance of the CEC maintaining its role as a bridge between the university and the community, a bridge that enables innovative approaches to achieving common goals, provides important educational experiences to students, and allows for an expansion of what is considered knowledge production

Barajas and Martin explore the idea of liminal space in relation to fostering transformational scholarship and community trust in a place-based University of Minnesota research and outreach-engagement center located in north Minneapolis. Lessons from the first five years suggest that attention to building a beautiful and accessible physical space is necessary but not sufficient for building strong community-university partnership. The conceptual and epistemological components of shared space proved to be equally important. This article shares how UROC developed and cultivated a liminal space between university and community that is just safe enough for everyone to feel discomfort and challenge. They found that being able to feel safe enough to be uncomfortable together is a critical aspect of shared space that seeks to transform the unequal access to knowledge/power experienced by communities of color in urban areas.

Towle and Leahy discuss university-community partnership in terms of organizational structure and sustainability. The Learning Center, a place-based project established by the University of British Columbia in 1999, provides a place in the community where UBC students and faculty, and community residents and organizations connect. The Learning Center provides an intellectual space that focuses on learning not service provision, and encourages the co-creation of new knowledge. Towle and Leahy discuss shared space in terms of physical, emotional and intellectual environments and share valuable lessons learned about each. In particular, the authors discuss the importance of co-creating shared values and principles rather than rules, which impacts the operation of the physical space and also the emotional and intellectual environments in which diverse groups participate

The last place-based example is located on a university campus opening its doors in the last two years. Woods, Reed, and Smith-Howell describe the process of building the Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center (CEC) at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. The CEC on-

campus space for the university's outreach and engagement efforts includes its Service Learning Academy and its rapidly expanding Office of Civic and Social Responsibility that provides shared space for over thirty nonprofit, government, university and student organizations. The CEC offers a collaborative environment, hosts multiple community events, and provides an open door to the UNO campus itself. The authors discuss 3 critical factors in building and sustaining the CEC including building engagement into the fabric of the university, privately funded community chairs and other funding for engagement, and external recognition for engagement work through the Carnegie classification.

Learning spaces not connected to a physical university building begin with the article by Smith-Arthur and Spring from Portland State University. This article focuses on university/correctional institutional partnerships where incarcerated learners and university students engage in academic coursework together within the confines of correctional facilities. The concept of physical, intellectual, and social learning spaces is explored through three capstone courses offered within the university that are focused on writing and art workshops for juvenile inmates, civic engagement and civic leadership within both men's and women's correctional facilities, and gardening where students learn gardening skills from inmates at a women's prison. While the experiences of the learners are important and described in this article, the lens used to describe these experiences is one that focuses on transformational learning. The authors describe the ways in which shared learning spaces can be transformative for both the learners and for the institution.

Hall and Panarese from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth discuss the notion of building community through the "Building Community Project," an interdisciplinary approach to engage in democratic dialogue utilizing mindfulness to improve educational offerings. The events brought together university faculty and students as well as individuals from the local community in an inclusive learning space to share different perspectives on educational processes. The authors highlight the outcomes and data from three events to encourage teachers to incorporate mindfulness in the classroom. Intersecting this model with literacy and diversity, teachers are taught to build relationships with students who are then taught to build more effective relationships with their peers. The authors suggest that events designed to create safe and respectful shared learning spaces that connect ideas about teaching and learning among diverse stakeholders have the potential to bridge theory into practice. This article like others in this issue have indicated co-created knowledge involves shared spaces, shared understandings, and shared intentions.

Kinders and Pope describe the partnership formed between the University of Central Oklahoma and the Greater Oklahoma City Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. This article provides detailed information about the local context of the Hispanic population, which has nearly doubled from 2000-2010, many of whom are immigrants. The purpose of the shared space partnership related in the paper is to provide acculturation, college-going, and business development opportunities to this growing population. The partnership has resulted in new services through the Hispanic Chamber provided by the university. In addition, creating this shared space inspired the university Hispanic faculty Association to deepen its role, has inspired new service-learning offerings, and other opportunities to enhance both university and community learning.

Finally, Luter from the University of Wisconsin Extension provides a discussion about the link between the work of school reform and neighborhood development. Luter argues that place-based approaches in the literature are incomplete because the link between neighborhood improvement and school improvement has been ignored. The claim is that the concept of place-based school reform has not been clearly defined conceptually and developing that shared space could be an important approach to social change. He suggests that universities may sometimes forget they share urban space with communities and that leadership within universities is needed to co-create these shared spaces with the neighborhoods in which they reside.

This special issue of *Metropolitan Universities* provides examples of how urban serving universities are reaching out to their geographic communities and working to create shared spaces. More importantly, universities are finding ways to co-produce knowledge with communities that lead to strategies for addressing pressing community concerns. It is exciting to know that these examples, along with many others across the country and the world, are discovering, reflecting and co-creating with stunning impacts.

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Exploring engaged spaces in community-university partnership

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Abstract

The Community University Partnership Programme (CUPP) has been operating at the University of Brighton for the past 10 years. This article explores the different types of space we think need to exist to support a variety of partnership and engaged work. We therefore explore our understandings of shared or 'engaged' spaces as a physical, virtual and relational phenomenon in this context.

Keywords:

Placemaking; Public engagement; Participation; Knowledge exchange;

Introduction

The Community University Partnership Programme (CUPP) has been operating at the University of Brighton since 2003. During this time, we have developed a mature understanding of the place and purpose of partnerships between staff, students and local, national and international communities. We support such partnerships to combine resources that make a tangible difference to the effectiveness of the community sectors, the quality of university education and research and the lives of local people. These are underpinned by our values of knowledge exchange, reciprocity and mutual benefit. For example, we have:

- Developed student projects whereby students work for part of their curriculum time with community organisations, reflecting on their experiences and values in end of year assessments;
- Supported academics to form long term partnerships with local groups who can benefit from their research and offer a practitioner and community perspective on areas of shared concern;
- Supported other universities throughout the UK and in other parts of the world to develop strategies for working within their own local communities, matching their local resources to key local priorities.

We have continually contended with issues of space over this time and considerations of physical space have been important. Questions of accessibility (can people find one of our different campus buildings, spread over five different localities?), familiarity (should we meet with partners inside our campus buildings or in spaces they 'own'?), and practicality (how do university timescales and budget differ from community resources?), have all been significant.

However, the range and scale of our activities has also taught us that there are some pitfalls in being distracted by these questions alone. We think different types of space need to exist to support a variety of partnership and engaged work, physical yes, but also virtual and relational. In this article we expand on our thinking on this topic by using examples of the work for which CUPP is responsible. We introduce the main functions of our team - the helpdesk, community knowledge exchange and student community engagement and highlight the spaces and spatial considerations we associate with each of them. We also introduce findings from a piece of research CUPP conducted in 2013 that looked ahead to the future of community-university partnerships. One of the main findings of this research was the need to imagine and create new kinds of space that could support changing collaborative practices between those involved.

On the basis of these empirical examples, this article takes on the challenge of thinking about collaborative spaces of the future. We draw on theories of placemaking, public engagement and power and highlight how our collaborations with designers and design thinking can support us to imagine these spaces of the future. We conclude by considering what we have learnt so far about our mixture of experiences and look also to the future, to try to develop some principles of engaged space that can reflect different characteristics and pay attention to how the spatial practices they contain can support our community-university partnership ambitions into the future.

Throughout this article we interchangeably use the language of public engagement, social and/or community engagement but do not suggest these mean the same thing. We are aware of different nuances behind the terms, but it is beyond the scope of this article to explore them fully. (A more complete explanation of this in the UK context can be found in Wolff et al, 2012 and NCCPE n.d).

CUPP at the University of Brighton

CUPP at the University of Brighton was initially set up as an externally funded project, to explore what an engaged university might look like in a UK context. Early encouragement from our Deputy Vice Chancellor and chair of our original Steering Group was ‘define in the doing’ rather than spending too much time on definition in advance. This led us to explore, through a series of pilot projects, different ways of working, around the core principles of reciprocity and mutual benefit and ‘defining in the doing’ became a title for one of our later publications (CUPP, 2013).

Learning from the work of other universities in the US and some early projects in the UK the project started by consulting with local voluntary organisations and community groups and forming a steering committee from local stakeholders. Three years later and after responding to more than 500 local enquiries, the project was taken into core funding by the university, with community engagement written into the University’s mission statement and strategic plan. The resulting programme operates across the whole of the university, taking into account the different campus locations and working with academics from every discipline, through its three main functions. These are:

- The Community Helpdesk as a single point of entry or access for external enquires, staffed by a development manager who can then broker requests and connect them to relevant personnel or other strands of CUPP's work;
- Community Knowledge Exchange (CKE) which provides support to new partnerships in the early stages, bringing together different types of knowledge on an equal basis and overseeing the development of longer term communities of practice;
- Student Community Engagement (SCE) which introduces experiential learning into the curriculum providing students with a practice based opportunity while making a contribution to a local organisation.

Helpdesk. The Helpdesk was part of the original vision of CUPP and was established within a year of the programme's inception. It is a service, an access point and resource offered to those interested in developing community-university partnerships, and it is also a role, undertaking engagement activities and managing supporting processes and development (Hart et al, 2009). As a simple function, it is an entry point for external enquiries from local community/voluntary, statutory and social enterprise organisations who wish to access the resources of the university – whether that be knowledge/expertise, research, funding, staff, students or facilities. However, the variety of enquirers, enquiries, myriad pathways and possible collaborations render its spatial dimensions complex, cutting across the physical, virtual and relational. Universities increasingly have these entry points but the Helpdesk is a particular model and approach to entering into engaged spaces. Its closest equivalents include University of Technology Sydney Shopfront (Australia) and York University Knowledge Mobilisation Service (Canada). The Helpdesk has developed from its early stages as Research Helpdesk, through to its current format as a Community Helpdesk offering 'exchange, collaboration & partnership with staff & students' (CUPP, 2015). Throughout, its operational approach has been driven by CUPP's values: it is responsive to local community need, strives to be accessible to all, guided by community engagement principles and aims for mutual benefit and exchange. This value-led approach influences the engaged spaces the Helpdesk occupies, creates and is associated with. It has a pivotal role in CUPP as the initial broker into engaged spaces and connects enquirers to the other strands of SCE and CKE. Starting with often tentative and messy ides, the Helpdesk allows for an exploratory space that can be envisaged as a journey that encompasses multiple spatial aspects. The role of the 'third space professional' described by Whitchurch (2008) is useful here in illustrating the role played by the Helpdesk Manager in brokering or mediating projects, supporting and managing the challenges and intricacies of these movements through the physical, virtual and relational. It is this 'third space' that CUPP often find itself occupying.

Community Knowledge Exchange. Community Knowledge Exchange (CKE) activities bring together the knowledge of local communities, voluntary organisations, practitioners and university academics to share their different understandings and perspectives on issues of common interest. We do this by focusing on developing and supporting partnership projects and Communities of Practice (Wenger, 2000) between staff, students, and local communities. Working together in this way means contributions can be made to meeting local community needs and bringing real issues into teaching and research.

The principles behind Community Knowledge Exchange include:

- The equal status of different types of knowledge;
- Working together to identify and meet community needs in a sustainable way;
- Addressing inequalities and disadvantage;
- Building enduring relationships between local communities and the university.

By encouraging academics, practitioners, and community members to work together our projects aim to share knowledge in ways that enhance the understanding of each partner and make a positive difference to the areas in which we live and work.

A sample of some of these projects that demonstrate these aims includes a project that used campus green space to develop raised beds for vegetable growing. These beds were shared between staff, students and local residents in high rise flats with no access to a garden. This made the campus a physical space on which to gather and be productive. We have also supported work that has engaged with policy spaces, such as an action research project with Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender & Queer (LGBTQ) people working with public service on better access and provision. And finally, recent work between researchers and practitioners on issues of monitoring & evaluation has developed a growing set of relationships to exchange knowledge on the theory and practice of capturing and using data.

Student Community Engagement.Student Community Engagement (SCE) is the term we use in CUPP to denote engaged spaces within curricula that enable students to work on live projects with community partners (Millican and Bourner, 2011). Referred to in the US as 'Service Learning' and in some UK institutions as Community Based Learning we feel the notion of service does not fit well with a UK audience, while community based learning has other meanings for community partners.

SCE for undergraduates generally takes the form of a period of practical work within a community setting carrying out a task designated by a community partner with some form of reflective evaluation submitted for assessment. As such SCE extends the spaces for learning outside of the lecture hall or seminar room to a community setting, in which service users and community partners also have a role as teachers. Taylor and Fransen (2004) describe a shift in educator relationships in which practitioner, student, tutor and community member all become learners, doers and teachers.

A key challenge within SCE comes from the changing cultural practices, dress codes, language, and norms of behaviour that exist within these different spaces, and the ways in which these can be communicated to students in order for them to respond effectively. Different spaces demand different levels of formality and professionalism, will have their own power dynamics and may be perceived differently by different partners. Students who are asked to act as mentors to pupils in secondary schools, for example, can find themselves 'feeling' like children as they return to a school environment, while they are perceived as 'grown ups' by the pupils they work with. At post-graduate level where students are more likely to take on live research projects for a community group, misunderstandings can arise over the nature of research. To a community partner a research project could mean a positive evaluation rather than a piece of critical enquiry, and their time frames for completing these are invariably looser than the tight deadlines of the academic calendar. For 'third space professionals', challenges in brokering SCE projects include

mediating between the different spaces, facilitating a closer understanding of the practices of each partner and managing what are often unrealistic expectations.

Theorising Space

In this section we offer a brief overview of how we have thought about 'spaces' in our work to date. Community-university partnerships are spaces of participation and thus we cannot discuss space as a neutral grid on to which such activity takes place (Massey, 1992). Rather we have to be alert to what Cornwall (2002) reminds us, that spaces for participation are not neutral but are shaped themselves by power relations, and that the concept of power and the concept of space are deeply linked. In this section we briefly highlight four ideas that we have drawn out at different times to reflect on the space in which we do our engagement work

Dimensions of Public Engagement. Spatial concepts in the community-university engagement literature have not been given a great deal of attention in and of themselves. However, different types of space are implied in the seven 'dimensions' of public engagement identified by Hart, Northmore & Gerhardt (2009, 14). The dimensions are:

- Public access to facilities;
- Public access to knowledge;
- Student engagement;
- Faculty engagement;
- Widening participation;
- Encouraging economic regeneration and enterprise in social engagement;
- Institutional relationship and partnership building.

What these suggest are types of activity that relate to different aspects of the functions of a university. These alert us to the possibility that engaged spaces can take different forms. It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss the dimensions in depth, but we include them here as they help us demarcate the aspects of our CUPP work within this broad field. As third space professionals we are negotiating and supporting activities in all of these different fields. However, within each of them power relationships are at play, and if knowledge is to be brought together on an equal basis an understanding of how power operates differently in different places is important. John Gaventa's (2005) work on types of participative space is useful in helping to deconstruct this.

Participative Spaces. Gaventa is interested in the workings of citizen democracy, the spaces for participation and the inter-relationships of spaces for engagement: "the places and levels where engagement might occur and the forms of power found within and across them" (Gaventa, 2005, 9). He acknowledges the importance of space as a concept in the literature on power, policy, and citizen action, as well as its use to denote institutional channels or political discourse and social and political practices, (which he sees as *"closed spaces"*). He identifies policy spaces (moments and opportunities where citizens and policy makers might come together) as *"invited spaces*," and those democratic spaces, (where citizens claim citizenship and take direct action) as *"claimed or created spaces*." He sees spaces as "opportunities, moments and channels where

citizens can act to potentially affect policies, discourses, decisions and relationships which affect their lives and interests" (Gaventa, 2005, 11).

Gaventa quotes Cornwall to illustrate how the concept of space and the concept of power are deeply linked. "Space is a social product… it is not simply 'there', a neutral container waiting to be filled, but is a dynamic, humanly constructed means of control, and hence of domination, of power*"* (Lefebvre, 1991, 24, in Cornwall, 2002). Within the notion of space or place boundaries also become significant, determining who might enter and participate effectively within these and the social as well as the actual boundaries that delimit action. Gaventa's "Powercube" suggests that within closed, invited and claimed spaces, a kind of invisible power operates.

Gaventa uses Lukes (1974) to explain these as (a) pluralist, where contests are assumed to be visible and open; (b) hidden, where the views of certain interests and actors are privileged over others; and (c) invisible, where powerlessness is internalised and certain forms and ideologies are taken for granted. Using the model of a Rubik's cube, his powercube becomes three dimensional, with different forms of space cross cut but different forms of power, which each operate within a third, broader spatial dimension that of the local, global or national sphere.

Gaventa's Powercube provides a framework or a tool for analysis in looking at the workings of power and the spaces for engagement and as such is useful in understanding the dynamics of partnership working. Like any framework, it is not definitive, the categories it cites can be cut differently and the interrelationship between them challenged. Its value is in drawing attention to the spaces in which we might meet, the tensions that exist within the relationships we form and the different spheres within which a unit such as CUPP might operate. It also reminds us that despite our focus on local partnerships, some of our work takes place on a national or global level. If we are concerned to change the culture of universities to facilitate a more effective response to the local environment, we become drawn into national and global debate and capacity building with other institutions. So it is to these spaces too that we have to pay attention. Our ability to influence policy, to change working cultures or to prioritise different forms of knowledge, cannot happen within the locality alone. Networks provide virtual spaces to facilitate national and international co-working. We we can choose to operate within them, but these are also subject to different power dynamics. The spaces in which we arrange our meetings, (community or university based, cafeteria or board room, virtual or involving travel) frame the behaviour that may take place there, and the different forms of power, particularly hidden, or internalised notions of power or powerlessness, can have a profound effect on the ability of different partners to participate. A partnership that brings together different forms of knowledge may be able to blur the boundaries between different spaces, bringing academics into claimed or created spaces, opening up formerly closed spaces to community members or co-creating new spaces where power might operate differently.

Communities of Practice. A further way in which the notion of space becomes significant in community-university engagement is through work CUPP and colleagues at the University of Brighton have done in theorising Communities of Practice (CoPs) (See: Hart & Wolff 2006; Hart, Ntung et al., 2011; Hart Davies et al., 2013; Davies, Hart et al., forthcoming). We understand CoPs to be "groups of people informally bound together by shared experience and a

passion for a joint enterprise" (Wenger & Snyder, 2000, 139-140). This idea is located in the principle that learning takes place in the context it is applied and that knowledge is a co-constructed social process in cultivating social learning spaces (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Given that our community-university engagement activities happen across different cultural, social, political and knowledge domains, we find CoPs a useful way to reflect on collaborative activity. It is an idea that is able to absorb more than one type of 'expertise' and provides physical and virtual spaces that people can come together. The CoP literature draws attention to the different roles individuals might play in such a community at different times, as core or peripheral members as they move in and out of central involvement in the task. It is however the co-location of different practitioners, in physical or virtual space, that enables them to develop a more rounded understanding of an issue of shared concern.

We expand further on how we have put CoPs into practice in the section on 'Exploring Spaces' below, however essentially CoPs are concerned with the opening up of shared spaces for learning between individuals with different forms of knowledge. The notion of place making, discussed below, brings together different groups in a shared learning process, but conceptually is more concerned with the way in which individuals might transform their physical environment in ways that are meaningful and democratic.

Placemaking. This now-pervasive term encapsulates broad practices relating to how people and communities transform the environments in which they find themselves, into the places in which they live (Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995), and is a further useful theoretical perspective on the use of space in community-university partnerships. Johnson (2015, 25) discusses "placemaking as community engagement" where "place is produced through social, and socially contested, processes…is involved in the construction of social meaning and identification, and is part of — and constituted by — social and discursive practices" (Røe, 2014, 501). She highlights how demarcation, the use and separation of spaces for engagement, can mark them out as symbols of struggle for power and resources. She quotes Moore (2013) in stressing how "Place – the geographic, cultural, social, and historic context –matters a great deal…when considering how and with whom a university partners in any type of community development activity" (76).

The University of Brighton has worked with the concept of placemaking to develop mechanisms to encourage people to become active (Martin, 2003) in defining and determining the spaces they live in, using affordances offered by localism agendas and planning systems. Significant changes in planning legislation (NPPF 2000) and continued political devolution initiatives in the UK (DCLG 2011) have sought to involve citizens in shaping the places in which they live, but until recently there have been few tools available to help them do this (Cornwall, 2008; Wates, 2014). There are a number of significant, composite issues facing the resilience and self-sustainability of local communities and the notion of placemaking highlights the importance of linking and connecting the different initiatives taking place in a particular area (Franklin & Marsden, 2015). The intention of these new policy initiatives is to introduce local residents to these issues and encourage them to engage with them in ways that are both locally and globally meaningful (Manzini, 2009).

Community21, http://community21.org/ is a set of digital and non-digital tools for imagining physical space developed at the University of Brighton using the work of academics, students and the public and community sector. As such it is a real university/community initiative and one example of placemaking in practice. It was built using a constructive design research approach (Koskinen, Zimmerman et al 2011) that situates objects, interfaces and spaces at the forefront of the processes of design research. Working collaboratively on design (Stappers & Saunders, 2008; Yong Park, 2012) with community partners and stakeholders it provided an opportunity to co-create tools for neighborhood planning. Using a loosely based Communities of Practice approach enabled a range of stakeholders to become involved in designing tools and methods and in identifying their own research questions and priorities. The Community21 digital platform is a virtual space which supports communities to engage with their role 'as the architects and planners of their neighborhoods under localism' (Gant & Gittins 2010). Core CUPP principles of co-design and co-production enabled the access of locally authenticated knowledge as well as visions and data relating to self-defined concerns. The tools that have been developed can now be made available for use by other activists and stakeholders while the data gathered has been significant in engaging the community (Walters et al., 2011) and supporting self-organisation and networked action (Sawhney, De Klerk & Malhotra, 2015). Although Community21 began as a set of digital tools, useable in a virtual space, this has since evolved into an additional physical, placemaker space which we explore in the case study examples below.

Gaventa's Powercube, Wenger's notion of Communities of Practice and these more recent theories of placemaking provide three different ways in which to think about spaces within community-university engagement and the ways in which we work within them. While upholding values of knowledge exchange, co-creation, reciprocity, and mutual benefit, it is important to recognise how the dynamics of power impact on bringing these into being. As third space professionals we often describe ourselves as "boundary spanners" (Wenger, 2000) able to straddle the boundaries of both community and university spaces. However in doing so our work does not stop there. It is also important to ensure that those we are working with are also able to operate on an equal basis within the different spaces in which we choose to meet, are able to understand the significance of closed, invited or claimed spaces, and the dynamics of hidden or invisible power in the relationships we develop together.

The following section looks at how our understanding of the importance of power, places and spaces plays out in three examples of our work.

Exploring Spaces

The CUPP Helpdesk. The Helpdesk service deals with around 350 enquiries a year and processes have been developed to meet the volume, diversity and complexity of this need. A snapshot of 2014/15 shows that the majority of enquiries come from community/voluntary/charity sector/ (44 percent), but a significant amount are also from social enterprises (17 percent) and statutory bodies (10 percent). As a catch-all Community Helpdesk, enquiries also come from businesses (9 percent), individuals (13 percent) and internally from academics and staff seeking support around community engagement (7 percent). In terms of operational processes, an enquiry pathway shows how the Helpdesk Manager will take an enquiry through triage, signposting, investigating, brokerage and early partnership development. This could suggest that the

Helpdesk's spatial practice follows a linear and binary conception, whereby a request is responded to by bringing two separate entities into a relationship - a contained solution-focused space (Laing, 2015) . This may occur for simple one-off requests that require signposting or a tangible time-bound conclusion, however the range, diversity and changing nature of enquiries can also move us into multi-dimensional communities of practice that have very different spatial dimensions (*ibid)*. A good example of this is an enquiry that came from three closely connected mental health peer support groups who wanted to find an academic who would partner on a funding bid that could help them gain an evidence base for their specific model and practice and ultimately gain future funding. This cut across disciplines of social sciences and health, as well as into an existing social mentoring research network and therefore led to a series of large meetings attended by peer support practitioners and academics interested in mental health/wellbeing, social mentoring, peer support and organisational models. Here three separate enquiries that could each have resulted in single, binary relationships were brought together in one broader community of practice with the potential for a range of different relationships and future research projects.

This example enquiry helps to illustrate the role of the 'third space professional' and the exploratory space opened up and held by the Helpdesk. Ideas for partnership, especially when related to research and knowledge exchange, can be messy, tentative and require interpreting and shaping in relation to the university's offer and resources available. Although, the service aims to be needs-led, interpretation and shaping by the Helpdesk Manager is required and expectations and misperceptions have to be managed. The Helpdesk gives community partners the opportunity and position to ask. However the task is to also get them to think about what they can offer in a mutually beneficial partnership. This all has implications for the power dynamics at play in these brokered spaces. An academic interested in helping an enquirer also has to be supported to think through how this connects and can be embedded into their research and teaching. These are complex process for all to manage and can pose challenges around power, equity and influence as well as practical questions over the available time and resources to be invested. Thus in the above example, the need expressed for evidence to secure funding has not yet been directly met and it has been difficult to identify funding that could satisfy both the community and academic outcomes desired. Within this context, the third space professional attempts to facilitate co-exploration and exchange in ways that can be physical (creating accessible meeting places, sharing useful material resources), virtual (translation of jargon, avoiding miscommunication, starting to structure ideas as well as use of digital communications e.g. Skype meetings) and relational (holding the space and relationships to keep the dialogue going, acting as a go-between). Some of this spatial practice can include "taken for granted" tasks that stem from CUPP's values and community engagement principles and can range from as small as making cups of tea to not assuming any prior knowledge, valuing everyone's contribution and asking facilitative questions in meetings. This spatial practice aims at creating next steps and actions that can sustain the engaged space further into the form of a sustainable community-university partnership.

The engaged space that the Helpdesk holds open reveals interesting spatial issues around time, action and the relational phenomenon of space. As touched on, a Helpdesk enquiry may open up

an engaged space for a specific time-bound purpose. This could be for an event such as academic or student involvement in a one-off conference or the use of a university room/facility to host a community event. Issues over access to university facilities and resources are a good example of how the exploratory nature of the Helpdesk can open up and shape new spaces for engagement. The university's room policy has been shaped in response to the requests that come through therefore in this way, the Helpdesk allows for a question to be asked: can this space be used? Can this part of the university become engaged? One enquirer asked could a social enterprise arm of a local youth charity that employs young apprentices take on painting and decorating contracts in the university; therefore this opened up the area of procurement as a potential engaged space. Or it may be that an initial enquiry changes and transforms over time into a wholly new proposition for collaboration. The spatial aspects of the engaged space created through the enquiry therefore change over this continuum over time. With the latter, the Helpdesk usually holds this relationship with the community partner as different forms of engagement (student/staff volunteering, SCE, research, CKE) and different areas of the university (schools/disciplines, support services) are explored. CUPP has developed good ongoing relationships with the local sector and the majority of enquiries come from existing contacts. These relational spaces are developed and sustained in part through engagement activities undertaken by the Helpdesk development role. These activities include physical presence at community events and celebratory showcase events that bring community and university partners together to better understand what is possible and trigger future possibilities.

On Our Doorsteps, a Seed Fund

Within the strand of our work that focuses on Community Knowledge Exchange, we have since 2010 been running a small seed fund, which supports the early stages of partnership working between academics and community organisations. The fund was originally known as On Our Doorsteps but was renamed the CUPP Seed Fund in 2015. The programme is based on three main ideas: being a good neighbour; realising the mutual benefit achievable through community-university partnerships; and focusing on activities within the immediate localities of University of Brighton campus buildings. Bids are invited annually from partnerships of university staff and community organisations for a sum of £5000 to fund projects which could meet these aims. The bids are considered against six criteria: the equality of the partnership; the degree of locality; the identification of genuine community need; the realisation of mutual benefit; the likelihood of a longer term partnership being established; and the volunteer opportunities involved. We are currently conducting a study of the 19 projects funded in the years 2010-12 which includes consideration of the significance of the physical locations of the projects and the related issues of the diverse roles of the participants

One of the key defining features of this particular community engagement programme is already implied in its original title, "On Our Doorsteps." More particularly a core aim of the programme is to focus on activities very close to the university campuses. This aim needs a little contextualising. The significance of this is not (as it might at first seem) so much an attempt to overcome any issues of the University of Brighton being an ivory tower or a separate "castle in a swamp" (Watson, 2007) as it is a reflection of the (now relatively unusual in the UK) mixed multi-campus nature of this particular university. Brighton has five campuses spread across three separate coastal urban areas. The campuses are each very differently placed with regard to their physically adjacent communities. In the city of Brighton and Hove there are: a city centre Grand

Parade campus – opposite the Royal Pavilion and at the heart of the city's cultural quarter; the Moulsecoomb campus set in a mixed residential and light industrial area; and the Falmer greenfield campus on the edge of the city, but close to some of its least affluent areas. In Eastbourne the university buildings are situated in a ribbon cluster among some of the wealthiest residential parts of the town, while in Hastings a new campus is being developed in the very heart of the centre of a town undergoing regeneration. Brighton then is a university very much physically intertwined with a range of diverse residential and commercial communities. On every campus practical issues of getting on with the neighbours on big issues and small ones are therefore the stuff of daily life. The university has very high permeability. The seed funding programme was developed for a university with that particular characteristic.

In practice the potential restriction of the requirement to work in close physical proximity to the university campuses has proved no inhibitor to enabling a wide range of types and subject matter of projects. This may, however, be a different matter if the university was on a single campus or less immediately adjacent to such a considerable diversity of residential and commercial districts. Given the emphasis of the programme on physical proximity to the university campuses and the patterns of housing in the three coastal towns it is also not surprising that in about a third of the projects evaluated, university members involved were also local residents of the streets and districts which were the focus of the projects. This further blurred the distinctions as to what we might otherwise think of in terms of a binary partnership of two separate entities.

Many seed fund projects are concerned with physical proximity and represent permeability between different constituents. We also include here an example of a project which perhaps creates a "third space," between academics, practitioners and community members his is the Resilience Forum, which had been running on one of our campuses since 2010 and became established in Hastings through a seed funded project in 2014 and is also now run with YoungMinds, a national charity at their London headquarters. Resilience in this context is the idea that people facing adversity can overcome it, whilst also potentially subtly altering, or even dramatically transforming, (aspects of) that adversity. Jointly run by the University of Brighton and a local community interest company BoingBoing (see http://www.boingboing.org.uk), Resilience Forums are Communities of Practice (CoPs) that are open to anybody with an interest in resilience research and practice. Forums are free to attend and topics for discussion to date have included child protection, sociological critiques of resilience, hope, inequalities, reoffending, collective resilience and building resilience in practice. The forum is beginning to experiment with online participation and have had people skyping in. And after each session, forum materials are uploaded on the BoingBoing website (www.boingboing.org.uk) so that participants who couldn't be there in person (either in the room or online) can access some of the learning. Sometimes the forums are filmed and then the entire film is uploaded on the BoingBoing website. Twitter feeds, Facebook posts and blogs on the BoingBoing website distribute the learning in these other spaces.

Davies, Hart et al. (forthcoming) give further consideration to how Communities of Practice are a useful approach to community-university activity. They note how CoP theory offers some ideas and a language for trying things out in spaces where people are coming from lots of different backgrounds and experiences. In particular, how knowledge can be co-constructed, questioning

assumptions about what is legitimate knowledge and making us aware of the participative dynamics of the CoP space.

In the Forum in Hastings, the university in partnership with BoingBoing has been a key convener of people and services interested in the idea of resilience, which has included for example, academics, young people, youth offending teams and parent carers. The forums provide a space where different types of people are encouraged to exchange ideas and develop dialogue. On a pragmatic note, the university provision of physical space is a key factor here. Resources and availability in the wider sector are often constrained. CoPs also often include individuals who can span different "worlds", who are known as boundary spanners (see Wenger 2000). They are those people who can broker and translate across different practice settings. We have previously identified the important role that these boundary spanners have in CoP work (Hart & Wolff 2006; Hart et al. 2013). In a more relational sense, this boundary spanning can also help to challenge notions of who has expertise as it is not always coming from the professional in the room. This is in contrast to other experiences those same individuals may have outside of the CoP space. Davies, Hart et al (forthcoming) highlight that often, parent-carers and young people themselves may also hold expert views on what it means to work with the resilience concept in particular, which they may or may not realize they hold.

As we introduced in the section on theorising space, this for us is an example that gives weight to the view that projects of this kind may be more usefully viewed as constituting a multi-dimensional community of practice. This not only brings together individuals and groups with different interests and skills but which also enables individuals to bring together their own separate roles and identities into a new unity.

Imagining the Future and the Place Maker Space Initiative

In 2013, to mark CUPP's 10 year anniversary, we initiated a small research project (10 down 10 to go) into the characteristics of the future of community university partnership working. This involved interviews with community partners and community engagement managers and practitioners, a half day symposium with focus groups for students, managers and academics and a literature review that took in a range of future scenario building exercises. The intention was to construct a vision of what community university engagement might look like for a university or community partner on a day in 2023. This could then be used to assess where we have got to, and what else we need to do to take things forward.

Certainly, that vision included an increased use of technology, and a blurring of boundaries between community and university as practitioners played different roles. Still, four out of the five groups we consulted highlighted the importance of physical spaces inside and outside the university to promote exchange. This emphasised the need for flexible spaces that could offer accessible learning "like a public library" or a community café that could be owned by communities and university practitioners alike. People spoke about the need for "Secure spaces," "Regular days for our neighbours where the university is opened up to the people in our community," a "Regular festival/conference focused on social justice and which moves between our site towns/cities, developed by an array of community people" (Wolff et al., 2013, 10).

This did not come as a huge surprise. As this article has already illustrated, space has always been a key consideration for CUPP, with constant debate about whether activity should take place inside or outside the institution, should take in claimed or invited spaces, or be a first opportunity to encourage people into our existing campuses (hopefully breaking down barriers for the future). However this study confirmed that space, both physical and "how it feels", is likely to remain a crucial factor in successful community university partnerships and needs very careful consideration.

Since then, there have been a number of moves to create such a flexible, co-designed space in the different locations within which the university operates. Among these is the Community21 Place-Maker-Space initiative—a physical room, in a central city location, specifically intended to generate collaborative debate and creative interaction between universities, the public and private sector and communities (Farrell Review, 2014). While the specification of such a space is still evolving, it will be used by university academics, students, graduate groups, planning officials, private companies and community members. Along with Community21's practice based researchers, two new graduate enterprises who are working directly with communities to envision and design specific local environments using different digital tools and gaming software and local planners have already booked a range of consultation activities from this space. As a physical extension of the Community 21 digital website it also forms part of a broader "Maker-Space" movement which offer communal craft and technology workshops which help form social bonds and develop new skills within communities through acts of making (Hatch, 2014; Halse et al., 2010).

Our work on the Community21 digital platform demonstrated the role making can have in engaging different groups and communities (Gant & Duggan, 2013) through the fabrication of tools, objects and products. The Place-Maker-Space provides the physical space and relevant software to enable groups to come together to develop collective visions for places making community and neighbourhood planning a more democratic process (DCLG 2015). As such the university plays a significant role in engaging local communities and helping them to engage with and shape their locality in a way that is both creative and informed. (see Making Futures, 2015). Examples of the methods we have used include:

- The production of augmented reality techno-town-tapestries where "hard-to-reach" or disenfranchised groups can use animation apps to "characterise" problems or ideas in anonymous ways and communicate them back to the community through a publically accessible, intelligent interface;
- Minecraft (a popular computer game) which engages young people in the co-production of highly interactive, 'gamified' and realistic virtual simulations of their lived or imagined spaces that can be shared locally or globally (Reckien & Eisenack, 2010);
- Ageing apps and role play apps that visually illustrate someone's own ageing process to elicit empathy in disconnected community members and enable the making of new maps and plans for greater cohesion.

The Community21 initiative with its digital and physical spaces provides an opportunity to co-define the challenges and concerns for research and practice with different urban and rural communities. From a university perspective, this process is invaluable in helping to ensure the continued relevance of our teaching and research in subjects such as design, planning, urbanism,

social science, geography etc. Moreover it is also helping to redefine these subject areas away from static notions of disciplinary distinction, into inter-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary engaged activity that involves stakeholders, transcends boundaries and is responsive to changing contexts. Through co-production and co-defined spaces we are able to make meaningful and useful applied place-based interventions, connecting communities (Sawhney et al., 2015) for sustainability and resilience (Manzini, 2015; Horlings, 2015; Frankin & Marsden, 2015). Together they illustrate how virtual and physical spaces both play a role in meaningful engagement.

Conclusion

In more than 10 years of CUPP's work, we have learned to pay attention to the importance of space, virtual, physical and digital. We also ascribe importance to the relational: the way that power operates within different spaces and to the role we play as "third space professionals" or boundary spanners in creating tools and spaces in which collaboration can take place and mediating relationships within them. While we dispute the notion of a binary division between community and university, and recognise that students and academics are also community members, delivering and using community services, we acknowledge that culture and norms operate differently in community and university environments, and each has its jargon and ways of working.

The nature and location of these spaces may vary, depending on the proximity of the campus to the city and the needs of the local area. However our research has indicated that spaces for engagement, both physical and virtual, are important; we need permeable boundaries though which different forms of knowledge might be exchanged (Wolff et al., 2013). We argue that key characteristics for such space centre on three main considerations. These are location, participation and the digital. The first of these relates to whether activity should happen inside or outside of the university. Bringing community members onto campus might be ideal for one event, whilst taking researchers into the community might be a preference for another, while we are looking to develop new permeable spaces no single location is ideal and a variety of spaces may be required to promote participation of variable location and size. In addition to this, each location has symbolic meaning and power implications that need to be acknowledged. A lecture theatre, for example, suggests the primacy of the expert and the relative passivity of the participants and would inhibit any attempt at collaboration or co-design. A university building is an invited space and its relative formality can inhibit the equal involvement of certain participants.

With respect to participation, different engagement techniques are required. The Place Maker space for example, is specifically equipped with a range of hands on tools and software to maximize different learning styles. Designers working across disciplines can help in the creative design of tools for engagement. This also leads us to emphasise the value of co-production in engaged spaces and this this aspiration is often a useful 'test' for accessible such spaces are to those who are normally excluded from the conversation.

Finally, our experiences point to the usefulness and importance of virtual spaces such as social networks, group conferencing, or interactive on line working spaces. We find this diversity offers

invaluable spaces for distance and international working. But the availability of individuals across time zones, connective reliability and people's familiarity with technology all impact on a sense of power and agency. In our experience virtual spaces work best when blended with real meetings in physical spaces in which personal relationships have been allowed to build.

By looking more deeply into theories of power and the interaction between space and power, into learning and the development of learning through Communities of Practice and into placemaking and the tools and processes that enable communities to influence the spaces they live in, we are able to appreciate the complexities of partnership working. This has enhanced our understanding of the spaces in which we work and made us mindful of the need to open up the more formal environments a university traditionally offers if partnership working is to thrive. We feel a key feature of our future work will be to develop new flexible spaces within which Communities of Practice can meet and learn together, in a way that combines the different forms of knowledge that reside in practitioner, academic and local communities. While the advancement and continued use of technology will provide us with more virtual tools and environments within which to collaborate we continue to think that new forms of physical space will also be important.

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The morning after: Stakeholder reflections on the sustainability of a community-campus engagement center in the changing environment

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Abstract

Most analyses of the success and sustainability of community-university engagement initiatives focus on the university environment. We explore the impact of changes in the larger social and political systems on the community as well as those within the university on the meaning and use of a shared community space. The York University-TD Community Engagement Centre (CEC) is a storefront facility for research and teaching shared by York University and the Jane-Finch/Black Creek community, a richly diverse, suburban, underserved neighbourhood in Toronto, Canada. The physical space facilitates and sustains the community-university partnership in this region. As representatives of the community and/or university with strong ties to the engagement centre, we review changes in both the institution and the larger political context in which the university and community navigate their relationship. We also reflect on how these changes play a role in determining community and university priorities, the value of their relationship, and the availability of resources. Community-university initiatives emerge in environments that provide opportunities for shared activities and the development of a shared vision. However, the sustainability of a community-university initiative is strongly influenced by broad environmental changes, requiring self-reflection, trust, communication and innovation.

Keywords:

Community-university partnerships, community engagement, engaged scholarship

Community-engagement initiatives emerge when they align with community and university priorities and visions. These initiatives can take numerous forms (Martin, Smith, & Phillips, 2005). One strategy of supporting a range of community-engagement initiatives is the creation of a shared physical space within the community. The acquisition and maintenance of space is a major long-term investment. Its establishment may be even more influenced by environmental opportunities than other engagement strategies. A successful partnership also requires ongoing adjustments to, and reflections on, the changing socio-political environment. There is generally recognition that partnerships develop against a backdrop of a longer historical and political context (Martin et al., 2005) but they exist in a socio-political environment that continues to change. These changes can affect communities and universities differently because of their unique social and political locations and the respective value and meaning of the partnership can change (Kassam & Tetty, 2003; Suarez-Balcazar, Harper, & Lewis, 2005). This can result in friction that can surprise or disappoint one or both parties and which can make the ongoing commitment to this shared resource more difficult to support. However, it can also create new

opportunities, bringing in new dimensions of collaboration, and new shared goals and visions. This paper will explore the impact of changes that support and/or challenge the sustainability of a specific shared space, a community engagement centre, as the community and university negotiate these changes and their relationship.

Weerts and Sandmann (2010) argue that successful ongoing community-university engagement requires boundary spanning: the creation of bridges between institutions and their partners. Boundary spanning activities are most successful when they are complex and multilayered, and include the sharing of resources (McNall, Reed, Brown, & Allen, 2008). These resources need to be seen as belonging to both/all parties and be shared equitably, rather than being seen as belonging to one party and charitably donated to another (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Martin et al., 2005). The genuine sharing of a physical space in the community by university and community can not only be an instantiation of boundary spanning, but a foundation on which to build other forms of boundary spanning activities, and so may contribute in important ways to the sustainability of the overall partnership. The York University TD Community Engagement Centre (CEC) is a shared space that forms a complex multi-layered bridge between York University and the Black Creek Jane-Finch community. The CEC itself is both one of the valuable resources being shared and a facilitator of the sharing of other valuable resources. It is a resource that came into being as a result of environmental opportunities, and that has been influenced by ongoing changes in the institutional, community and political environments.

Weerts and Sandmann (2008) note that environmental opportunities include (a) the presence of champions at the community and university level with strong social capital who support the collaboration, (b) favourable institutional and governmental policies that facilitate engagement; openness in both communities to putting energy into new collaborations (whether through positive experiences that pull for closer ties with the university, or increased awareness of needs that push community members and agencies to seek new solutions to challenges, the latter being particularly sensitive to the changing socio-political environment), and (c) the availability of funding to allow for the establishment and maintenance of the infrastructures necessary for success. While these may be necessary elements for the establishment of engagement initiatives, it also provides a useful framework for considering the evolution of a partnership over time. The paper draws from a number of university and community documents, studies and reports, focus groups conducted during the 5-year evaluation of the centre, and focused discussions held with staff and community representatives who have been deeply involved with the centre since its inception. The paper begins with a description of community and university contexts, and then presents changes and events across the course of the 8 years that the centre has existed as opportunities and challenges to the sustainability of the engagement centre.

Context

The Jane-Finch/Black Creek Community.

The city of Toronto has a number of distinctive characteristics that provide the larger context in which the Jane-Finch/Black Creek neighbourhood is situated. Toronto is the largest city in Canada and the capital of the most populous province, Ontario. In 2011, the City of Toronto had a population of over 2.6 million people but the Greater Toronto Area had an overall population

of 5.6 million. In that census, 51% of Toronto residents were born outside of Canada, and approximately one-third of those had arrived in the last 10 years (City of Toronto, 2013a). Almost half of the residents of Toronto (49%) identified as visible minority, with 12.3% of the total population identifying themselves as South Asian, 10.8% as Chinese, 8.5% as Black, 5.1% as Filipino, and 2.8% as Latin American.

Toronto has a higher rate of low-income individuals and families (19%) than the rest of Canada, and the rest of the province of Ontario. Those neighbourhoods reporting the highest concentrations of families living with low income also have the highest concentrations of visible minority residents, immigrants, lone parent families, and unemployment, highlighting patterns of social exclusion and structural determinants of inequality (City of Toronto, 2011). The global recession has increased unemployment, with a 29% increase in numbers of families and individuals receiving social assistance from 2007 to 2010, and increasing pressure on the community agencies who supported them (City of Toronto, 2011).

Toronto has challenges in terms of affordable housing; almost one in five households (19.8%) pay more than 30% of their income on rental fees (City of Toronto, 2013b). Almost half (45%) of Toronto residents rent their homes and most renters live in high-rise apartments. There has been a building boom in the city, but approximately 70% of the new housing units have been high-rise apartment buildings. With less than four percent of new buildings having apartments with three or more bedrooms, families in Toronto face particular challenges in finding affordable housing (Toronto City Planning, 2016). As a result, the suburbs and outer suburbs have seen rapid growth, and many newcomers settle outside of the downtown core.

The Jane-Finch/Black Creek region, a suburb in the northwest part of the city, reflects Toronto's rich diversity, and the factors that have pushed newcomers out of the city core, but also has unique characteristics. The Jane-Finch/Black Creek neighbourhood straddles the intersection of three Toronto city wards. Relative to the rest of Toronto, the three wards within which the neighbourhood is situated have a younger population, with a higher proportion of children under the age of 25 living at home. The wards also report lower levels of education and a greater percentage of the community born outside of Canada, ranging from 59% to 64% (City of Toronto, 2016). The Jane-Finch/Black Creek neighbourhood resembles the wards it resides in on many measures. About 70% of the community identifies as visible minority. Reflecting the structural barriers to employment for immigrants found across the city, this neighbourhood also has an average income that is about 10% lower than that of Toronto overall (City of Toronto, 2003). It has even lower incomes and a higher proportion of lone parent families than the larger region, in part reflecting the presence of several high rise public housing units at the corner of Jane and Finch that have low income as a prerequisite for tenancy (City of Toronto, 2003).

While not dissimilar from its surrounding region, the community has been singled out for negative media representations, and has struggled to redefine its public image and bring attention to its many strengths and assets (Jane Finch TSNS Task Force, 2015). Jane-Finch, in particular, has been associated with "guns, gangs and drugs" (Pagliaro, 2013). This stigmatized identity is a source of frustration and results in a transferal of stigma onto community residents (James, 2012; Joyette & Oda, 2005; Narain & Kumar, 2013). The social construction of the neighbourhood through negative racial stereotypes and a crime and security lens has also shaped the direction of

government initiatives in the neighbourhood and justified what residents perceive as over-policing, along with ineffective and intrusive revitalization strategies (Jane Finch TSNS Task Force, 2015). Importantly, it erases the community's strong and vibrant history of civic engagement and activism. The many assets of this richly diverse neighbourhood include the numerous agencies, community groups and arts projects who collaborated in a range of community initiatives.

Sorrow and anger over the death of three year old Breanna Davy in 1999, slain by a stray bullet in a shooting, brought community and local agency representatives together into a new initiative. Community representatives initiated consultations with staff from the City of Toronto, the housing authority and police services to discuss public safety and the need to strengthen physical and social infrastructure (Rieder, 2005). One major outcome of this meeting was the development of the Black Creek West Community Capacity Project. The Community Capacity project is a three-phase community needs assessment (City of Toronto, 2003). Phase I focused on the collection of information about the population and the services available in the community. In Phase II, there were community consultations with representatives across multiple sectors including community residents, businesses, faith leaders and agencies. Phase III has focused on the development of an Action Plan to respond to issues raised in a sustainable and coordinated way. An important aspect to this initiative was the focus on community capacity; that the consultation process also recognized the importance of documenting the ability of the community to build on its strengths, and that it led to an action plan for change (Rieder, 2005). These action plans included engagement with local organizations concerned with education at all levels (primary to tertiary), and building and strengthening employment opportunities, including employment at the local university, York University, which is one of the neighbourhood's largest employers. Another action plan was creating opportunities for meaningful engagement of community residents in decision-making and implementation on community issues. These action plans describe a community that is proactive in seeking and defining meaningful partnership with their local university partner across multiple dimensions of engagement.

York University and Community Engagement

York University was established in 1959 as a second university in Toronto; it is now one of four. It is a comprehensive university with 11 faculties, almost 47,000 undergraduates and close to 6,000 graduate students, making it Canada's third largest university (York University, 2015). The university's Keele campus was founded in 1965 in what was then farmland in the northwest of the city, next to the Jane-Finch/Black Creek neighbourhood. The university identifies social justice, diversity, accessibility and fairness as defining values, therefore creating a fertile setting for the development and sustainability of a community engagement initiative (York University, 2010).

In 2006, York University received a ten-year gift of $1 million from the TD-Canada Trust bank that allowed it to establish a deeper relationship with the Jane-Finch/Black Creek neighbourhood through increased community engagement. The choice of Jane-Finch/Black Creek for the location of this centre reflects the recognition that York University is part of the geographic neighbourhood, and has had a long presence in it. There have been numerous individual partnerships between community residents and agencies, and university members and programs

(York University, 2009) but the initiatives have lacked coherence and visibility. The gift was made to establish a visible, pan-university engagement centre with a goal of promoting "accessibility and social justice through meaningful and transformative community/university partnerships." In 2008, following a consultation process with community residents and agencies and with York University community members (York University, 2007), the York University-TD Community Engagement Centre (CEC) was formally opened in a shopping mall at the intersection of Jane Street and Finch Avenue.

The receipt of the gift that supported the establishment of the CEC dovetailed with an impetus to strengthen community engagement at York altogether. In 2009, York University released the results of a consultation process that coincided with the establishment of the CEC and focused on community engagement. One outcome of this initiative was the documentation of the long history of engagement of individual faculty members and programs with Jane-Finch/Black Creek agencies and community groups, particularly in the area of education (York University, 2009). The consultations led to a 2010 White Paper in which York defined itself as "Canada's Engaged University". The university explicitly included community engagement as part of its strategic plan, and made a commitment to integrate community engagement into all three areas of scholarship: research, teaching and service (York University, 2010).

The York University-TD Community Engagement Centre (CEC).

The CEC is a storefront facility for research and teaching that seeks to promote and strengthen the relationships between York University and the Jane-Finch/Black Creek community by facilitating collaboration and resource sharing, in service of mutual goals. The CEC is expected to benefit residents, students, faculty and the university as a whole by (a) utilizing the strengths and assets of residents' knowledge/expertise to enhance student learning experiences, (b) addressing and reducing barriers to full participation in postsecondary education for community residents, (c) facilitating the development of new community/university collaborations, (d) enhancing the depth and breadth of new and existing collaborative research partnerships; and (e) promoting civic engagement opportunities.

The Yorkgate mall in which the CEC is located is at a transportation hub in the region, with several bus routes crossing at the intersection and a large amount of free parking. A bicycle path leads from the mall along a greenbelt to the university, which has created easier access between the university and the centre. It takes approximately 30 minutes to walk this distance. The mall also houses Seneca College's Yorkgate Campus (offering academic upgrading and two-year diploma programs in Practical Nursing and for Social Service Workers). York University and Seneca College are co-located inside a suite of offices with both shared and individual spaces but separate storefront entrances and signage. The collaboration between Seneca and York in sharing this space increases the flexibility of the space to meet both community and university/college needs. The mall also houses the Black Creek Community Health Centre, and The Spot (a program of the Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre with youth-focused programming), therefore creating opportunities for collaboration with community agencies, as well as several local businesses and a large food store that bring residents into the mall on a regular basis. The physical space for the CEC includes a large reception area, which has two computers for use by community residents and various information about the university, 5 small offices, and one large

meeting room. The meeting room is used for CEC meetings but is also booked by community agencies and resident groups, as well as university classes and programs, for initiatives that further the mutual goals of the CEC.
The ten-year gift pays for the rent and maintenance of the space to the local mall. In addition matching funds are provided from the President's Office to cover salaries of the staff: a manager, a community projects coordinator, and an administrative assistant, plus a number of placement students and work/study students, which are on-campus positions for students who demonstrate financial need. Although the matching funds come from the President's Office, the CEC reports to the Vice-President Academic and Provost.

The original governance of the CEC included an Executive Committee, and five working committees: Program (including two subgroups: Access and Public Education, and Inter-Professional Education); Evaluation; Research and Knowledge Exchange, Finance and Fundraising, Nominations and Outreach. The goal was to have each committee comprised of equal numbers of community residents and university faculty, with community resident and university member co-chairs. Finding community residents who were able to participate during workday hours, and university members and agency representatives who could participate during evening hours, was challenging. Thus, keeping an active membership on all committees was difficult. After four years, the structure was simplified into just three committees: Research and Evaluation; Experiential Education; and Access and Public Education, and the Executive Committee was eventually replaced by an Advisory Committee.

The CEC is not the only pan-university community engagement initiative at York University. A separate initiative, the Knowledge Mobilization (KMb) unit, also exists at York University and supports partnerships for research collaboration and knowledge exchange, with an emphasis on the region to the North of York University. The KMb unit, established in 2005, focuses on research alone using a knowledge broker model. Knowledge brokers bring together organizations and university faculty who are seeking research or community partners, respectively. Once the initial introduction is made, the KMb unit steps out of the relationship. Other KMb activities focus on communicating information about York research to non-academic audiences, for example by creating and posting plain language summaries of faculty members' work. In recent years, the KMb unit has joined ResearchImpact, a national network of knowledge brokers supporting a similar model of community engagement and knowledge exchange (http://researchimpact.ca/kmbinaction/). The KMb unit is administered by the office of the Vice President Research and Innovation. The CEC, with its education mandate, is administered by the office of the VP Academic and Provost. Although united under a shared strategic plan, the different offices have different priorities.

The result can be that activities between these two university initiatives are not always aligned and could potentially be seen as competing. Integration between these two initiatives therefore depends to some extent on communication between the two VP offices.

Joint initiatives and collaboration

Since its inception, the CEC has provided space and opportunities for collaboration and joint initiatives between university and community. In some cases, the community leads these

initiatives, with the university playing a supporting role as a partner, or one of many partners. In some cases, they are initiatives led by university, in partnership with one or more community organizations. Finally, some are truly joint initiatives, developed in collaboration between university and community.

There have been a number of different kinds of programs and activities offered at the CEC since its inception. An evaluation at the five-year point of the CEC identified activities within each of the areas of the CEC goals that reflect the ways in which, by virtue of its central location in the community, this shared space acts as a bridge between members of the community and university, supporting multiple goals and functions.

Activities that enrich student experience:

The CEC has been used for undergraduate and graduate courses from several Faculties: Education, Health, Environmental Studies, and Liberal and Professional Studies. These courses have an emphasis on community engagement (e.g., community-based research) or community issues (e.g., urban planning). By physically situating the classes in a community location, students are immersed in the environment and processes that they are studying.

The CEC has also facilitated a number of experiential education opportunities, where students gain real world experiences through placements or internships with local supervisors, participated in research projects with community partners, or engaged with community members in more limited interactions, such as through interviews with community agency staff. The CEC's physical presence in the community and the relationships forged in the governance of the CEC have helped to draw attention of both university and neighbourhood community members to these possibilities. The CEC has also organized on-site student led clinics for community residents providing supervised professional services such as annual tax clinics, and a legal aid clinic, thereby using the community space for activities that bridge student learning objectives but also provide direct services of interest to the community.

Activities that reduce barriers to post-secondary education for residents

A program that precedes the CEC, now housed within it, is the Bridging Program for Women, a program offered by Women's Studies as an alternative route to accessing secondary education for women over the age of 21. The Bridging Program allows women who do not have the prerequisites for university to take one of a select number of university courses to explore the possibility of university study. Those who attain a B or higher are eligible for acceptance to York University in several undergraduate programs. Having the program offered in a shared community space increases its physical and psychological accessibility, thereby facilitating access to higher education for community members.

In addition to the academic Bridging Program for women, the CEC also offers regular information sessions for community residents about application procedures and financial aid offered within the storefront space, and support for transition programs in high schools. Information is readily available in the reception space of the CEC. The CEC staff also participate in regional and city networks on university access, ensuring open communication about the

needs of community residents, local policies that affect educational access, and university policies and procedures.

Activities that support new collaborations

The CEC has been instrumental in supporting community projects and initiatives, and bringing together community and university partners with shared interests and needs. For example, the Black Creek Micro-Lending Program is a community-university initiative supporting local individuals and businesses to access small amounts of funding to establish or support entrepreneurial activities. Community residents and university faculty and students, with funding from a university grant (Low, Yip, & Visano, 2008), developed this program collaboratively. For the not-for-profit sector, York University funded the Catalyst Grants program, providing small amounts of funding (maximum $10,000) to sustainable projects led jointly by community residents/groups and York University members that met community needs. These initiatives engage both community and university in collaboratively defining, documenting and building capacity in the community.

The Good Food Market was a farmer's market, created in response to a lack of affordable fresh food in the neighbourhood. The Good Food Market ran during the spring, summer and fall in a space situated at an intersection in the community that is just outside of the university boundaries. The Good Food Market included not only fresh fruits and vegetables but also local crafts and locally prepared foods. The choice of a location closer to the university was intended in part to meet a secondary goal of the market. This farmer's market was not only to provide fresh food locally, but also to encourage more York University members to shop in the community, thereby creating another bridge for sharing resources between community and university.

The development of collaborations is also supported through knowledge sharing activities. These take place in public spaces within the Yorkgate mall in order to engage and reach out to community residents and meet community goals of better coordination and accessibility of local information. The CEC has organized community events that included presentations of a range of community and university partnership activities and projects. The CEC has also engaged in a number of strategies to share information about the community—generated by the community—highlighting the positive aspects of the Jane Finch/Black Creek community. The Knowledge sharing activities include information fairs and presentations. Agencies, research partnerships, and university information are shared to ensure communication of information and research findings, foster opportunities for new initiatives, and increase the impact of existing projects.

Activities that encourage depth and breadth in partnerships.

In addition to supporting new initiatives, the CEC has helped to build longer-term and larger networks of relationships that can be sustained across multiple initiatives. Consistent with the notion of complex and multilayered boundary spanning activities (McNall et al., 2008), many include research, community action, and educational opportunities. For example, Assets Coming Together (ACT) for Youth was a multi-year, multi-sectoral collaboration between community members and researchers that is funded by a federal research grant. ACT for Youth addresses

negative portrayals of youth in urban communities that focuses on the Jane-Finch/Black Creek community.

Another example is the Connecting the Dots Conference for Jane-Finch and York U Partnerships. This one-day conference, initiated by the CEC, brought together residents, agency representatives, students, faculty, and staff to reflect on relationships, perceptions, and challenges, and to foster mutual understanding in the development of future partnership opportunities. This conference not only supported and motivated reflection on the nature of the community-university relationship between York University and the Jane-Finch/Black Creek community, but also led to a commitment to ongoing support for mutual understanding, through the development of a credited course where York students can obtain a contextual understanding of the neighbourhood provided by community and resident leaders.

Showcasing university programs in the community

Although not highlighted in the evaluation, the CEC has also participated in a series of activities that have increased community residents' knowledge of university activities working with or relevant to the community. As with the knowledge sharing activities described above, these made use of the common spaces in the mall in which the storefront resides. Included among these are performances by York University Fine Arts students in the Yorkgate mall for Black History Month, and a University Fair held in the Yorkgate mall to showcase student placement and research opportunities. The latter provide information not only about the activities of York University students but also of local agencies, issues and research initiatives.

Opportunities and challenges in a changing context and implications for shared spaces

A number of social and political events have occurred that shifted the goals and priorities of the university and community in ways that had an impact on their shared initiatives and shared spaces, either directly or indirectly. Many of these emerged through discussions with stakeholders of the CEC in preparation for this paper. Others grew from consultations with community and university stakeholders, which have been documented in formal reports.

Policies Affecting Collaboration: Institutional, Municipal, Provincial

Changes in the Regional and Municipal Context. In 2005, the City of Toronto and United Way, Toronto, launched the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy. The intention was to invest in community infrastructure in communities most in need of support, with an emphasis on security and safety. Thirteen Priority Neighbourhoods were identified; the Jane-Finch/Black Creek neighbourhood was among them. In 2012, the City engaged in community consultations that broadened the scope of social factors and desired outcomes taken into consideration (the Black Creek Community Capacity Project).

In 2014, the City launched the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020, which led to the identification, in 2014, of Neighbourhood Improvement Areas, those neighbourhoods with the greatest inequality in outcomes across five domains: economic opportunities, social development, participation in decision-making, physical surroundings, and healthy lives.

The two Toronto communities receiving the lowest values on the neighbourhood equity scores were both within the Jane-Finch/Black Creek region. The community responded with the Jane Finch Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Taskforce, again with a focus on community consultation that put community visions of improvement front and centre.
York University and the CEC played a growing role in community organizing around the original Community Capacity Project, and played a key partnership role in the community response to the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020. The ability of York University to contribute to this response, and to see itself as part of the community, was an important step in the growing partnership between the community and university.

Changes in the Provincial and Institutional Context. York University's formal support for community engagement in its strategic plan aligned with a greater interest by the provincial government in the role of postsecondary education institutions in community engagement (Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, 2012). A Provincial discussion paper released in 2012 identifies community engagement as one of the goals of research and teaching activities undertaken by postsecondary institutions, and a mechanism for ensuring high-quality student experiences. At the time, this was seen by many as an opportunity to increase the visibility and support for the CEC.

However, the definition of community engagement, and community partners, is very broad in the university vision. It includes a range of entrepreneurial educational experiences and partnerships, including business and government partnerships and co-op learning experiences. While community residents welcomed initiatives supporting the development of business and employment opportunities, (e.g., the Black Creek Micro-Lending Program, Low et al., 2008), they also express concern that a neoliberal view of engagement can shift energy in the area of community engagement to engagement in business and government ventures (e.g., Jane-Finch TSNS Working Group, 2015; Joyette & Oda, 2005). Thus, the engagement may lose the focus on the development of the broader range of community capacities and assets.

In 2013, the university launched an Experiential Education Working Group to support the university's goal to improve the quality of the undergraduate experience through experiential education (York University, 2013). Experiential education (EE) is defined as a pedagogy that utilizes concrete or hands-on learning experiences to support meeting learning objectives. In essence, it is putting theory into practice. The current shift to interest in EE, both on the part of the province and the university creates opportunities to highlight the strengths of the CEC, since the CEC fosters EE experiences. However, as the Working Group noted, EE can also be achieved with meaningful classroom exercises and experiences and may therefore not require involvement of the physical space of the CEC.

Concern has been raised by some stakeholders that community engaged EE experiences are time consuming and expensive, compared to classroom experiences. Although classroom experiences may not capture all of the benefits of community experiences for students, if the only goal of EE activities is enhancing student experience then in times of fiscal restraint they may not be seen as an important investment. Awareness of the range of ways that EE can contribute to the larger

initiative of community-university engagement needs to be included as part of the EE agenda and is one the strengths that the CEC brings.

This also highlights the differences between the CEC and the Knowledge Mobilization Unit (KMb), described above, which is also a place-based community-university engagement initiative but one that operates under a very different model. The KMb focuses on the large region north of the university, but is physically located on the university campus rather than in shared space. The KMb Unit organizes activities in the community, such as meet-and-greets between community and university researchers. However, most activities are episodic, the region it works in is large and so activities are offered in different parts of the region to increase access. Continuity of activities is thus not necessary, the way it would be for courses or student placements, and after the initial introduction, activities take place in a range of different spaces and no longer involve the KMb Unit. The more focused and episodic nature of the KMb activities means that the KMb initiative does not require a permanent space and its presence on campus allows it to easily align with university driven priorities and activities.

Another issue internal to the university is that including the CEC in on-campus activities can be more challenging because it requires travel by the staff from the off-campus site. The Manager makes regular trips to campus to participate in meetings and activities but this also takes her away from the CEC. This may raise some challenges for including the CEC in all relevant university initiatives and this, in turn, may create challenges to the integration of CEC activities and university priorities overall. The CEC activities are integrated at the level of the particular activity (e.g., individual courses, internships, research projects) but these individual activities may vary in how well they are integrated into the university's strategic plan or goals. Thus, the presence of a shared space in the community strengthens and facilitates university engagement in community priorities, but may also present challenges for the initiative's engagement with university priorities if policies are not in place to ensure the CEC is kept informed and included.

Openness, trust and communication

Historic tensions exist in the relationship between the Jane-Finch/Black Creek community residents and the university, and these resurfaced in consultations with community residents undertaken as part of the Community Capacity Project. Residents expressed frustration in general at the disconnect between the high frequency with which they are consulted, studied and policed and the low rates of positive outcomes for residents (Joyette & Oda, 2005). Some of the former two activities have been attributed to York University initiatives by faculty, students, or both. This is a caution to university members to refrain from "doing research on" the community. It highlights the mistrust created by a history of research that has provided no benefit to community residents but is seen as promoting the careers of the researchers through publication and grants, a complain that has often been raised in the context of community based research (e.g., Minkler, 2005; Shields & Evans, 2008). Since its inception, the CEC has been active in promoting community-based research in genuine partnership with community, supporting these research initiatives with funding, showcasing local examples of research partnership, offering a range of in-kind support to local research partnerships, and developing tools and activities to support collaborative research. This includes the Connect the Dots conference described under joint activities. Nonetheless, some frustration remains and many university community members

are still unfamiliar with partnership approaches to research. Finding spaces to air these issues is an ongoing and important issue.

Despite the number of positive interactions being generated by the CEC and other community-university initiatives, members of the university still reflect the stigmatizing perceptions of the Jane-Finch neighbourhood that are prevalent in Toronto. Students in particular are seen as holding racist and stigmatizing views of the neighborhood, reflecting the stigma and racism that exists in the city overall; for example, during new student orientations, incoming students are warned by their peers not to cross the bridge into Jane-Finch (Narain & Kumar, 2013). These negative stereotypes were apparent when, in 2012, York University was struggling with negative image issues of its own. Following highly publicized acts of violence on campus, violence on the university's Keele campus was a topic of discussion in the media. The editor of the student newspaper wrote a piece in which he accused residents of the Jane Finch neigbhourhood of being responsible for the acts of violence and assault that had occurred on York's campus. Community groups in Jane-Finch/Black Creek expressed anger, disappointment and frustration and the sense that the university did not do enough to respond to these remarks (Jane Finch Action Against Poverty, 2012). Given the long history of mistrust that has existed between the university and community, events such as these can do a great deal of damage to the development of trusting relationships. These challenging relationships with the university can also result in a lack of real engagement of community residents in CEC leadership and activities. The existence of a shared space is both symbolic of bridging the distance between the community and the university, but also provides opportunities for positive interactions between the respective members of these groups that may help build trust between them.

The active participation of York University in the Community Capacity Project, organized in response to Jane Finch Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy Taskforce and other community collaboratives, built trust and created opportunities for the kind of open communication needed to address past and ongoing tensions. Moreover, the action plans that emerged from these community collaboratives made explicit community goals and facilitated alignment between university and community priorities. The location of the CEC in the community supported the participation of York University in these activities as members of the Jane-Finch/Black Creek community, and facilitated their ability to identify and support shared community goals. An example of this is how the CEC has collaborated on taking up the community goal of improving physical and green spaces in partnerships with the Faculty of Environmental Studies and the Faculty of Health, among others, through teaching and research collaborations that actively took place within the community. The development and fulfillment of these many common goals provides the opportunity for the partnership to move the agenda and the partnership forward by strengthening the bridges between university and community.

Champions in the university and community

The development of community-university initiatives requires the availability of both human and financial resources (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010). These are equally important in ensuring the sustainability of these initiatives. Moreover, the presence of champions may be an essential component in ensuring that sufficient funding continues to be directed to the initiative to allow it to thrive.

A faculty dean was the initial university champion of the initiative when the financial gift was received. When the dean moved into a higher executive office, the CEC moved with her. This shift into a higher office created more visibility for the CEC within the university, but also put the CEC into competition with other initiatives for the time of administrators. As a relatively small unit, and one that has been described by some stakeholders as a "boutique project," it requires a great deal of commitment by university champions to keep it moving forward when there are so many other pressing issues to be dealt with. The activities of the CEC require administrative attention but there is also a need for ongoing financial commitment to staffing and maintaining the physical space that holds and defines these activities.

The presence of community champions, both at the agency and resident level, is equally important for the sustainability of the CEC. A number of agency leaders have remained committed to supporting the CEC since its inception, but some have moved on to other jobs, and others anticipate leaving in the next two to three years. It is not clear if the next wave of agency leadership will be willing or interested to offer the same support. Ensuring and nurturing the next wave of community champions will be critical to the success of the CEC going forward. Junior staff in community agencies tend to move positions relatively frequently, changing jobs as programs lose or win funding, or as new opportunities emerge, and typically, they will move out of the neighbourhood. Sustaining champions among less senior staff may therefore be difficult because of the turnover. The increasing burden to provide services with the economic downturn also means greater pressure on community agencies to deliver services directly and less time for staff to participate in initiatives that do not have direct benefit to clients and community residents. This too may undermine building new champions among community agencies.

Funding challenges and opportunities through partnership

Partnership in general can bring new resources to both the institution and the community. The Jane-Finch/Black Creek neighbourhood is relatively new and, as such, has a high proportion of relatively recent community agencies, and with relative recency comes smaller budgets (cf., Lo, 2011). Community agencies and residents note an ongoing under-resourcing of the community, and continued structural barriers to overcoming local challenges. The agencies have tremendous strength in the diversity of their staff, both in terms of ethnocultural and linguistic diversity, and provide a range of programs to high numbers of residents. However, with limited resources come limitations in the ways in which they can participate in initiatives beyond delivering their own programs (City of Toronto, 2003). Competitive applications for short term funding for projects undermines the ability of community agencies to work together, even when collaboration would be the best strategy.

The university can address some of these challenges by creating opportunities for collaboration and bridging some of the uncertainty in program funding. The CEC has supported collaboration between students, faculty, local agencies and community residents to help coordinate community responses to policy changes (e.g., the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy) and has helped bridge programs through the small Catalyst Grants program described above under the Activities section. The ability of the CEC to respond to community needs by offering some services through student led clinics, like the tax clinic and CLASP (Community & Legal Aid Services

Program) helps support both students and community agencies in ensuring that community residents have access to needed resources in a predictable way. Importantly, in this neighbourhood a major challenge agencies raised is space to provide the programs they offer, both in terms of simple availability and in terms of costs (City of Toronto, 2003). The CEC has been able to provide space for community programs, which is a valuable contribution to the community and has helped to foster relationships between university and community members through repeated interactions. The value of being able to share this resource, and the frequency with which the community makes use of it, is an important part of the CEC's success in being visible and valued in the community.

With a large body of students and faculty engaged in social science and humanities research and teaching, several strong professional programs, and a very large undergraduate body, York University has been characterized as a large liberal arts institution, which is both a strength and a challenge for the institution (York University, 2015). The challenge comes from the larger grants awarded to science and medical research, and the risks of being identified as a "teaching institution," which can jeopardize its research and graduate studies activities. The advantage comes in the form of opportunities to develop large collaborative initiatives in the social sciences, a strong grounding in participatory methods and philosophies, and in thus defining itself as distinct from more "medical" approaches to issues of health and well-being.

Increasingly, the national funding agencies have been encouraging large partnership grants, often in the social sciences and often with a focus on partnerships that engage community partners. The CEC has facilitated the development of applications and supported these partnerships. An example of this success is the ACT for Youth project, which secured a $1 million Community University Research Alliance (CURA) grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). As funding is increasingly focused on larger grants to larger partnerships, the presence of trusting and long-standing relationships that address social and community issues can benefit both the community and the university.

Other funding challenges.

As noted above, community engagement is not just a means of improving student outcomes and benefiting the community, but also as a mechanism for increasing funding to the university. Partnerships can bring financial resources to the university through increased grant revenue; however, the presence of partners who can bring their own large resources to the partnership can make other engagement opportunities more attractive to the institution. The Jane-Finch/Black Creek community is not York University's only neighbour and thus not the only potential local partner. While the other universities in Toronto are situated in the downtown core, or to the east and west of the city, York University is situated to the north, and is the local university for York Region. York Region, north of Toronto, is a rapidly growing community of 1 million people who are often overlooked by the other Toronto universities and eager to partner. Compared to the Jane-Finch/Black Creek neighbourhood, York Region is larger, has greater resources, and provides opportunities for partnership with larger organizations, industry and governmental agencies. As noted earlier, the KMb unit focuses on building research partnerships with this region.

Working in York Region can be more rewarding for the university not only because of the greater resources of community partners in the region but also because of political interest. Politicians in the City of Toronto may not be focused on the Jane-Finch/Black Creek neighborhood or the CEC activities in it, but the municipalities in York Region are very excited about opportunities to collaborate with York University. The city of Markham and the region of York have both donated substantial sums of money towards the development of a York University campus in Markham, a small city north of Toronto that will serve the York Region. There are clearly much greater opportunities in the north for resources that arise directly from these partnerships.

A bigger question regarding funding arises with respect to the 10-year donation that has been funding the CEC. It is not clear whether the CEC will be able to continue without the external funds that had been available through this gift, nor whether another source of funding will be available. Sustainability for other initiatives in the university has depended on their ability to meet their mandate but also their ability to attract external funding. The loss of the CEC would be weaken the relationship that the university has been building with the community however, who already mistrust the university's long-term commitment. It may be difficult to sustain the existing initiatives should the CEC close. Such a closure may result in widening the already wide chasm between the University and a community that still has some mistrust of the motives of institutional interest.

Conclusion

The York University-TD Community Engagement Centre is shared space that exemplifies the notion of boundary spanning. The CEC emerged at a time when community engagement in teaching and research was a provincial, and thus a university, priority. Its establishment was made possible by a one-time donation. Maintaining a shared physical space is highly visible and makes a strong symbolic statement about the importance of the relationship between the community and its neighbouring university. However, staffing and maintaining a physical space in the community is costly, and questions can be raised about whether this approach to community engagement is sustainable as interests, and funding, shift over time.

These concerns speak to the importance of viewing the CEC in terms of its broader boundary-spanning role. The goals of the CEC explicitly include teaching, research, and civic engagement, thus creating rich and diverse bridges between the community and the university. Over time, the CEC's presence in the community has facilitated open communication between the university and the neighbourhood, created opportunities for the sharing and development of mutual goals, and facilitated ongoing communication and collaboration across numerous dimensions. It has created meaningful and unique educational experiences for university students, increased access to education for community members, enhanced sharing of knowledge and resources, and has attracted additional funding and resources to both the university and an historically underserved community.

Sustainability for the CEC may depend most heavily on the on-going commitment of champions within both the community and university. The CEC has demonstrated an ability to enhance education, research and civic engagement for both communities but these contributions must be

kept visible and be valued. The ability of the CEC to continue will require capacity and willingness on the part of the community to continue to engage in the governance and collaborative opportunities and on the part of the university to support the costs of maintaining and investing in the space. It seems unlikely that many of these initiatives could continue without the presence of a physical space in the community that can host, organize and make visible collaborative initiatives. Planning for the next great challenge in the future of the CEC, namely the end of the donation that supported its creation, may be the next environmental challenge that the community and university must face together.

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Shared Space, Liminal Space: Five Years into a Community-University Place-Based Experiment

Heidi Lasley Barajas and Lauren Martin

Abstract

This article explores shared space at the University of Minnesota's Robert J. Jones Urban Research and Outreach Engagement Center (UROC), located four miles off campus in a community strong in assets, but facing inequality, disinvestment and racism. UROC's mission promotes university-community collaboration to solve critical urban challenges. We learned this requires more than just a physical space. Trust and connection requires tending to epistemological space – liminality between the university and community – to foster transformational scholarship.

Keywords:

Engagement, Anchor Institutions, Place-Based

Introduction

Public relevance is crucial to the future of institutions of higher learning (Holland, 2009). Academia has knowledge, skills and resources to help tackle societal grand challenges such as climate change, widening local and global wealth gap, wars and famine, health decline and disease, and gender-based violence among many other issues (Boyer, 1997; Harkavy, 2015). However, an emerging body of literature suggests the importance of engagement, including creative and collaborative approaches to knowledge production, rooted in the lives of people who experience these challenges first-hand (Stringer, 2014; Bradbury, 2015). Collaborations between the academy and communities often falter on issues of trust, accountability, transparency, and misunderstanding (Davidson-Hunt & O'Flaherty, 2007; Glover & Silka, 2013), particularly when those collaborations involve communities of color and low-income people due to histories of exploitation, colonialism and experimentation (Smith, 2012). Thus, collaboration is critical but fraught. The creation of shared spaces offers opportunity, and, of course, additional challenges.

This article describes the first five years of the University of Minnesota Robert J. Jones Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC). UROC is a place-based engagement center located in the Near North Community of Minneapolis (known as the "Northside") designed to be a shared space to promote collaboration. The selection of the Northside as the physical site for UROC was deliberate. The goal was to build on strong assets with community leaders while also funneling more university resources to confront significant structural racism, concentrated poverty, housing segregation, disinvestment, and wealth, health and educational disparities.

Trust-building, transparency and accountability have been critical to UROC's mission from the beginning. Lessons from our first five years suggest that attention to building a beautiful and accessible physical space is necessary but not sufficient for building strong community-university partnership. The conceptual and epistemological components of our shared space proved to be equally important. Here we share how UROC developed and cultivates a liminal space – between university and community – that is just safe enough for everyone to feel discomfort and challenge. We have found that being able to feel safe enough to be uncomfortable together is a critical aspect of shared space that leads to transformation and collaboration.

This article describes the sometimes-tumultuous history of UROC's iterative development to offer lessons and insights for others as they construct shared spaces in which to collaborate for the public good. We begin a discussion of the literature on anchor institutions, place-based engagement and liminal space. This is followed by a short history of UROC. Then we discuss in greater depth what we mean by UROC being "liminal" and why we believe it is critical for shared space and transformation. We provide examples to share lessons. We conclude by offering clear lessons and next steps from UROC's developmental trajectory.

The Literature: Anchor Institutions, Place-Based Engagement and Liminal Space

From Anchor to Engagement

Anchor institutions are frequently described as "place-based" institutions (Birch, Perry, & Taylor, 2013) that "bring together economic and financial assets, human resources, and physical structures" (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2013). Anchor institutions draw their identities to a large degree from their urban locations and their contributions to the economic stability of their surrounding communities (Dubb, McKinley, & Howard, 2013). Non-profit and for-profit institutions can all act as anchor institutions, providing employment opportunities, creating markets for goods and services, and partnering with other institutions and businesses to develop new partnerships and economic, and cultural, and educational opportunities within communities (Ehlenz, Birch, & Agness, 2014). Taylor and Luter (2013) further refine the definition of anchor institutions by suggesting that an authentic anchor institution should have a social justice mission that allows it to act as a "change agent" within its surrounding community.

Urban universities are uniquely positioned to act as authentic anchor institutions in their communities. Universities have traditionally played a role in urban development as the "eds" of "eds & meds"--institutes of higher education and medical centers that both provide a market for goods and services and generate jobs for area residents (Harkavy & Zuckerman, 1999). While job creation through hiring local residents is an instrumental contribution to local communities, universities are increasingly leveraging their geographic locations to cultivate partnerships and sustained relationships with their surrounding communities to achieve benefits that extend beyond employment. This can include service learning, class projects, and engaged research (Dubb et al., 2013).

A focus on more meaningful engagement with surrounding communities comes from a growing understanding that increased economic well-being does not necessarily perpetuate individual and social well-being, and that development *of* a community is different and more impactful than development *in* a community (Bridger & Alter, 2007). Deeper engagement can happen when universities embrace a 21st Century way of thinking that works *with* communities to collaboratively solve problems and build on strengths (Holland, 2009). This vision aligns with the burgeoning literature on community-engaged scholarship and a recognized need across the academy for deeper collaboration with communities (Fitzgerald, Bruns, Sonka, Furco, & Swanson, 2012).

The importance of working with communities was strongly articulated during the process of developing what was termed an "urban agenda" between the University of Minnesota Twin Cities' campus (UMTC) and the Northside community. Maruyama, Jones, and Finnegan (2009), writing about the UMTC's initial work to create an urban task force, stated that place-based work should "[F]ulfill the University's land grand and civic missions through addressing issues of urban communities *in collaboration* with those communities, in order to improve the quality of life for all Minnesotans" (Maruyama et al., 2009, p. 82). They further suggested that collaboration should be "[A]nchored where possible by a *physical presence* [emphasis added] in communities where the issues to be resolved are most prevalent" (p. 82). But, they further stated that the University's governing body "cautioned that the University cannot become a social or human service provider for all unmet needs or a landlord for urban renewal" (p. 81). Alignment with the UMTC's teaching, learning and research mission was part of the foundational fabric of UROC.

To this end, some urban universities are reaching out to their geographic communities, working with local neighborhood organizations to find ways to meet local needs. More importantly, universities are finding ways to co-produce knowledge with communities that lead to strategies for addressing pressing community concerns. For example, the Netter Center at the University of Pennsylvania focuses on developing mutually-beneficial partnerships with community organizations to address community concerns, resulting in the development of new courses for university students and new programs and initiatives for the surrounding geographic community of West Philadelphia (Netter Center for Community Partnerships, 2014). The Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center at the University of Nebraska at Omaha provides a discrete, dedicated, on-campus space for the university's outreach and engagement efforts. The on-campus building provides office space for community partner organizations, public meeting spaces, and a centralized location for students seeking volunteer opportunities. The TD Community Engagement Centre at York University is located off-campus in a shopping center in the Jane-Finch neighborhood of Toronto and offers a variety of academic and lifelong opportunities, both for York University students and local residents.

Defining Space: Liminality in Engagement

A key challenge in committing to sustained and collaborative place-based work is the need to share physical and epistemological space in mutually beneficial ways. Sharing requires working through many conflicting ways of doing and knowing, where all involved transform how they

work together. The notion of liminality as a metaphor illuminates one way that shared space can emerge. In Anthropology, liminal space is often defined as a space that is "betwixt and between;" a kind of suspended no-person's-land, mediating between two (or more) fixed states (Turner, 1964). Victor Turner, an early theorist of "liminality" defined a fixed state as "any type of stable or recurrent condition that is culturally recognized" (Turner, 1964, p. 234). Turner and other Anthropologists used the concept to explore and understand rituals, initiations, and rites of passage. Others, such as Mary Douglas, have explored the symbolic relation between liminal spaces/people and distinctions between the sacred and the profane (Douglas, 1966). The concept has also been used in post-colonial studies to shed light on cultural hybridity and movement between cultural spaces and is still a cogent concept in thinking about transformation (e.g. Horvath, Thomassen, & Wydra, 2015).

For our discussion here, liminal space is a compelling metaphor for two reasons. First, it provides language for thinking about transformation between fixed states. Certainly Turner's definition of a fixed state could apply to the institutional and cultural differences that often surface between universities and communities. Another key aspect of liminal space is that it suspends the rules (momentarily)—it is flux and transformation, uncertainty and discomfort. This moment of disruption can be a time to build trust. Old ways of knowing and doing become transformed. That trust can then extend outward. As described more in depth below, we believe the way UROC holds space creates small moments of something akin to liminal space; we are neither simply a community center nor an academic research center. We are both. We do not wish to over-stretch this metaphor, but we believe that close attention to cultivating a space that is safe enough for everyone to feel discomfort and challenge – such as in liminal space – is an important component of shared space.

A Short History of UROC

UROC and the UMTC

The UMTC was established in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul in 1851 and it received public support under the Morrill Land-Grant Act. The University of Minnesota system has four additional campuses across the State of Minnesota. The Twin Cities campus currently has 30,500 undergraduate students and 16,300 graduate and professional students, including 7,000 international students from 135 countries and 400,000 alumni. The UMTC has recognized the critical role of public engagement in meeting the University's mission for teaching, research and outreach. Thus, the system-wide Office for Public Engagement (OPE) reports directly to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost. UROC is a UMTC-wide center that reports through OPE to the Provost and is therefore positioned as an academic research center to support engaged scholarship on issues relevant to urban communities.

The UROC building is a refurbished strip mall that is 22,700 square feet, with over 14,322 square feet of usable office and meeting room space. The building also houses an art gallery, hospitality station, reception area, a teaching kitchen, staff lounge, meditation/prayer room, storage, and other facilities. Windows across the front and back of the building represent the transparency promised to the community, and create a light-filled environment. The building has

high visibility and its common spaces are regularly reserved for. More than 2,050 visitors come into the building each month. In the 2015-16 academic year, UROC engaged faculty from more than thirty-five academic programs across the UMTC campus, supported sixty-five projects, and welcomed more than 25,000 visitors.

The mission, goals and structure that emerged for UROC were not always clear. Rather, they unfolded over a four year process of community engagement led by the UMTC's central administration with strong leadership from other units, faculty and community partners.

Early History of UROC (2006-08)

The concept for creating a space to be shared by the university and community at UROC's current location (near the corner of Plymouth and Penn Avenues in north Minneapolis) was formed in conversations between the UMTC president, the Minneapolis Mayor, and a community leader and CEO of a county health facility located near UROC. The first iteration of "shared space" was called the University Northside Partnership (UNP). This vision was led by Robert J. Jones, the Senior Vice President of Systems Administration and Academic Affairs who was a leader in the UMNTC central administration. The vision was big and bold. The Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder (an African-American run press) in the opening of an article dated May 26, 2006, described the plans as follows:

> University of Minnesota officials have big plans for the corner of Penn and Plymouth in North Minneapolis, where they envision a national model of university involvement in a community with multiple needs. Some community members and organizations support the proposal, while others, including black professionals, do not believe that a white institution like the U of M is best suited to lead such an effort. (Towns, 2006)

The possibility of a physical University presence in North Minneapolis led to UMTC recruiting a renowned child psychologist to found the University Child and Family Center in partnership with the county health facility. The center would focus, among other things, on the role of child development in reducing out-of-home placements to foster care.

From the beginning, the University vision for what a shared space might mean was not universally shared among the different communities in north Minneapolis. There was also a great deal of mistrust rooted in concerns that the University had ulterior and secret motives behind the UNP. The center was a proposed partnership with the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County to build and run a $65 million dollar state of the art mental health facility and research center. However, by June 2006 the St. Paul Pioneer Press declared that "The University Northside Partnership is now tangled in issues of race, mistrust and control, and it has opened the dam to a flood of long-held grievances against the University" (Tosto, 2006, p. 1A). The article pointed to flyers in the community that asked, "Do you want our black families and babies to be tested on like black guinea pigs again?" (p. 1A).

These articles captured the tone and tenor of what was to come for the next five years of community conversation between UMTC officials, faculty and staff, and community members and leaders about research, race, knowledge production, ownership and intellectual property,

exploitation, experimentation on black children, and claims of past broken promises and lack of trust. Media coverage from the time focused particular attention on the proposed mental-health facility for children and the need for a formal community benefits agreement.

The distance on agreement between the community and the University as to the value and role of a university physical presence was considerable, culminating in a community vote conducted by the Northside Resident Redevelopment Council. Of a total of 439 interested community members who voted, 75 percent supported the UNP. However, that vote was an agreement on the possible value of a university building in the neighborhood—not necessarily a vote of trust for the work to be done there.

The UNP's plans for a research and mental health facility on the corner of Plymouth and Penn Avenues North collapsed in 2008. The University pulled out of the plan citing financial concerns, including the worsening economy and a higher than expected lease rate for the space. However, the university remained committed to the community and turned attention to renovating a failing shopping center (located near the same corner) as a base for university research and outreach (Brandt, 2008). The University's research and outreach centers and Extension's Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships stood as models from which an urban center would be built.

In shifting the focus but not the vision, the University took an indispensable first step toward creating a model of reciprocal, participatory engagement where the community and university collaboratively identify problems and create solutions (Cantor, Englot, & Higgins, 2013). As the planning and building progressed, the community worked side-by-side with the University in an effort to "move beyond the one-way flow of intellectual capital (and technology transfer) independently generated within the ivory tower and given to (or perhaps foisted upon) communities" (Cantor et al., 2013, p. 20).

UROC: Is it just a building? (2008-09)

The UNP moved forward at the University with continued support from senior members of central administration. Under the leadership of Senior Vice President Jones, key faculty members, and a newly hired executive director of UROC, work with community leaders and community residents participating in the UNP continued discussions of a university presence in the community. In February 2008, the UMTC purchased a bankrupt shopping center near the corner of Plymouth and Penn for $1.125 million dollars with a plan to invest another $2.1 million dollars in renovations. In the Minneapolis Star Tribune on February 16, 2008, Senior Vice President Jones stated that "The purchase of this strategic location on the North Side is the foundational piece of the university's vision to create new and support existing partnerships between the community and the university" (Walsh & Collins, 2008, p. 6B). The corner of Plymouth and Penn had been envisioned as the geographic space for this partnership that became "real" in the building of UROC. From there many questions remained. Was UROC just a building, a space to house partnerships; or was it more than that?

To answer this question, under the direction of the first UROC Executive Director and Associate Vice President, Irma McClaurin, the University conducted almost two years of community and university listening through focus groups, interviews, and informal conversations to learn from multiple community and university stakeholders what they would like to see as the vision for UROC and its work. This process engaged hundreds of people, culminating in a two-day conference which was held in February 2009, called "Coming Together to Create a Shared Future for North Minneapolis," or the Futures Conference for short. There were over 56 participants including faith leaders, economic development representatives, UMTC senior leadership, faculty and staff, nonprofit leaders, community residents (elders, formerly incarcerated individuals, and youth) and represented people from many racial and ethnic groups. Participants engaged in workshops, discussions, and break out groups. From that work emerged a new vision based on mutually beneficial partnership and valuing all forms of knowledge.

Participants in the Futures Conference provided a clear vision demanding accountability, transparency, relevance, and commitment to multiple forms of knowledge, partnership and mutual benefit. They suggested that transformative, trusting relationships would be dynamic and take time to develop because so many harms from research have been done in the past. The conference also suggested a collaborative, transparent model would require a shift from thinking that higher education provides expert knowledge and solutions while the community only contains the problem. Instead, a vision of mutual benefit and recognition of community assets and knowledge was necessary for the vision to move forward. Most importantly, the community wanted to drive relevant, useful and action-ready research rather than serve as passive "subjects" of someone else's research agenda that would lead to publications, tenure and rewards for the researcher and for the anchor institution (for documents, see uroc.umn.edu).

These joint engagement efforts were bolstered by independent efforts within the University and from within the Northside community. Internal University activities, led by two senior faculty, focused on convening interested faculty to talk about doing engaged work. Faculty were identified through their participation in efforts led by the Office for Public engagement to understand how engagement could support the University's mission. External University activities were organized by the Northside Residents Redevelopment Council (NRRC) and included organizing the community vote, discussion of community benefits, and more. Both of these processes surfaced three community and faculty delineated priority areas of work: education and life-long learning, health and wellness, and community and economic development. The Futures Conference also identified art and artistic expression as a critical form of knowledge, connection and healing.

Living into the Mission: The UROC Model Development (2010-14)

When the building opened its doors in 2009, UROC had a building, mission and vision. The Futures Conference content and vision were distilled into UROC's current mission. Senior Vice President Jones invited early adopters of engaged and place-based research, often through discussions with collegiate deans, to locate projects at UROC. (Important to note is that early adopters were not charged for space; rather that cost remained in the Senior Vice President's office.) In addition, the Community Affairs Committee (from the UNP) was linked to UROC to continue a formal avenue for community input. Efforts were moving forward, but two large

questions remained: What is UROC? And how does UROC operate? In other words, it was still to be determined exactly what UROC would actually DO and who would really benefit from that work. Some thought UROC was an outreach outpost or a point of service delivery. Others believed it was a community center that offered classes. Still others believed that UROC was simply a building, a space just like any other office space on campus. These ideas did not match the University of Minnesota's strategic vision for urban partnership as outlined by the University's governing board to be "consistent with our core missions of research and teaching" (Maruyama et al., 2009, p. 81).

The founding executive director of UROC shepherded the early engagement processes and the building renovation and design. After a short transition, Heidi Barajas was hired by Senior Vice President Jones as executive director in 2010. Between 2010 and 2013, the UROC staff worked with community and University partners to operationalize and "live into" the UROC mission. First, UROC's work was aligned with the Office for Public Engagement's strategic plan on public engagement that supports the University's core strategic goals in the areas of research, teaching and service. UROC's reporting line was changed to its current configuration in 2011, when Senior Vice President Jones left the University and the System and Academic Affairs structure was re-organized. At that time, UROC's reporting line was shifted to the OPE within the Provost Office.

After UROC was secured in the academic reporting line of the UMTC, the executive director convened a UROC leadership team that reported directly to her. The UROC leadership team, comprised of the executive director, directors of research, facilities, outreach, and administration, along with the support of faculty and graduate students from UMTC's Minnesota Evaluation Studies Institute (MESI) developed a logic model (with activities, outputs, intermediate and long term goals). The logic model and accompanying strategic planning documents solidified our core operating principles and examined the modes of operation of projects at UROC that were long-term, sustainable and deemed impactful by participants and the broader community.

Through preliminary documentation strategies, we learned from our activities that were deemed successful by University and community partners how to best meet the UROC mission. Criteria for "success" were determined by each project, but we created a checklist to help surface key areas for measurement of success, including: processes of partnership (i.e. how involved were community in all phases, degree of working relationship, etc.); degree of methodological rigor to match the question; knowledge production, documentation and dissemination of that knowledge in multiple formats; and action (what was done as a result of the knowledge).

The end result of that work was UROC's operational model, shown in Figure 1. At the core of UROC's work is partnership through a cycle of research and outreach. All work conducted at UROC must be through a university-community partnership of some kind. Engaged research requires consistent and thoughtful community connections that are best developed and maintained through outreach. Thus, the UROC staffing structure has a Director of Outreach and a Director of Research. UROC promotes and supports engaged research and outreach through two mechanisms. First, UROC supports the efforts of other units on the UMTC campus to do work in mutually beneficial partnership with community. We do this through catalyzing engagement. UMTC projects can affiliate with UROC and use shared space in the community,

community connections, a collegial and supportive learning environment, professional development, and reputational capital. Prior to joining UROC, these projects go through an affiliation process where we agree on "fit" between the project or program and UROC's mission, vision and values.

Second, UROC conducts its own signature projects through direct engagement. Our goals are to engage with our neighbors and other urban communities to develop and model ways of conducting engaged research and outreach. In both forms of engagement we promote scholarship in action, bringing the best of the academy and community wisdom to bear on our most pressing urban challenges such as the achievement gap, sex trading and trafficking, trauma and community violence, health disparities, and a pervasive wealth and jobs gap linked to race and geography.

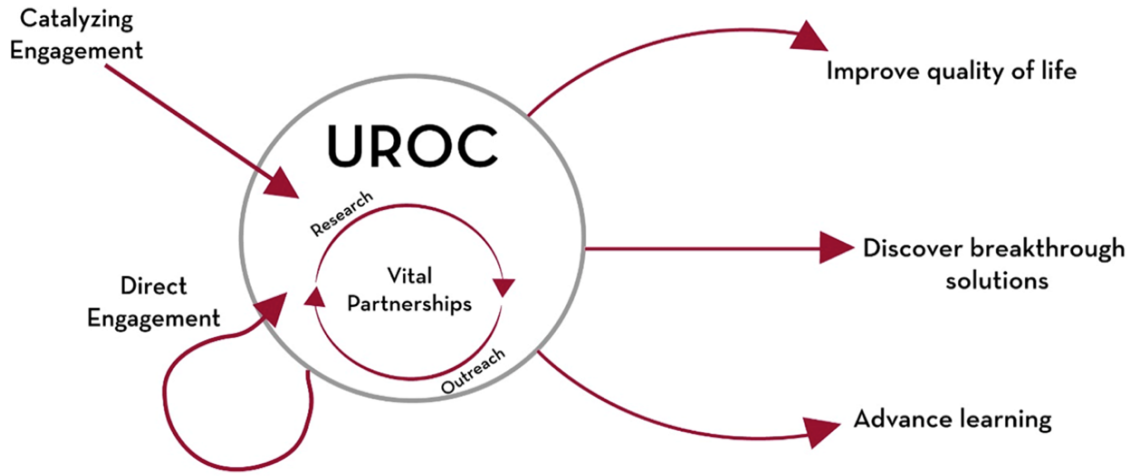

Figure 1. Operational Model

The core principles for UROC's direct engagement research and outreach are transparency, accountability, inclusivity, and mutual benefit. All projects conducted at UROC build on strengths in confronting urban challenges and are driven by local questions and concerns. Research at UROC involves those directly affected in ways that are appropriate, building on the motto from youth work, "nothing about us, without us."

There are many modes of community engaged research and outreach. These include approaches described as: engaged research, community based research (CBR), community based participatory research (CBPR), action research (AR), participatory action research (PAR), and youth participatory action research (YPAR). Each label has a slightly different pedigree, emphasis and approach. UROC does not promote or endorse specific approaches or research methodologies. Rather, we encourage a "right fit" between goals, methods and type of engagement along the engagement continuum developed by the UMTC's Office for Public Engagement. The continuum envisions a range of engagement from research "in" communities,

to research "for" communities, to research "with" communities. UROC does not conduct or directly support research "on" communities where there is no partnership.

Liminal Space: Working together in New Ways

Shared space is more than simply an accumulation of walls, doors and windows. It has a climate, an environment, an ethos, a "feel", and a presence. Shared conceptual and epistemological space, as liminal space suggests, is where we cultivate a space that is safe enough for everyone to feel discomfort and challenge. By definition, something is conceptual when it deals primarily with abstract or original thoughts. A conceptual plan for example, is one in an early stage--to make it work, the details need to be fleshed out. Epistemology relates to our theory of knowledge and what "counts" as knowledge and expertise. Both are beyond what we perceive with our senses and involve how we believe each other.

When we talk about conceptual and epistemological space at UROC, we mean the way the space "feels" to people who enter it. Do people feel respected, valued, and welcome? Does the space reflect multiple cultures, values, and communities? The physical space, staffing, and overall accessibility can foster or forestall these responses to UROC. Our staff is intentional about cultivating these more intangible aspects of UROC. For example, one senior leader from the UMTC referred to our common areas as follows: "This space feels powerful, the accumulation of many difficult conversations that happen in a respectful and trust-building way." A community leader reflected that UROC is "eye-pleasing." He felt that this quality raised the bar for people to feel a sense of importance and value within their community. The UROC art gallery encapsulates this duality of space. It is both physical and conceptual, providing representations of community beauty, strength and reflection. All of these elements are critical to how the space at UROC functions to bridge divides and provide space for difficult and complex relations that can lead to transformation through knowledge production and scholarship. Much of the programing and research conducted through UROC plays on these notions of shared space.

Below we provide a few in-depth examples about how the conceptual and epistemological space at UROC is cultivated in relation to engaged research and scholarship.

Action Research Cycle: Root Causes and Joint Action

Our first example highlights how UROC's space combined with deep community connections spurred engaged research on sex trading and trafficking that has helped shape prevention, intervention and statewide policy. UROC's director of research has been conducting community engaged and action research on sex trading since 2004 and she has firmly established that the harms of sex trading directly relate to individual and community health and vitality (Martin, Hearst, & Widome, 2010; Martin, 2013). In 2011 UROC hosted a Critical Conversation on sex trafficking at which hundreds of community members voiced their concern and pledged to take action to stop sex trafficking in Minnesota. The conversation—with survivors, police, Northside residents, activists, academics and more—was inherently difficult. It surfaced multiple perspectives and community wisdom about the harms of sex trading on individuals and the community and also strengths and resiliencies.

Building on our difficult conversation, UROC developed the Sex Trafficking and Community Well-being Initiative which seeks to deepen and sustain engagement by conducting a series of interconnected research projects, awareness-raising activities, prevention initiatives, and intervention activities directed at the issue of sex trading and trafficking and its impact on communities. The projects engage widely with community and use multiple research approaches as guided by each project. We use the action research cycle as both an approach and a metaphor (Stringer, 2014). Stringer (2014) states:

> Analysis of information emerging from responses to questions provides insights from which "interventions" – actions to remedy the situation – are formulated. Continuing research cycles enable evaluation, reformulation, and redevelopment of actions, leading to increasingly effective solutions to the problem at the heart of the research project (p. 102).

Staff at UROC co-design projects with community and do the projects together. This always leads to new and deeper questions. With each project, we delve deeper and deeper into root causes. The projects focus on experience and meaning-making around marginalized, hidden, and obfuscated experiences that tend to be elided by our broader social narratives and discourses. Each individual project within the initiative has its own source of funding, including government, foundations, and internal UMTC sources. However, the initiative allows us to develop insights across projects to dig deep into challenging, hidden, and difficult issues in urban communities. For example, we examine the relation between sex trading/trafficking and race and poverty, even though we do not have separate funding for a specific project on this topic. Likewise, we seek to understand the intersections between sex trading and sexual violence.

UROC's research is embedded in statewide anti-trafficking efforts. Our connections shape the questions we ask and we use rigorous research methods to surface data, often in partnership with communities. Minnesota was the twelfth state to pass Safe Harbor laws, which decriminalize youth victimized in sex trafficking and is the only state to provide statewide funding for prevention and intervention efforts, known as the No Wrong Door model. Many of these gains were accomplished using empirical research, conducted by UROC and others, to make the case to legislators and other stakeholders. For example, based on a previous collaboration, the Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center (MIWRC), commissioned UROC's director of research to conduct a benefit-cost analysis on the fiscal impact of a sex trafficking prevention program for youth. In conducting this study, we re-worked typical University contracts to support joint ownership of the report. This study was instrumental in securing funding for No Wrong Door mentioned above. Additional research on the overall market for sex trafficking in Minneapolis and Minnesota has shaped statewide law enforcement efforts, service provision and prevention of youth victimization in trafficking.

UROC's work on sex trading and trafficking builds on several different connotations of shared space as liminal. For example, the initiative was launched by a Critical Conversation on sex trafficking. The Critical Conversation series at UROC serves to elevate university and community knowledge as equals – bringing the university into the community and the community into the university. We were able to convene multiple, often incongruent,

stakeholders (former victims of sex trafficking, advocates, police, legislators, academics, and more) together to build common language and a platform for action. It was a hard conversation, but individuals who participated felt welcome at UROC because of our staffing, the "feel" of the space, and because of its geographic location.

UROC's research on sex trading seeks to build on the strength of multiple stakeholders including youth, service providers, police, research, and more. UROC's reputation as a good partner and neighbor serves to engage strong and deeply rooted community partners to help design projects, make meaning and seed action.

Facilitating a Multi-Jurisdictional Team with Empirical Research

Urban-located and land-grant institutions include in their mission serving the public good. UMTC, holding both of these identities, also offers the resources of a research institution. This last identity has created tension between universities and communities. The role that scholarly activity plays, in this case empirical research, may be of great benefit to communities as well as universities. As Glover and Silka (2013) suggest, the issue may fundamentally be who initiates and leads partnerships and how scholarship stimulates conversation that expands what is possible. UROC supports and engages with several projects that are led by multi-jurisdictional teams. One such project is a community-initiated, UROC-facilitated multi-jurisdictional team of stakeholders focused on economic development.

Economic development is a key aspect of anchor institutions and the communities of which they are a part. Universities have interest in the economic development of their neighborhoods, are invested in the development of other anchor institutions in their geographic proximity, and have other significance in a wide range of related areas such as employing large numbers of local people (Coalition of Urban Serving Universities, 2010). A primary concern of community residents in North Minneapolis is employment. To address this concern, and to support current economic development efforts offered by non-profits and government agencies, UROC focused on job creation by building a multi-jurisdictional team supported through research.

In 2011, Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton held a job summit at the request of religious leaders on the Northside. The summit, held at UROC, initiated a conversation between community and University leaders who agreed that separately, the community, local government, and the University could not assuage the long history of benign neglect that resulted in the current lack of jobs for north Minneapolis. The Northside faces a number of historical and contemporary structural issues related to employment and jobs. Recent research revealed that for African Americans (roughly half of the population in north Minneapolis) only 32.8 percent own a home, 42 percent live below the poverty line, and less than 4 in 5 African American students graduate high school. By 2012, the Northside unemployment rate was 21.1 percent compared to the overall Minneapolis unemployment of 9.5 percent. Given this alarming evidence, we developed a collaborative model named the Northside Job Creation Team (NJCT).

The NJCT is a collaborative space initiated to hold major stakeholders in north Minneapolis, the city, the state, and the UMTC. It is facilitated through UROC. The mission of the team is to reverse the clear deficit of living-wage jobs and large employment disparity in the Northside through research that identifies potential businesses that could attract public/private investments

to create sustainable living wage jobs in or near north Minneapolis. To achieve parity with the rest of the city, north Minneapolis would needs to employ 5,000 residents more residents. Although a challenge, the NJCT set a goal to create 1000 jobs in five years.

Key to the success and sustained work of the NJCT is the role of the project consultant—a retired community leader with a strong and diverse business background. Contracting with a consultant allowed the University to support the process, but allowed for the consultant to speak as a member of the business and larger community. For UROC, the community consultant role cultivates a space that is safe enough for everyone to feel discomfort and challenge. Funding for the community consultant and to conduct research with faculty and students from the UMTC's Carlson School of Management has been provided by UROC, city economic development offices, and two philanthropic organizations.

By 2015, the NJCT included 32 team members representing a broad array of organizations including the City of Minneapolis, the Governor's Urban Initiative Board, the Black Chamber of Commerce, Minneapolis Public Schools, a Twin Cities regional economic development partnership, several local philanthropic and non-profit organizations, key job education organizations including local community colleges, and successful minority-owned businesses. Originally, two faculty from the UMTC business school provided oversight for the research and eventually became NJCT members. The faculty worked with graduate students on research that provided detailed feasibility studies and business plan analysis that were the most viable and sustainable business opportunities for north Minneapolis. In all, nine research projects have been completed.

In 2015, the NJCT made significant progress including signed letters of intent from four businesses committed to relocating or expanding into north Minneapolis. Crucial barriers, discovered through research, were identified for each of these opportunities and are currently being addressed through the multi-jurisdictional team. To date, 905 living-wage jobs have been created. We project that if all goes well with the companies mentioned above, we will add 630 jobs in the next two years for a total of 1535 living-wage jobs. Although the NJCT is pleased to have been successful to this degree, the number of jobs needed to reach parity with the rest of the city is 5,000.

Creating Distinct Spaces for Faculty Participation

UROC supports and engages in a number of projects related to education. The Generation Next UROC Faculty Fellows initiative explores the benefits of creating spaces for university faculty to engage in scholarship as part of a cohort.

UROC as a place-based organization requires long-term participation of faculty. A number of individual faculty partner with UROC on project-driven work. However, building the field also requires time and space for faculty to connect with other faculty who do engaged research. This facilitates growth of new ideas, and provides the space to create new and possibly interdisciplinary partnerships. Providing a space for faculty cohorts to thrive may also address common barriers for engaged scholars. Jordan et al. (2012) suggests that legitimizing partnership work as part of the scholarship process, raising the profile of engaged work to meet larger university goals, and providing spaces in which scholars can better understand the principles

underlying community engaged scholarship across disciplines are key to building the field and sustaining faculty participation.

UROC has had successes and struggles in building sustainable spaces for faculty cohorts to jointly engage in scholarship on critical urban challenges. Here we describe a unique epistemological space between a powerful non-profit promoting educational attainment and a group of interdisciplinary faculty.

Nationally, there is a large gap in standardized test scores between students of color and White students. Locally, Minnesota is among the states with the highest achievement gaps between Black, Latino, Native American, and many Southeast Asian students and their White counterparts (Yuen & Williams, 2016). In response, leaders in Minnesota came together to form Generation Next, a Twin Cities organization dedicated to closing the achievement gap. Generation Next is co-chaired by the UMTC president, the president of the General Mills Foundation, and headed by a former mayor of Minneapolis. Based on the National Strive Together Network, Generation Next brings education, community, government, and business leaders together to identify and adopt programs that focus on 6 traditional measures of school success. In 2014, Generation Next leadership articulated to UROC the need for more connection to community. UROC suggested bringing together multi-disciplinary faculty and community partners to engage around distinct points of view about the roots of the achievement gap beyond individual educational benchmarks.

As a starting place, Generation Next asked faculty to respond to the following two questions consistently posed to the organization: Why is there an achievement gap in the context of Minneapolis-St Paul? What action should we take to address the gap?

Five faculty groups, each headed by a lead faculty fellow and comprised of both faculty and community partners were established. Faculty selected as leads had a strong, demonstrated record of community-based scholarship in the areas of education, health, gender studies, communications, and the arts. The Generation Next UROC Faculty Fellows initiative operates in alignment with the Office for Public Engagement, as well as with the Office of the President and the Office of the Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost, with the goal of contributing to, but not replicating, efforts by other individual UMTC faculty related to the achievement gap.

Each faculty group met monthly and the group leads also met several times to share the work from their individual groups, and to build the overall cohort. Through this process, there have been interesting and unexpected connections across the work and direction of the five individual groups addressing both the "why" and the "now what" questions posed by Generation Next.

Surprisingly, each of the groups was opposed to entering into discussions to answer the "why" question. They expressed frustration with continued focus on the reasons there is a "gap" and identified an overabundance of research that addresses this very question (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Milner, 2013; Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, 2012). The fellows also asserted that educational inequity is upheld through continuing to use a faulty narrative, which echoed other academic research in this area (Cabrera, Milem, Jaquette, & Marx, 2014; Barajas & Ronnkvist,

2007; Cammerota, 2007; Ramirez & Carpenter, 2005). These new insights contributed to the existing narrative and work of Generation Next. Each group shared with the other groups as well as the Generation Next leadership projects/actions related to ending educational disparities. What excited the Generation Next leadership the most was how a space that included different, complex approaches to addressing a faulty narrative created a different lens, with multiple possible outcomes and outputs for understanding how to improve the education of diverse kids.

In the first year of the initiative, faculty were invited to participate without financial incentive. When the faculty leads were invited to create the initiative, UROC was transparent that funding was not yet in place. A small food budget and some logistical support for scheduling meetings, arranging meeting places, and note taking during meetings was offered to all groups. Some took advantage of the support and others did not. Although the primary work of the initiative focused on creating a connection with Generation Next, a second goal for UROC was to document and understand how to support faculty in engaged work.

Several intentional efforts contributed to creating a space that invites strong participation by faculty. To begin, intentionally asking Generation Next to name this group of faculty as Generation Next UROC fellows was important in terms of validating the work across the university and in individual departments and programs. Providing logistical support to set meetings and find space was important support. As with any partnership, listening and adapting to the environment created as the initiative developed has been key to keeping faculty engaged. For example, one of the faculty leads proposed submitting a proposal to the University strategic plan. As a group, the leads produced a collaborative proposal.

This year UROC was able to secure internal funding from the University Metropolitan Consortium to provide $10,000 to each group to seed a project/action. All five groups are doing a project with community partners that demonstrate ways to support student educational success. In February of 2016, a second meeting with the Generation Next leadership shared information about the projects ranging from youth participatory action research projects (YPARs) designed as part of the language arts curriculum for all students in a middle school, to a participatory project with high school teachers, to a project focused on how school discipline policies impact caregivers.

Faculty leads, participating in a focus group shared why they were drawn to the work and continue to participate in the cohort. The leads expressed a strong desire to contribute to the narrative on educational achievement and the gap. All of the faculty leads wanted their work and perspectives to be heard by the kind of audiences to which Generation Next had access. The leads also appreciated a formalized space where they were given the opportunity to work together as engaged scholars. They expressed some frustration in the level of connection to Generation Next as an organization and wanted UROC to support strengthening that connection. The next step for the cohort is to share the outcomes and impacts of the projects to date with each other, and then Generation Next, and to create a funding strategy across all of the projects to sustain the work.

Conclusion

In UROC's first five years we have learned much about shared space; including what it really means to "share" and how to use a place-based facility to foster mutually-beneficial partnerships that lead to action in the world as well as critical scholarship. To navigate our first five years, UROC needed to confront two overarching tensions that emerged from both University and community collaborators. First, is UROC simply a building, a shell to house special projects? Second, how would the space itself be used and occupied? In other words, how would it be shared? And who would have access?

Answers to these questions shaped how we define, use, and share space at UROC. First, sharing space is not easy or straightforward. It requires iterative development as well as adaptive leadership that learns, grows, and changes with each iteration and challenge. Second, universities and communities each have their own rules, cultures, and ways of doing that often operate on seemingly conflictual logics. Further, the societal power differential between academic and other ways of knowing is a real source of strain and potential conflict. Early contentions around race, power and trust have continued to be central to the work of UROC.

As the narrative of our first five years shows, in many different ways, we chose to lean into the discomfort of structural inequality, race, knowledge production, and power. This includes acknowledging that universities, research leaders, and academic knowledge are not yet fully reflective of all communities. In particular, in the academy, communities of color and people experiencing poverty are not yet seen as full and equal partners in creating knowledge. Acknowledgement is a first step. The shared space at UROC seeks to transform the unequal access to knowledge/power experienced by communities of color in urban areas. That work starts from the foundation of how we cultivate our shared and place-based space of UROC.

These challenges are not unique to UROC, and much has been written about the challenges of university-community partnership building (Sandy & Holland, 2006). But we believe our place-based approach offers unique lessons, strengths and challenges. The metaphor of liminality – or a space in-between – sheds light on how UROC fostered its notion of shared space. All who participate in UROC's space, University staff and community partners, must challenge their assumptions, change their standard ways of doing and expand beyond their comfortable ways of knowing to accept multiple ways of doing and knowing. The lessons of UROC's formation and its first five years suggest that the University and community need to transform and benefit together.

The efforts described represent examples of how UROC is living into our mission as well as different approaches to sharing space with our urban communities, and with students, faculty, and staff at UMTC. The original vision for UROC was to transform how the University works with community. This vision was timely because of the difficulties UMTC had at the beginning involving community in decision-making. But, for the work of engagement to transform and for the community to benefit, the University and community need to transform and benefit together.

Sharing space, rather than giving space, requires UROC to hold spaces (physical, conceptual and methodological) that invite and welcome both university and community. Often, university staff

working with community try and separate themselves from the anchor institution in order to be seen as one of "the good guys." In the short term, such an approach may feel good or allow university researchers initial access to community spaces. However, as a university place-based center we ask university and community members and partners to enter liminal spaces together. We all need to experience discomfort and challenge in order to grow and change. Living in shared space is a risk, but one that could support our transformational intentions.

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The Learning Exchange: a Shared Space for the University of British Columbia and Vancouver's Downtown Eastside Communities

Angela Towle and Kathleen Leahy

Abstract

The Learning Exchange was established by the University of British Columbia (UBC) in 1999 in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES). The challenge has been to create a shared space for learning exchanges between two very different communities: a research-intensive university and an inner city area most commonly depicted as a place of hopelessness. The Learning Exchange provides an interesting model for how shared spaces can work to bring benefits to both to individual community members, students and faculty, as well as to the university and community organizations. It provides a place in the community where UBC students and faculty, and DTES residents and organizations connect, pursue common interests and learn from each other with a long-term goal of bringing about social change. Examples are given of the ways in which attention is paid to the physical, emotional and intellectual environment and the synergies that occur in shared spaces. Based on our experience and lessons learned we identify important principles for creating successful university-community shared spaces.

Keywords

Physical environment, Emotional environment, Intellectual environment, Asset-based community development

Introduction

The mission of the Learning Exchange is to engage, inspire and lead two very different communities to work and learn together: the University of British Columbia (UBC) and Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES). The DTES, often referred to as 'Canada's poorest postal code', is noted for its open drug trade, single room occupancy hotels and high HIV infection rates. These combined and seemingly intractable issues have contributed to the common discourse of the DTES as a 'place of hopelessness'. UBC is a research-intensive university located 13 kilometers away, making it physically and, some would argue, psychologically distant from the DTES. However, having a meaningful presence in the DTES is consistent with UBC's strategic plan, and grounded in the idea that universities can, and should, be more connected to the critical issues facing communities. Located in the heart of the DTES, the Learning Exchange has developed as a welcoming, informal and lively shared space where UBC students and faculty, and DTES residents and organizations connect, pursue common interests and learn from each other and, in so doing, increase community and university capacity to act for positive change. In this article, we describe the university and community context, trace the history of the Learning Exchange, and describe the diverse learning activities that occur. We

then describe the physical, emotional and intellectual shared spaces, and give examples of the benefits to the university and the community, and the synergies that occur. Finally, we discuss lessons learned and identify general principles based on our experiences, and outline future directions.

The University of British Columbia

UBC is a public research university with campuses and facilities in British Columbia, Canada. UBC's Vancouver campus is physically separated from the city by sea and a forested green-belt. Founded as an independent university in 1915, it is the oldest institution of higher learning in British Columbia and enrolls over 60,000 students each year, mostly in the faculties of Arts, Science, Medicine, Applied Science and the Sauder School of Business. The university consistently ranks among the top three research universities in Canada and among the 20 best public universities worldwide. The university manages the second-largest research budget of any university in Canada (over $550 million annually). In terms of research performance, High Impact Universities 2010 ranked the university 30th out of 500 universities, and second in Canada. UBC is a member of Universitas 21, an international association of research-led institutions, as well as being the only Canadian member of the Association of Pacific Rim Universities, a consortium of 42 leading research universities in the Pacific Rim.

The university's commitment to community engagement began under the leadership of President and Vice Chancellor Martha C. Piper who in 1998 launched TREK 2000, the university's blueprint for the millennium. The concept of getting students involved in community-based activities was central to TREK 2000, inspired by the writing of Peter Drucker who argued that universities should be preparing young people to take on social responsibilities as part of their roles as participants in the knowledge society (Drucker, 1994). Drucker's argument underpinned President Piper's vision of UBC's responsibility to prepare students to be 'global citizens' and was the motivation for the establishment of the Learning Exchange (see below). Subsequently, under President Stephen Toope the commitment of UBC to serve and engage society to enhance economic, social and cultural well-being was confirmed in the 2009 strategic plan, 'Place and Promise: the UBC Plan' (University of British Columbia, 2009) in which Community Engagement is stated as one of three core commitments alongside Student Learning and Research Excellence.

Vancouver's Downtown Eastside

The DTES is the historic heart of Vancouver and has a diverse, mixed and predominantly low-income population. As defined by the City of Vancouver, the DTES consists of seven adjoining neighbourhoods each with a distinct character, population, built form and land use (City of Vancouver, 2013). For example, Gastown, Vancouver's founding neighbourhood is a major tourist attraction. It borders the Oppenheimer District, the heart of the low-income community, which has the greatest concentration of community services for vulnerable people, including Insite, Canada's first supervised drug injection site. Strathcona, one of the oldest residential neighbourhoods in Vancouver, was for many years a working class district but is now undergoing gentrification with rising housing prices. Chinatown is one of the last remaining large historic Chinatowns in North America, though traditional connections have weakened as more recent

generations have improved their circumstances and moved into the suburbs. The DTES is situated and linked to the City's founding Indigenous communities, including the Musqueam, Tsleil-Waututh and Squamish First Nations; other major ethnic groups include Japanese-Canadians, Chinese-Canadians and African-Canadians. 64% of DTES residents speak English as their main home language; Chinese (including both Mandarin and Cantonese) is the next most frequent.

More than half of the residents of the DTES are dependent on income assistance support, pensions, or charitable and social services. Many groups are considered vulnerable because they experience greater risk to health and well-being than the population as a whole. These groups include the homeless, seniors, low-income singles and families, sex workers, drug users and people with disabilities or mental illness. In addition to poverty, the challenges they face include safety, adequate and affordable accommodation, unemployment, poor nutrition, poor health, low self-esteem, a lack of well-being and connectedness, and dependency on social services and charity.

Public perception of the DTES as a place of hopelessness and danger has been shaped by the prevailing negative discourse in the media. Newspaper reports highlighting injection drug-use and/or HIV /AIDS in the DTES have contributed to the stigmatization of the area, adding to repeated derogatory descriptions of the DTES such as "an enclave of filth and desolation" as well as metaphors of the DTES as a war zone (Woolford, 2001). Visitors to Vancouver and UBC students, especially international students, are often cautioned not to go to the DTES. However, the DTES is also often regarded as one of the more close-knit, caring communities in Vancouver, and has a rich architecture and culture, the highest concentration of artists in the city, and a history of political activism (Hasson & Ley, 1994). There are, unsurprisingly, conflicts between the different communities in the DTES due to its heterogeneity. For example, some people in Chinatown feel stigmatized by the homeless people and open drug trade on their door steps, and have lobbied for the revitalization of business and higher-end housing to attract customers in ways that the affordable housing advocates feel is exclusionary. These tensions make the DTES a complex and highly charged place, where working towards possible solutions is challenging, since people do not necessarily agree what the problems are.

Because of the multifaceted social and health-related problems, and a concentration of services in the area, a huge amount of research has been done in the DTES, especially by UBC researchers. However, the prevailing perception among local people is that little has changed as a consequence. The research appears to benefit researchers rather than the community, giving research a poor reputation.

History of the Learning Exchange

The Learning Exchange originated from the commitment to community engagement made as part of UBC's TREK 2000 visioning exercise. Initial consultations in the DTES in 1999 about how UBC could best develop a community presence revealed a range of opinions about the university's plans, including some skepticism and resistance. In Fall 1999, the UBC Learning Exchange TREK Program was initiated to introduce student volunteers to non-profit organizations and elementary schools in the DTES. A year later the Learning Exchange opened

its original storefront, offering free computer access as part of a federally funded network of DTES organizations to bridge 'the digital divide'. This occurred against the backdrop of the Vancouver Agreement (Anon., 2010) involving all three levels of government, initiated to address the serious social and economic situation in Vancouver's inner city at time when many in the community and the university were calling for a more integrated, holistic approach to concerns related to the DTES.

From 2001 to 2006 the Learning Exchange expanded its community-based programming and student experiential learning opportunities. Activities included the development of computer training workshops for residents and an innovative English-as-a-second-language (ESL) conversation program, designed by UBC graduate students in collaboration with local residents; a variety of free courses, talks and events were developed in collaboration with faculty and community partners. In parallel, the Learning Exchange championed the development and integration of community-service learning (CSL) into academic programs at the university, which eventually led to the creation of the UBC-Community Learning Initiative. In 2008 the Learning Exchange moved to a larger location, enabling significant expansion of the computer training and ESL programs, as well as providing an off-campus base for staff working with inner-city schools engaging with university students.

In 2011 the university moved the UBC-Community Learning Initiative out of the Learning Exchange in order to position the responsibility of engaging students in the community more broadly within the university. This severed a major link between the Learning Exchange and the university. The position of an Academic Director was created with the charge to re-establish and grow the direct link between the Learning Exchange and the university campus. Since 2012 there has been an increase in the profile and activity of the Learning Exchange in both university and DTES communities. In 2015-16 campus and community groups' space usage quadrupled, including a six-fold growth in community-based researchers' usage.

Summary of Activities, Participants and Outcomes

Current Activities

The Learning Exchange provides year-round, core programming for community members (patrons) and students, in addition to providing an open-drop in environment for unstructured individual or group activities. The core programs are designed to respond to community needs for digital literacy and English language skills, and improve the daily lives of people in the DTES through personal development and building social networks. The core programs also provide hands on, experiential learning opportunities for UBC students.

Learning Activities. To respond to digital literacy needs, the Computer Drop-In program provides computer access and support four afternoons per week. Structured computer workshops and tutorials on basic computer skills and programs provide instruction on a weekly basis. The Contributing Through Computers (CTC) initiative trains members of the community to lead workshops with their peers, on site and at community partner locations throughout the DTES and beyond. The ESL Conversation Program trains and supports local residents as peer facilitators to lead conversation sessions that help people learn English and about Canadian culture and the

local community. A new initiative, Seniors Thrive, helps seniors learn English and also promotes health and well-being by facilitating social connectedness and participation in learning. The Learning Lab offers a range of social, arts, and cultural activities and special projects and events that are appropriately scaled to support people in moving past their comfort zones, without too much pressure, while inspiring them to pursue learning in a safe environment. It responds to the growing needs of DTES residents who access the drop-in space and who are eager for more engagement and learning, but reluctant to join groups due to previous negative experiences with structured learning.

Although the core programming is coordinated by members of staff (university employees), students support and participate in these activities as paid student-staff program assistants (co-op and internships) of 6 or 12 months duration or as part of in-depth course-based activities such as practicums, assignments or projects. For example, economic students run an 'Econ Café' on hot topics in the DTES, and medical students design and deliver workshops on health-related topics to seniors. Students also participate in one-off learning experiences, including orientations to the DTES and asset-based development theory and practice. Learning objectives for students doing course-based activities are varied but most often related to translating theory into practice (the realities of the 'real world'), asset-based approaches, social justice, cultural safety and the social determinants of health, and specific skills such as relationship building, communication, and group facilitation. Many students also volunteer at the Learning Exchange, sharing particular skills such as facilitating a language class, or co-facilitating ESL classes with peer facilitators, or working with staff and patrons to gather information and create learning resources.

Community-Based Research. Support for community-based participatory research and knowledge exchange is a recent and growing part of our work. The 'Making Research Accessible' initiative addresses the problem that organizations and individuals in the DTES are often unable to access the primary literature. Licensing agreements for electronic journals limit access to UBC faculty and students, and as a consequence people in the community are often dependent on government reports or other secondary sources. We have created a database that contains over 600 peer-reviewed journal articles and PhD dissertations published since 2010 and a list of 40 primary investigators with active projects in the DTES. In partnership with the UBC library we are exploring ways to make this information available to the community through a searchable open access repository. We also collaborate on knowledge exchange events, bringing researchers together with members of the community.

Participants

Community members. Each of the core programs has a group of patrons who have attended regularly and consistently over a number of years. In addition, there are patrons who come for a short time, get what they need (information or a skill) and then move on. Newcomers hear about the Learning Exchange through word of mouth 'on the street'. As the Learning Exchange has become more established as part of the community we have become recognized by local people and agencies as a 'safe place'. Increasingly, patrons come to us through referrals from the many different service agencies in the DTES (over 100 in a 20-block radius), either because they need specific skills such as computer skills or English, or because there is an expectation that the Learning Exchange staff can help them find their way or take time to work with them.

The patrons who participate in the core activities reflect the diversity in the neighbourhood. 30% of drop-in programs are frequented by Indigenous people, many from across the country who are urbanized or who recently left their reserve. A high portion of men frequent the drop-in. Many of them at one time worked in the resource industries as loggers or tradesmen but with the changes in the work economy are unable to find work. Many older Chinese women come to the ESL program having worked for most of their lives in the garment industry, often doing two jobs and therefore putting off learning English; now as seniors they have more time to learn and want to connect socially. There are fewer women at the Learning Exchange and overall in public spaces in the DTES, likely due to the threat of violence that many women experience, and the real or perceived lack of safe places for their children. The discomfort that women feel at the Learning Exchange has decreased in recent times, but we are not currently set up to provide child care, which continues to be a barrier.

Students and faculty. Most students come to the Learning Exchange by applying for advertised student-staff or graduate research assistant positions, or as part of university courses. Student participation as part of a course requires involvement of their instructors and this has grown over the past few years as a result of targeted faculty engagement, especially in disciplines related to health, education, social sciences and arts. Students who come as volunteers often do so as a result of experiencing a class or tour of the DTES, or may find us through the website. As with the DTES community, word of mouth and referrals are important ways of widening participation among the university community.

Outcomes. Learning Exchange staff keep records of the numbers of patrons attending the various activities in order to demonstrate that we continue to meet needs and for the purpose of reporting to donors. For example, the Computer Drop-In program supports 45 individuals each afternoon, while the computer workshops provide instruction to over 350 individuals per year. In its first three years CTC has trained 150 facilitators, engaging more than 30 community partner organizations, and directly impacting almost 700 basic computer skills learners. The ESL Conversation Program runs 30 concurrent conversation sessions a week; each year 80-100 peer facilitators are trained and there are 500 ESL learners.

Beyond collecting numbers, there are challenges in evaluating the impact of participating in the activities on individual community members who may be wary of sharing the sort of personal information which would allow us to track their progress over time. In addition, program staff are often too busy implementing programs and supporting peer facilitators or students to also document participation systematically. Recently we have involved graduate students to assist with evaluation of the core programs. For example, a group of Masters of Public Health students taking a course on program evaluation developed practical and innovative ways to capture the impacts of the Learning Lab program. Their evaluation plan was then implemented over the course of a year by a graduate research assistant. Another group set up an evaluation framework for the Seniors Thrive initiative which has formed the basis for a three-year evaluation component that runs in parallel with, and informs, its implementation. Innovative and participatory program evaluation approaches, including arts-based methods and theatre, have been used successfully to gather, present and disseminate information about impact and lessons learned.

Similarly we track student numbers as an indicator that we are meeting a need for experiential learning experiences. In the 2015-16 academic year over 200 students participated in in-depth learning activities and another 250 students participated in one-off learning experiences or as volunteers. We have anecdotal evidence of the impact of these experiences and that students are meeting learning goals through informal and formal feedback sessions, exit interviews, and reflective writing done for course work. In collaboration with a research team from the Faculty of Education, we are about to embark on a more systematic, qualitative study of the student learning experience which will involve interviews, focus groups and a survey.

Organizational Structure

The Learning Exchange Director reports to the UBC Vice-President External who is responsible for a cross-functional, enterprise-wide, portfolio that engages with external stakeholders. The Director has a core team of 6 full-time staff and acts as a managing director, responsible for overall administration, program development, fundraising and community partnerships. An Operations Manager oversees the facility, infrastructure and day-to-day administration; an Operations Assistant plays a pivotal role supporting university and community groups in sharing the space. Each year 8 to 12 student-staff are hired to work alongside the four Coordinators responsible, respectively, for digital literacy, ESL, Learning Lab and student learning activities, with overlapping responsibilities for the drop-in, special events and unit-wide activities.

The Academic Director reports to the UBC Provost and Vice-President, Academic, linking with the academic leadership and individual faculty and their departments. The position also provides supervision to a part-time evaluation specialist and graduate student assistants who support evaluation and community-based research activities at the Learning Exchange.

In 2009, the university provided ongoing core funding to the Learning Exchange in recognition of its contributions to UBC's vision. 80% of the Learning Exchange budget comes from university General Operating Funds, the remainder from donor support for specific initiatives.

Shared Spaces for Learning

Literature Summary

Several bodies of literature underpin our work at the Learning Exchange and contribute to the creation of effective shared spaces for learning. For the purpose of this article, we define shared space as having three components: a physical place, an emotional place and a conceptual arena or intellectual space (Torjman, 2006).

Our philosophy is based on a capacity-building, asset-based community development (ABCD) approach, modelled after John McKnight's work at the Asset-Based Community Development Institute at Northwestern University's Centre for Civic Engagement (www.abcdinstitute.org/).The ABCD approach intentionally focuses on individual and collective strengths, as opposed to deficiencies, in order to build individual capacity and group capacity, including the capacity of students, faculty and researchers at the university. Typically, service

organizations have not drawn on the strengths of communities and are more likely to see their role as intervenors, conducting needs assessments and developing programs to bring what is missing. These well-meaning organizations often create unintended outcomes that miss or diminish the things that are going well, and undermine the sense of community competence (McKnight, 1995).

Given its geographic location the Learning Exchange, by definition and through its collaborations with local partners, is a place-based initiative with locally-based programs and activities. Place-based approaches have emerged as a means of addressing seemingly intractable, complex issues like poverty, with its interacting causes, within a local context of unique conditions (Bellefontaine & Wisener, 2011). Placed-based work engages participants and groups from a wide range of sectors and organizations, in an attempt to develop a more coordinated response from multiple actors, in order to affect the roots and effects of the particular issue within its geographic space. The Learning Exchange is an example of what Hart and Wolff (2006) refer to as a university-community partnership rooted in a sense of place and a commitment to engage with issues of locality.

Community engagement presents particular challenges for research-intensive universities. If it is not to be a marginalized activity it needs to be defined not just in ethical or educational terms but must speak to the most fundamental roles of the university in society: discovery and creation of new knowledge (Ostrander, 2004). It also requires new frameworks to help university leaders conceptualize linkages to community in ways that account for institutional complexity, recognize traditional forms of scholarship and foster reciprocal relationships with community partners for mutual benefit (Weerts & Sandman, 2010). In this context the Learning Exchange is a specific model of engagement that, through its staff, fulfils the multiple boundary spanning roles conceptualized by Weerts and Sandman (2010), namely community-based problem solver, technical expert, internal engagement advocate and engagement champion. Its activities not only facilitate shared learning between university and community, but discovery of new knowledge.

The creation of shared spaces for university-community learning is a therefore a form of boundary work in which staff act as brokers between the university and community cultures, and the stereotypes which university and community hold about the other break down as they cross boundaries (Hart & Wolff, 2006). In the context of service learning in higher education, McMillan identifies boundary workers as agents who assist participants make new connections across communities of practice (in this case the university and community), enable coordination and, if experienced, open new possibilities for meaning and therefore learning (McMillan, 2011). Both Hart and Wolff (2006) and McMillan (2011) recommend the use of Wenger's (1998) elaboration of boundary work and 'communities of practice' as a particularly useful conceptual framework for community-university engagement.

The Physical Learning Environment

The Learning Exchange has several distinct types of space, each with its own character, which can be summarized as: welcoming spaces for informal drop-in activities (individual or group); classroom spaces for structured group learning; quiet spaces for reflection (individual or group).

The main open space, accessible from the street, provides two valuable amenities for patrons: computers and coffee. Patrons, students and faculty can drop in and just sit on the side lines if they choose. The space has a flexible layout for multi-tasking usage and fosters both active participation (learning by doing) and watching (learning by observation). Computer stations can be moved out to create a large space for performance, knowledge exchange events and community forums. Artefacts that have been produced at the Learning Exchange are displayed on the wall, as well as indigenous art (house-post). A maker space for art and craft work and cultural programming has been created from a converted carport. This serves as a transition space between the alleyway and building interior, which can feel more comfortable for people who live on the streets: the door to the back lane can be kept open to blur the boundary between inside and out. The drop-in area operates as a self-serve space: patrons can sign themselves in and make their own coffee, there is a phone available for anyone to use without asking permission, and patrons can print up to 5 pages a day (though this is not strictly enforced). There is a private washroom instead of the open public washrooms usual in the DTES. People are encouraged to do things for themselves and everyone (staff, students, patrons) uses the same amenities (coffee, washrooms, cleaning materials, etc.) creating a sense of neighbourliness and helping to keep the space clean in high traffic areas.

Classroom spaces for structured learning are accessed by a wide staircase from the drop-in area. There are closed rooms of different sizes, fitted with tables and chairs, intended as spaces for doing things together as a group: intentional learning and co-tasking. Doors to the rooms mean that people cannot move in and out of the spaces so easily as in the drop-in area. The rooms are used for regular programming, including all ESL classes and arts activities. There is an open area in the middle of the floor which is a flexible space, similar to the drop-in.

On the top floor there are two large meeting rooms, offices, work stations, and a kitchen which are open access for staff, but otherwise by invitation. The controlled use of the space and usage protocols allow for more sensitive, quiet, focused or reflective work and bestows more trust on the users. The meeting rooms are used by outside community groups for planning, retreats or research. For example, a research study, The Aboriginal Women's Initiative healing circle, found it to be a safe space, reassuring and conducive to emotional work, away from the hubbub of the street level and drop-in. Office space is also provided to community groups on a time-limited basis. One of the meeting rooms functions as a staff lounge for team-building and staff development activities.

The Emotional Learning Environment

Physical spaces alone are not enough. Equally important are the relationships, cultures and practices that occur within the space. These arise from our capacity-building, asset-based philosophy, and are articulated in the key values and principles that inform our work and form a foundation for shared understanding (see Table 1).

Table 1. Learning Exchange Key Values

Inclusion: We welcome all individuals and groups in everything we do. We engage and empower members of the local community and the UBC community to exchange ideas and knowledge.

Collaboration: We develop productive relationships and partnerships that are mutually beneficial. We inspire innovation and change by bringing together people with different perspectives.

Celebration: We recognize it takes courage to overcome the risks of learning. We celebrate and support every step, large or small, that leads to greater awareness, understanding, and action.

Learning: We honour all kinds of knowledge and expertise including lived experience. We foster lifelong learning through reciprocal and experiential opportunities.

Pragmatism: We are flexible in creating an environment for people to make concrete, useful differences in their learning and lives.

Sustainability: We take a long-term approach to relationships and operations—building capacity for the future while meeting the needs of the present.

Learning Exchange staff are skilled at making everyone welcome and encouraging increasing levels of participation. The terminology used by Learning Exchange staff, students, faculty and volunteers seeks to build more equitable relationships. For example, we use the term 'patron' or 'community member' rather than 'client' which implies a one-way relationship of receiving only. Staff know patrons and students as individuals, and encourage them to take the next step, take a risk, and celebrate successes. They know when a seemingly small step, like just having a conversation, is actually a huge step for a particular individual. Patrons get many chances; if they need to take a break for a few days or weeks they are still welcomed back. In contrast, typical public access programs (e.g. for housing or employment) expect regular attendance, there are penalties for non-compliance and no second chances.

The Intellectual Learning Environment

The shared physical and emotional spaces promote reciprocal learning between patrons and students. Despite the distrust of formal education and the real barriers some patrons face due to low levels of literacy in all its forms, many are very knowledgeable about the community, are well read, and interested in passing on their knowledge. Activities are organized in ways that ensure contributions come from all directions; the university is not positioned as the provider of answers or handouts. Some examples of how patrons and students learn from and with each other include: patrons who are digital literacy facilitators show other community members how to use Word or a useful App; patrons help economics students learn about institutional poverty by sharing their stories and experiences; a graduate student in arts learns from patrons about the use of theatre as an intervention for self-expression, enriching his thesis on theatre as a therapeutic intervention; an undergraduate student assists a new peer facilitator to deliver an ESL session at the start of the program. Multidirectional learning can provide a more thorough picture of the complex issues and possible solutions facing communities. For example, at a legal access forum,

university faculty and patrons all increased their understanding of the ways in which the legal system creates barriers, by providing both a studied perspective and a lived one.

Shared Space as a Community Asset

Beyond the core programming and learning opportunities provided through the university, the Learning Exchange has become a highly valued and trusted part of the DTES community, evident in the number and diversity of groups who collaborate with or work independently in the Learning Exchange space. Use of space includes hosting special events on hot topics such as social justice or collaborations with the DTES Literacy Roundtable. Many arts and cultural groups hold volunteer recognition events, cultural celebrations and board meetings. The City of Vancouver holds community planning meetings on topics ranging from bicycle lane development to community economic development. Orientation materials and mechanisms allow independent usage, after-hours access, and increased ownership of the Learning Exchange space by community organizations such as the Vancouver Asian Heritage Month Society, an arts and culture organization that builds community by sharing and celebrating Asian arts, cultures, and contributions. The Vancouver Native Health Society (VNHS) has used the space to conduct research interviews and has collaborated on knowledge exchange activities to present and dialogue with people in the DTES about the findings of research projects. There are practical reasons they approached us: we are neutral space away from their 'service' environment; we provide free space so they can use their funds to work with the vulnerable community they serve; we can help promote the event and invite our patrons who might not be connected to VNHS.

Synergies that Happen in Shared Spaces: Two Examples

The Learning Exchange has provided backbone support to the Binner's Project, a local, grass-roots movement that works to promote and destigmatize informal recycling done by binners (street-level waste recyclers who collect cans and bottles) and improve their economic opportunities. In 2014, Binners participated in the Coffee Cup Revolution, one of the events to mark the Learning Exchange's 15th Anniversary, recycling thousands of discarded coffee cups in return for a deposit to draw attention to paper cup waste. The event led to a more engaged partnership with the Binners Project. Binners initially used the carport and over time moved into other spaces within the Learning Exchange facility. Graduate students in Population Health, and undergraduate students in Social Work, Urban Ethnography and Economics have contributed as part of their course work and as volunteers with support from the Learning Exchange.

Urban Core is a longstanding association made up of over 40 active agencies and over 100 member organizations dedicated to improving life for some of the most vulnerable citizens in the DTES. The Learning Exchange is an active member of Urban Core and has facilitated community-based research, participated on committee projects and events, co-chaired meetings, and helped to connect to and facilitate student projects on critical issues, on behalf of both Urban Core and its member organizations. For example, the Learning Exchange engaged and supervised a graduate student research project to map the income-generating activities of local organizations (Pilarinos, 2015), paving the way for more interest in students being active participants in Urban Core's work.

Discussion – Lessons Learned

The Physical Space

A variety of shared spaces, formal and informal, individual and group, allow for different levels of commitment or readiness for engaging in a heterogeneous community. Unlike the usual places in the area frequented by patrons, the physical space affords privacy (e.g. washrooms). The self-serve model, based on an expectation that people can manage themselves, is in contrast to many other agencies in the DTES where service users have to wait in line. The result has been to promote a sense of respect for and shared ownership of the space, which in turn leads to greater communal responsibility for what happens in the space.

We have found that the way space is configured is important: small changes can make a big difference to behaviour. As an example, the computers in the drop-in area were originally arranged in one long line on each wall with space in between. People had their backs to the room so no-one could see their faces. Staff were not able to see what the patrons were feeling, but they could see what was on the screen, which left people exposed. When the computer space was re-configured into islands of three computer stations, people were in proximity in a shared space, but not so close that they felt unsafe. People (patrons, students and staff) can now choose to connect or not. In another example, relocating a course, the Urban Ethnographic Field School, from the university campus to the Learning Exchange resulted in increased interactions among students, and between students and patrons, which in turn led to a greater quality in their reflective essays.

Divisions in the DTES community are deep and there need to be ongoing efforts to bring people together. For example, there are two distinct populations of patrons who participate in activities in the drop-in at street level and in the more structured classes on the second floor. We have needed to develop strategies to overcome the divide and create deliberate linkages between the spaces. These include rotating staff meetings through the different spaces, integrated training of facilitators who lead the different learning activities, and putting on events that appeal to both groups, including field trips which take people out of the space and their usual routines. Students also create important links between the spaces.

Emotional Environment

Personal relationships are fundamental to the successful use of shared spaces for learning but require careful attention to managing boundaries. Students who work or volunteer are provided with orientations that include boundary training. We have found this to be especially important to ensure female students can develop and maintain healthy relationships with the mainly male drop-in population. Staff expertise in supporting different learners in the space is key, but the work can be challenging and demanding. Attention is paid to staff well-being and the creation of a supportive staff environment, including frequent check-ins and debriefs. Team building activities include deliberate meetings, such as weekly huddles, program-specific retreats, ‘Lunch and Learn’ sharing of work in progress or the results of projects, and mental health and wellbeing workshops led by staff. These latter led to the identification of the need for planned social occasions outside of work as well as more spontaneous celebrations of work-related

achievements or birthdays. The success of these activities in providing a supportive work environment is demonstrated by low staff turnover and the desire of many student-staff to apply for new positions after their initial appointment ends.

Working from values and principles has proved to be more successful than having rules. At one stage in the Learning Exchange history rules were posted on the wall, which gave the wrong impression of the place as an old-fashioned school environment. They have been replaced by staff talking to people about problems, referring to values and norms rather than rules. Staff are able to unobtrusively monitor what is happening in the space at all times and can intervene in a low-key manner if needed.

Intellectual Environment

Education is the common goal that brings people together, and the Learning Exchange promotes both learning of the head and of the heart, in itself a form of shared space. People in the community want to be critical thinkers and intellectually stimulated; students and academics want to be touched by the heart. The heart brings people together, highlighting the importance of creative approaches to shared learning.

Probably one of the most important results of shared spaces for learning exchanges has been the demystifying of others which occurs through working and learning alongside strangers. We find that patrons, students and faculty are surprised by the unusual mix of people at the Learning Exchange, disrupting expectations, including the assumptions they have about a university space in the community. Students comment that they start to think more critically about commonly-held assumptions about the DTES and issues such as poverty, housing and health.

Shared learning leads to transformative learning. As patrons make the transition from being learners to being facilitators of other's learning, they gain transferable skills, confidence and a sense of self-worth. We also have numerous examples from students of the profound impact of their experiences at the Learning Exchange. One of the consistent themes is how the concepts they hear about at the university become real when they see them enacted. For example, social work students taught in the classroom about 'meeting people where they're at' have discovered what that looks like in practice, the meaning and the complexities. A graduate student in Education discovered insights into her position as a participant researcher and about the difference between 'promising practices' and 'best practices'. Other students speak to the impact on their personal lives or career aspirations. We see many students dispirited by their university experience who re-discover their passions and motivations to learn through their learning exchanges.

Implications of a University-Community Shared Space

We have discovered several consequences of the fact that the Learning Exchange is a university space in the community, some of them unexpected. Our location in the heart of the community not only provides a different learning environment to the campus, but breaks down traditional university silos. Students from different disciplines who would not normally interact (including medicine, social work, economics, sociology, counseling psychology and education) are able to

share learning, for example, through the 'Lunch and Learn' sessions, work together on projects such as the development of an ethnodrama, and are encouraged to support each other by assisting with orientations and boundary training. Graduate and undergraduate students move out of their usual hierarchical (teaching assistant – learner) relationships. Because the Learning Exchange staff are university employees, they have the needs of students in mind and can provide a supportive environment for students who might feel uncomfortable in the neighbourhood. They are able to match students with activities or groups that provide a learning experience yet ensure that the scales do not tip too far away from the goals and interests of patrons. They are also able to support community-based experiential learning in agencies in the DTES which are stretched to provide their basic services and would not otherwise have the capacity to accommodate students.

We are also able to provide support for faculty through providing space and equipment for classes and research, and connections to organizations in the DTES, for student placements and projects. We provide tours and workshops on the DTES for international programs at UBC trying to educate students about Vancouver beyond the tourist perspective, for example students in a Teaching English as a Second Language exchange program between the Faculty of Education and Ritsumeikan University in Japan. As a non-traditional learning environment we provide faculty with a place to expand their range of teaching skills with learners other than university students. Similarly students from the Faculty of Education Teacher Education program are placed at the Learning Exchange for their Community Field Experience course that provides beginning teachers with an enriched awareness and expanded understanding of the diverse settings in which education occurs. As a university we are seen to lend some 'positive distance' that government agencies, health authorities, or social service providers cannot. Being part of a university means we tolerate varying points of view in the pursuit of knowledge, important in the context of an environment that has many divisions. We are able to bring people together who might not otherwise connect.

Boundary Spanning - Making Shared Spaces Work

The Learning Exchange is both part of the DTES community and part of the University community, and aims to be a change maker in both places. Learning Exchange staff act as brokers between the university and community cultures. For example, the need to change the discourse at the university about the DTES, and the need to change the discourse about the university in the DTES, positions the Learning Exchange in the role of cultural broker, translating the interests, ways of working and cultures. Our processes and policies need to be democratic, nimble, flexible, pragmatic and adaptive, in contrast to the university culture which is hierarchical and bureaucratic. The language we use in our communication needs to speak to both academic and community audiences.

Creating effective shared spaces requires a lot of balancing to manage the many tensions of working at the boundary between university and community. We have found a need to monitor the ratio of patrons and students so that we do not overwhelm community members and upset the delicate balance we are trying to maintain. We need to relate both to those who talk about social justice and advocacy (often in the university) and the activists (the doers in the community). We need to manage the power dynamics, and the balance between academic activity and community relationships. We need to create spaces for different ways of knowing and thinking about

knowledge and learning in academia and the community. We need to balance control versus messiness to create a learning environment rather than a free-for-all. We need to juggle the ongoing tension between the community rhythm and academic rhythm, between being available and open to the public while finding time for the reflection that adds the scholarly depth to our work.

The Future

Property development and gentrification, the need to increase income-generating activities, food security and environmental concerns, and other local, national and international concerns, mean that we need to continue to be responsive to the changing landscape of the DTES. In addition to adapting and sustaining our current shared spaces for learning, an increasingly important aspect of our work is to create shared spaces for research and scholarship. We believe that it is important for the Learning Exchange to connect community engagement to knowledge creation to normalize, institutionalize and thus sustain UBC's commitment to the DTES.

The City of Vancouver recently embarked on a community-driven process to develop an area plan that has resulted in the identification of a number of priorities including improvements to well-being, places, community economic development, and arts and culture (City of Vancouver, 2015). The plan also articulates a need for more shared spaces where residents are connected and engaged, including areas where neighbours can access green spaces, maker spaces and public realm spaces that include the area's most vulnerable populations. We expect this recognition of the importance of shared spaces to lead to further opportunities for collaboration between the Learning Exchange, the DTES and the City of Vancouver.

Conclusion

The Learning Exchange offers three types of shared spaces: physical, emotional and intellectual. It provides a clean, accessible building in the heart of the inner city with a variety of spaces for the university and the community. It provides a safe and welcoming space that promotes a sense of belonging to a diverse set of users. It provides an intellectual space based on a common vision, shared values and goals that focuses on learning not service provision, encouraging the sharing of different forms knowledge, and the co-creation of new knowledge.

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Building an Engagement Center through Love of Place: The Story of the Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center

Sara Woods, B.J. Reed and Deborah Smith-Howell

Abstract

Universities throughout the United States operate engagement centers to extend campus faculty, staff and student resources to their communities. In 2014, the University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO) opened the Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center (Weitz CEC): a privately funded $24 million, 70,000 square foot facility located in the middle of its original Dodge Street campus. In addition to offices for its service learning and community service enterprises, the CEC houses over thirty university and community organizations and offers extensive space for meetings, dialogue and collaboration. This paper will discuss its strategic and programmatic origins, unique design, and lessons learned in developing and operating the center.

Keywords:

University Engagement, Partnerships, Community Engagement

Introduction

The University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO) opened the Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center (Weitz CEC) in March of 2014. Costing just over $24 million, the new 70,000-square-foot facility, fully paid for by private funds, supports the creation and expansion of university-community partnerships, satisfying growing demands for community meeting and planning space, and extending the campus's resources far beyond its physical boundaries deep into the community. The Weitz CEC is located in the heart of UNO's original Dodge Street campus. By serving as a destination where campus and community connect, the Weitz CEC has exponentially increased UNO's ability to engage its faculty, staff and students in high-quality, meaningful, and impactful engaged scholarship, service learning and community service experiences throughout the community, particularly in areas of economic stress.

The hallmark of the Weitz CEC is shared space, and the multiple benefits that this concept derives. Anchors of UNO's engagement efforts—in particular its nationally recognized Service Learning Academy (SLA) and its rapidly expanding Office of Civic and Social Responsibility—are for the first time in the same building on campus. By moving and expanding a nonprofit incubator from an off-campus location to the CEC, over thirty nonprofit, government, university and student organizations now are housed in the building, working side by side in a rich, collaborative environment that encourages and supports opportunities for ongoing dialogue, investigation and cooperation. Shared space is also achieved by hosting multiple community events—as many as fifty per day—in the building's 21 reservable meeting spaces, and for having an open door to the UNO campus itself. The everyday presence of a multitude of partner and

anchor organizations, the hundreds of daily visitors to the building attending a wide swath of events, and the unpredictable diversity of university students dropping in for a study session or a chat—all in one building—makes the Weitz CEC a truly unique place in higher education.

The Weitz CEC's mission is to "contribute positively and measurably to the community's quality of life by creating, supporting, and expanding mutually beneficial partnerships, engaged scholarship, and academic and student programming that create tomorrow's leaders and agents of change" (University of Nebraska Omaha, 2016). Its vision reads "the dynamic programs, initiatives and partnerships fostered and supported by the Weitz Center will inspire generations of leaders, groundbreaking solutions, and synergetic collaborations that will transform our community and campus into world-class metropolitan partners" (University of Nebraska Omaha, 2016).

The Weitz CEC was funded entirely with private donations, with most funding coming from two prominent, local family foundations. Both foundations had strong connections to UNO, having funded capital projects in the past. One of the foundations had also funded scholarships and program endowments as well, and had a firm commitment to the university's service learning efforts from their beginning. An accompanying program funding campaign has raised $4.5 million, with funds going to support an endowed directorship for the Service Learning Academy and programming support for the P-16 initiative in the SLA, the Collaborative, and a summer work academy for youth through the Office of Civic and Social Responsibility. Additional endowments provide student support and internships.

The Evolution of the Weitz CEC

The conceptual design, broad-based buy-in, rapid success of the Weitz CEC capital campaign, and ongoing program funding success can be attributed to three critical factors in UNO's history. The first was UNO's legacy and continuing reputation of deeply rooted engagement and outreach in the Omaha area as a distinguishing feature of its identity as a metropolitan university. The second was the launch, growth, and flourishing of UNO's service learning enterprise, which has evolved from a small cadre of engaged faculty and a handful of classes to a sweeping, galvanized movement encompassing every college and almost every department at UNO. The third factor was UNO's pioneering community role as an incubator of collective impact nonprofits beginning in 2000. Using a 2,500 square foot collaborative work space shared with the University of Nebraska Medical Center, UNO worked with community leaders to launch, administer, and house issue-focused nonprofit initiatives that responded to emerging community needs.

All three of these movements have gained local and national attention. As the Service Learning Academy and the nonprofit incubator (later called the Collaborating Center) grew in size, their influence through expanded stakeholders, partners, visibility, and outcomes also widened. Both became known as two of UNO's signature outreach efforts along with other UNO's mainstream engagement activities, some of which were long-term, college-driven initiatives and others that were more recent and campus wide. The confluence of these movements into one coherent, but still decentralized, engagement agenda was communicated in UNO's successful 2006 application to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. UNO was among the first group

of U.S. colleges and universities to receive its new Community Engagement Classification. Separately and collectively, these three factors (embracing community engagement as central to its role as a major metropolitan university, a thriving service learning movement; and the successful Collaborating Center) provided the programmatic, philanthropic, and values-based foundation on which the CEC is built.

Factor 1: Growing into a Metropolitan University

The first, and most far reaching factor, has been the university's long term commitment to the city of Omaha and its surrounding metropolitan area. Consistent with its metropolitan mission, UNO has contributed positively and extensively to the quality of life in the Omaha area since its inception as the University of Omaha in 1908. While the university has grown substantially in terms of its physical footprint, enrollment, and alumni base, its overall impact on the city and region's economic health, quality of life, and intellectual capital has steadily increased. The area's business, nonprofit, education, and government sectors have come to rely upon UNO's academic, programmatic, and student resources in their day-to-day operations, long-term growth, and sustainability. UNO has invested heavily in its community through a broad spectrum of outreach and scholarship activities, spanning from individual student internships to major, multidisciplinary programs. These have collectively engaged thousands of faculty, staff and students, and involved the campus' full range of academic areas ranging from the fine arts to engineering and mathematics.

The benefits of UNO's outreach efforts have been reciprocal, enriching the university's teaching, student services and research enterprises as well as its community partners. In 1993, UNO joined the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU). This affiliation has elevated UNO's community outreach efforts on a national level, and has helped sharpen UNO's focus as a "metropolitan university." In 1998, UNO adopted a vision statement that reflects its commitment to be a leading urban institution: "The University of Nebraska Omaha will be among the nation's premier metropolitan universities - a university of high distinction with strong academic and scholarly values distinguished by creative relationships with the communities we serve." (University of Nebraska Omaha 2010)

Building Engagement into the Strategic Fabric of the Campus. Since 1997, UNO has utilized a dynamic strategic planning process to drive campus resources and priorities. In 2000, UNO established three strategic goals that continue to guide campus priorities today. Goal 3 of the UNO strategic plan reads, "UNO will be recognized for its outstanding engagement with the urban, regional, national, and global communities" (University of Nebraska Omaha, 2010). UNO has expanded and extended its outreach efforts through increased financial, logistical, human resource and organizational support for service learning, applied research, community service projects and community leadership activities across the full breadth of university divisions, colleges, and units. These activities range from multi-disciplinary, comprehensive initiatives such as the Service Learning Academy to long-term applied research programs such as the Center for Public Affairs Research, and to hundreds of individual outreach activities of faculty, staff and students. Campus-wide examples include UNO's participation as one of the first group of institutions in AASCU's American Democracy Project initiative (labeled Civic Participation

Project at UNO) and development of the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance (formerly American Humanics) at UNO.

In his 2009 convocation address, UNO Chancellor John Christensen said, "We are the University of Nebraska at Omaha, but we always have been "of" our community. In many ways, I believe we are among the nation's distinguished institutions, serving as a national prototype for innovative interactions within our community, particularly in the area of service learning. However, the time has come to raise the proverbial bar." Continuing, Dr. Christensen challenged the audience, as well as the broader campus community, to broaden the campus' engagement activities, saying "groundbreaking work in the field of institutional engagement suggests that it is no longer enough for such activities to remain the province of a select few within the university. Rather, the art and science of engagement must permeate the academy, and be reflected broadly in all areas of teaching, research, and public service" (Christensen, 2009).

In response, the campus has taken additional action to make community engagement a clear focus of UNO's metropolitan mission. All colleges recognize the scholarship of engagement to some degree in their reappointment, tenure and promotion policies, and three have very detailed guidelines addressing it. Faculty can notate scholarship of engagement activities in their annual reports, collected through an online reporting system (Digital Measures). This will enable the campus to keep metrics on the type and trends of engagement-related scholarly activity, teaching and service.

Funding Engagement. Privately funded community chairs have been added to the ranks of faculty, and the Office of Academic Affairs offers annual engagement grants to encourage new scholarship activity. The NU Foundation has an endowment sufficient to support two Centennial Engagement Graduate Fellows, who serve in community engagement related roles on campus. One of the fellows is assigned to the CEC. Staff in academic affairs provide support in data collection and measurement regarding the campus' community engagement activities and are involved in the development of a "Campus Commitment" website highlighting community engagement.

Role of External Recognition in Furthering Engagement. In 2015, UNO once again received Community Engagement classification from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, one of 361 universities to have this classification. The application included details regarding the CEC and the partnerships that had already ensued in preparation for its opening, along with an extensive list of engagement activities that had occurred since UNO's original classification in 2006. UNO has been intentional in utilizing both external recognition opportunities such as the Carnegie classification to promote engagement on campus, in the community, within the NU system, regionally, and nationally. This has helped to elevate the work of faculty, staff and students, create informal and formal rewards, and connect even more effectively with funders. In doing so, each award builds upon the one before it, developing a broader and deeper cache of community and campus supporters.

A similar approach can be seen in UNO's history with the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll. The campus was first named to the honor roll in October of 2006. The excitement that occurred as a result helped fuel additional interest in service learning

and community service activities; for example, during that time the Seven Days of Service Initiative was launched.

In 2009, UNO was listed among the 141 institutions recognized "with distinction" on the honor roll, and soon following discussions began regarding the CEC. In justifying a nationally-unique engagement center to the University of Board of Regents in 2010, both the Carnegie Classification and the Honor Roll were detailed as examples of the campus' exemplary commitment to engagement.

In 2011, UNO was a finalist for the President's Award, and in 2014, UNO was the honor roll's national recipient of the Presidential Award for Economic Opportunity category. One of the programs identified in the honor roll in 2014, Summerworks, received over $2M of private funding in 2014 and 2015.

Another factor in recognition has been in the campus's ability to host national conferences, raising its visibility. UNO hosted the International Association for Research in Service Learning and Community Engagement (IARSLC) conference in 2014, the national conference of the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU) in 2015, and will host the Engaged Scholarship Consortium's national conference in 2016.

Factor 2: The Service Learning Movement at UNO

The second critical factor in the creation of the CEC was the transformational and defining impact of service learning on the campus's community engagement efforts. Service learning as a formal practice began in 1998-1999 as an initiative of the UNO Center for Faculty Development (CFD). In March of 1999, the Midwest Consortium for Service Learning in Higher Education awarded a $29,575 grant to the UNO CFD to create the UNO Service Learning Academy (SLA) within the Center for Faculty Development (Leach & Bacon, 1999). A total of nine service learning classes were offered in a variety of disciplines. After the Consortium grant ended, UNO sustained the Service Learning Academy with the director of the CFD providing leadership. A .70 FTE service learning specialist, hired in 2003, provided partnership support to both the community and campus faculty. With its origin in the Center for Faculty Development, UNO's Service Learning Academy developed as a faculty support and resource center. All service learning courses at UNO are integrally linked to the curriculum and course learning objectives. Service learning at UNO also focuses on the scholarship of teaching and learning, encouraging and support faculty, students, and community partners' participation in conferences and publications. This model has been instrumental in creating faculty and administrative buy-in for service learning specifically and engaged teaching and research more generally.

Among the faculty engaged in service learning at that time was Barbara Weitz, who taught in the UNO School of Social Work. She and her colleagues became campus advocates for service learning, hosting experts as well as visits to other campuses. In 2004-05, UNO had sixty service learning courses and growing interest among the faculty. In the summer of 2005, the Midwest Consortium for Service Learning in Higher Education funded the "South Omaha Seminar" to familiarize faculty interested in service learning projects with community organizations and

issues in that part of Omaha. In the summer of 2006, a second grant funded a similar seminar in North Omaha.

In 2005, The Service Learning Academy was established as an official office, separate from the Center for Faculty Development. Paul Sather, the then Assistant Director of UNO's School of Social Work, became the first full-time director of UNO's Service Learning Academy. The SLA also gained its own office space and a full time assistant director who oversaw service days and volunteer activities (in 2012, this function separated from SLA and now is part of the UNO Division of Student Affairs). In 2008, the SLA began the P-16 Initiative and hired a full-time coordinator to oversee it. With primary funding from the Weitz and Sherwood foundations, this initiative combines service learning classes from a university partner and a P-12 partner focusing on a nonprofit or community partner. In this scenario, university and P-12 students create a cooperative, real-life learning environment in which both types of students have specific learning objectives. The community partner benefits from the expertise and energy of the students. Another benefit is the early exposure the P-12 students receive by having contact with university students and being on a college campus, often for the first time. UNO's P-16 initiative continues today, and continues to receive funding from the Weitz, Sherwood, and other local funders.

Today, the SLA continues to thrive. UNO faculty, SLA staff, and many students have published and presented dozens of articles related to the impact of service learning in a variety of disciplines. UNO has hosted several service learning related conferences, including the International Association for Research on Service-learning and Community Engagement (IARSLCE) in 2014. The SLA now has a substantial endowment for its director and has access to both state and private funding. It has a full-time evaluator to measure the effectiveness and impact of its programs on students and community organizations, and shares its findings with funders, university colleagues, community partners, and the academy.

Dierberger (2015) reported four ways in which UNO is somewhat unique in the operation of the SLA. First, the SLA takes a more developmental approach in which students have service learning experiences that continue to build upon one another throughout the curriculum. For example, in the School of Social Work, service learning experiences would tie into the curriculum as students progressed from semester to semester, sometimes continuing with the same community partner or in the same issue area.

Secondly, UNO's approach promotes interdisciplinary service learning teams across campus. Through the South and North Omaha seminars, the SLA has encouraged collaboration among faculty from different fields to address common issues. For example, one collaboration around housing engaged faculty with classes in engineering, social work, and business. This interdisciplinary approach created new and creative collaborations throughout campus.

Dierberger also noted that substantial private funding distinguished UNO's service learning activities from those of other institutions. The SLA has received substantial private support to institutionalize its operations and staffing, as well as generous support for program operations. Additional support from the corporate community has allowed for additional programming and increased the visibility of the academy even further in the funding community.

Finally, there is substantial positive energy about service learning at UNO. Service learning is an identifiable component of UNO's brand, supported and promoted by campus leadership at all levels. This clear public support creates an environment that encourages faculty to participate in this pedagogy.

UNO's service learning initiatives have brought a wide spectrum of faculty, representing every UNO college, into the community engagement arena, and have acquainted numerous nonprofit professionals, board members, and stakeholders with the campus and its assets. These efforts have also brought UNO great national recognition, as the aforementioned Carnegie and President's Honor Roll attest.

Factor 3: The Collaborating Center and UNO's Role as Nonprofit Incubator

The third factor in UNO's progression toward the construction of the CEC was the operation of a prototype nonprofit incubator from 2000 until 2014. The College of Public Affairs and Community Service (CPACS) operated this facility for emerging, local nonprofit organizations. CPACS had deep roots in outreach and the scholarship of engagement, having been founded in 1972 as a direct response to civil unrest taking place in Omaha at the time. The university viewed CPACS as a means to forge more proactive and productive interactions with areas of greatest need in Omaha. The college's academic programs in urban studies, social work, public administration, criminal justice, and gerontology included hands-on community engagement and applied research.

In the early 1990s, CPACS received funding from the U.S. Department of Justice to develop a community plan for youth violence. The project was named PACT (Pulling America's Communities Together) and was part of a nationwide initiative spearheaded by the U.S. Department of Justice in collaboration with the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Education, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Commerce.

Some of the funds from the PACT grant were used by the UNO Department (now School) of Public Administration) to engage in neighborhood capacity building programs. Additional programs and partnerships with the Omaha Community Foundation, the Chamber of Commerce, the US Attorney's Office, the Mayor's Office, the Urban League, the Chicano Awareness Center (now the Latino Center of the Midlands), and the Omaha Police Department led to a successful Community Outreach Partnership Center grant through the Department of Housing and Urban Development in 1997. This grant further broadened UNO's involvement with even more neighborhood-serving organizations in Omaha's Enterprise Community.

In 2000, several CPACS faculty and staff were asked to participate in the planning of a neighborhood center for the Greater Omaha area. The success of the Neighborhood Builders training program and COPC neighborhood initiatives had illuminated the need for a centrally located, comprehensive center that would offer a full range of services to neighborhood associations and grassroots neighborhood-based citizen groups. Several local family foundations and the United Way of the Midlands came forward as funders, but balked at the idea of having the center located in the Mayor's office where it could be subject to political whim. The planning

team were also wary of starting a new nonprofit which would have to balance capacity development challenges rather than start out meeting the immediate needs of neighborhoods. Instead, funders and stakeholders sought a third party that would serve as an incubator for the center and assume an administrator role.

UNO, and specifically CPACS, was asked to serve in this capacity, as it had already proven to be a neutral convener in the past. Simultaneously, the University of Nebraska Medical Center approached CPACS to see if it would partner in the launch of the UNMC/UNO Collaborating Center for Public Health and Community Service. UNO agreed as the location for the center – called the "Collaborating Center" - was in central Omaha, just two miles from downtown and on the city's main bus line. The space was open, with offices around the perimeter. Low bookshelves surrounded each space and allowed for conversation between "neighbors." Rent was very reasonable, with UNO/UNMC underwriting the cost of the common space and adjacent parking.

UNO provided administrative support and technical assistance to the Neighborhood Center for seven years, until the center split off as an independent nonprofit. Other nonprofits incubated and supported by UNO included the Hate Crimes Coordinating Council, Project Interfaith, Omaha Table Talk, Metropolitan Area Continuum Care for the Homeless, and the Family Economic Sufficiency Program. As administrator of these programs, CPACS provided back-office support, including accounting, human resources management, grant administration, and technical assistance. In return, the incubator relationship provided multiple opportunities for service learning projects, applied research, and collaborative activities for UNO students, faculty and staff.

The majority of these programs and their staff were housed at the Collaborating Center. By co-locating these organizations in the same physical space, the nonprofits' staff and constituents benefited from shared meeting space, operating support, and most importantly, common interests and collaboration. In addition to UNO sponsored organizations, the space also housed several other nonprofit organizations that operated more independently, such the Omaha office of the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation and the African American Achievement Council. These organizations also benefited from the shared space and sense of community that thrived in the Collaborating Center.

Admittedly, managing these incubated organizations was time-consuming for UNO personnel. An associate dean in CPACS spent approximately .33 FTE of her time overseeing personnel, managing contracts, and helping to navigate university channels, structures, and procedures on the behalf of the nonprofit partners. Both she and the CPACS dean served on incubated organization's boards of directors in an ex-officio capacity. This time and effort offered extensive dividends, however. The incubator role created enormous goodwill in the community. CPACS, and more broadly, UNO, were active partners in solving community problems. Students had increased opportunities for active engagement, capstone projects, and internships. Board members, task force participants, and consumers of services were able to connect with the university in ways they had not before. The university was also able to connect with donors in new ways. One of the two donors for the CEC was one of the original donors for the Neighborhood Center and served on its original advisory board. Later, the same donor was a lead

donor for a major renovation of the CPACS building, and connected other foundations to the project.

Initially, UNO placed a full-time staff professional at the Collaborating Center who assisted with building management, scheduling, accounting, and other duties. Within a few years, however, it became clear that the partners did not need "managing." Working together, they agreed upon a general set of informal operating guidelines that served them sufficiently. This self-governance approach carried over to the CEC, which uses a committee structure for building operations. The organizations became resources to one another, often partnering on new initiatives, bartering services, and providing advice and support. The Collaborating Center remained in operation until 2014. The UNMC terminated its side of the lease in 2013 due to the loss of funding. When the CEC was completed, organizations were given an opportunity to apply. Many of the UNO incubated organizations had become independent nonprofits and had moved out on their own (which was an objective) or had been absorbed by a new parent organization. This was also considered to be a success. For example, Omaha Table Talk, which focused on promoting peaceful dialogue among and with people of color, joined ranks with Inclusive Communities, a growing nonprofit that became a CEC partner. Another Collaborating Center organization, the Family Economic Success Initiative, became part of Family Housing Advisory Services. Only one of the three remaining organizations opted to apply (Metropolitan Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless) and is now part of the CEC.

Planning for the UNO Community Engagement Center

In 2008, UNO announced that it was moving its College of Business Administration (CBA) from the Dodge Street Campus to the Pacific Street Campus. This created a domino effect, as the CBA's vacated Roskens Hall would eventually become home to the College of Education (COE), leaving Kayser Hall vacant. With a 5-story, campus office and classroom building now available, Chancellor John Christensen began conversations about how this building could contribute to the campus' growing reputation as a metropolitan university. Conversations quickly led to questions about Kayser Hall's viability as a potential Engagement Center for the campus.

The timing was right for such a conversation. There was rapidly growing support among the faculty, students and community for UNO's service learning and community service activities. UNO had recently earned its Carnegie Classification and was establishing a strong identity as a metropolitan university. The Collaboration Center was thriving and demand for its space exceeded its capacity. There was agreement among the campus' leadership that placing its anchor engagement programs under the same roof would build momentum, campus support, and greater community visibility.

To help dialogue regarding an engagement center move forward, in 2009 Chancellor Christensen convened a campus/community taskforce comprised of university administrators, facility personnel and faculty as well as community representatives and potential donors to discuss potential options. The committee met monthly, with one of the faculty representatives researching prototypes at other universities. The committee made site visits to two universities known for university/community engagement, Portland State University and the University of Utah. At both site visits, the committee met multiple campus representatives of outstanding

engagement programs and gathered feedback on UNO's vision for its campus-based engagement center.

The committee had several options for an engagement center. One was to completely gut the Kayser Hall building. Another was to select an off campus site. A third was to select a site on UNO's Pacific or Center Street campuses. A fourth was to identify a site on the Dodge Street campus. Quickly, the committee ruled out the Kayser Hall option. The building lacked windows, open space, and potential for access. It was not proximate for parking, was located on a far corner of campus, and would require substantial funding for upgrades of HVAC, information technology, and other updates before it could be renovated for engagement purposes.

The committee also ruled out construction of a site off the UNO campuses, as there was a strong desire to ensure the involvement of students. The experience with the Collaborating Center had been that it had been difficult to engage UNO's student population in an off-campus location. Almost all UNO students work, many over 20 hours a week. The committee believed the best way to ensure their involvement was to build the center on campus. Because of UNO's central location in Omaha, close to bus lines and downtown, access to campus is not an insurmountable issue for community. Also, the committee pondered, if building off campus, where? Omaha has two areas of economic stress: North Omaha and South Omaha. UNO's location in between the two communities seemed to be wisest choice, with a commitment to utilize the proposed engagement center to ramp up the campus' outreach efforts in both communities.

With all of this under consideration, the committee recommended that a new building be constructed on the UNO campus. The committee evaluated different sites, including locating the center on the Pacific Street campus to the south of the Dodge Street campus. Ultimately, the committee selected a site on what was then a parking lot on the center of campus, next to the UNO's signature campanile (bell tower). This location would ensure new visitor parking available next to the building, and the campanile would serve as a visible landmark for those unfamiliar with the campus.

Operationalizing Engagement into Design and Values

The physical design of the Weitz CEC involved a deliberate process that spanned over five years and involved multiple site visits, two architectural firms, many charrettes, over twenty-five focus groups representing campus and community constituents, and several university review processes before ground was even broken. First, consistent with university procedure, a local architecture firm developed an extensive program statement for the building that communicated the vision for the building, using feedback from focus groups from throughout the community and campus. The program statement, which contained both a narrative as well as conceptual designs of the interior space, was approved by the University of Nebraska Board of Regents and used as the basis for bidding by firms for the actual design and construction of the center. The selection process of the firms included points for each potential firm's conveyed grasp and understanding of the proposed unique nature of the CEC and its commitment to collaborative work.

The architecture firm selected for the building, Holland Basham Architects (HBA), spent extensive time exploring the concept of "collaborative work and meeting spaces" with future building staff and users, and students. Architects set up site visits for exploration of office, meeting, and casual space design, held charrettes and additional focus groups, and met extensively with the community/university task force to ensure that the vision for the center was achieved. The design of the building reflects a deference to collaboration, shared workspaces, open design and transparency.

UNO's twelve years of experience in operating the Collaborating Center provided important insight about effective collaboration practices that informed the Weitz CEC design process. The Collaborating Center "neighbors" also were key focus group participants when UNO began planning the Weitz CEC, as they offered insights that proved invaluable regarding the design of the partnership spaces. For example, they suggested including some private office space and creating work areas that allowed collaboration but also gave staff a sense of privacy when they needed it. The Weitz CEC's space reflects both. The Collaboration Center neighbors also recommended ample open collaborative workspace where Weitz CEC partners could meet and interact, greet stakeholders and clients, and spread out when they needed to. All of this was incorporated into the design, as making sure the Weitz CEC contained one private meeting space (all of the other meeting spaces in the CEC incorporate glass).

Separate from the process for the physical design of the building, the Weitz CEC community/university task force concurrently went through a lengthy planning process that identified the core values for the Weitz CEC that continue to guide decision making, partner selection and evaluation, and building operations. This process included utilizing focus group data and gathering additional feedback from campus constituents involved with service, volunteer, and service learning opportunities. Additionally, the Weitz CEC community/ university task force conducted a multi-step facilitated conversation process that included brainstorming, refining, and prioritization to clearly articulate the building values. These values continue to guide decision-making, partner selection and evaluation, and building operations.

In meeting both the mission and vision, the Weitz CEC emphasizes core values that serve as the basis for decision-making, selection of partners, and evaluation of its effectiveness. These are described in Table 1.

Table 1

Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center: Community and University Partner Values

Diversity	The Weitz CEC actively seeks to represent the many diverse ideas, backgrounds, and cultures that comprise Omaha and the university community.
Civil and Open Dialogue	The Weitz CEC is a space where all opinions can be heard and diverse ideas are not only respected but encouraged in order to foster innovation and creativity.
Collaboration	The Weitz CEC fosters an environment where people are willing to organically develop creative strategies and partnerships for solving complex social problems.
Communication	The Weitz CEC encourages thoughtful, respectful, and transparent communication between all individuals who use the Weitz CEC including community partners, faculty, staff, and students.

Reciprocity	The Weitz CEC is a portal through which the community and the university exchange resources, ideas, and solutions. Through reciprocal relations with clearly stated and fulfilled goals and expectations, community and UNO organizations interact with and benefit from each other.
Welcoming	The Weitz CEC values everyone who uses the building, and shows that by creating an environment that is clear, easy to access, filled with friendly faces, comfortable for all, and meets people's physical needs.
Continuous Improvement	The Weitz CEC equips all partners (community and university) to better serve the Omaha community by basing decisions for improvement on direct feedback and systematic data gathering and analysis.

Unique features of the Weitz CEC

While there are a number of community outreach centers at universities and colleges throughout the country, many are limited in scope and focus on one component of outreach, such as service learning, or are located off-campus and focus on a specific neighborhood. Others are housed within individual colleges or units within the institution and are focused on discipline-specific outreach activities, rather than being university-wide. The UNO Weitz CEC is unique on a national level in terms of size, scope, the nature of its operations, potential impact, and approach. In particular, the following are examples of the Weitz CEC's unique approach to engagement and how the nature of the building has been forged by collective learning within the entire campus community.

Shared Space Requires Principles and Guidelines. The Weitz CEC contains "partnership" spaces totaling 15,000 square feet - for both community and campus organizations. Currently, thirty-two nonprofit, government, student, and university organizations are housed in the Weitz CEC. The organizations were selected through a values-based application process, in which applicants describe how they will attend to building priorities such as collaboration, communication, diversity, democratic principles, and reciprocity. External partners have an opportunity to apply to be "administrative" partners, in which they enter in an incubator-like relationship with UNO. University partners include several faculty-led engaged scholarship projects that provide opportunities for applied research.

Occupation in the building is built upon the expectation that all residents will engage in mutually beneficial relationships. With the exception of the permanent anchor partners (SLA, OCSR), all building partners go through a rigorous application process. All external partners must indicate in their applications how they intend to commit to reciprocal activities with the campus (service learning, internships, and research partnerships) with the campus. Likewise, university partners must detail how they will be engaged in the community. Applicants must also describe how they will address the Weitz CEC values if selected to be building partners. A community/university committee reviews applications and conducts face to face interviews with prospective partners. The committee sends its partner recommendations to the UNO Chancellor for approval.

If selected, partners in the building are asked to maintain a level of engagement consistent with what was envisioned in their proposals. This progress is monitored through meetings with Weitz CEC staff and occasional reports. The relationships partners develop with university/community

partners are organic, with the individual organization determining the nature of these partnerships and how and when they take place. However, extended occupancy in the building is dependent on these reciprocal relationships occurring and being reported. In general, occupancy in the building is envisioned to last from three to six years for nonpermanent partners.

The Weitz CEC serves the entire Omaha metropolitan area and beyond. Some of its university and community partners, in fact, have a statewide focus. Currently, the Tribal Emergency Management Program (TEMP) serves Native American tribes and reservations within the state of Nebraska with a plan to expand its service area beyond the state in the future. Hunger Free Heartland, a community partner, seeks to address childhood hunger in the state. Similarly, the Buffet Early Childhood Center addresses issues affecting the success of children ages 0-8 in Nebraska. The Weitz CEC is also comprehensive in terms of campus use – all colleges at UNO are engaged in some way in the Weitz CEC. Similarly, the Weitz CEC does not limit its outreach to a specific type – e.g., education or economic development. Rather, its approach is organic, allowing the community and campus to determine priorities and programs collaboratively.

Finally, an essential component of the vision for the building was to offer a variety of meeting spaces to the community, provided at no charge to users. Rather than just offer space, however, the Weitz CEC is a thriving community crossroads. This has cemented the building's role in the Omaha area as a key place for making change, community dialogue, and group learning space. Each of the meeting spaces were designed for flexibility, IT innovation, and group dynamics. Meeting organizers can move walls, store or rearrange tables, utilize whiteboard walls, and take advantage of videoconferencing and other technology, aided by building support staff.

Decentralization and Shared Ideas. UNO has avoided, as much as possible, a top-down approach to engagement. The Weitz CEC serves as a mechanism to promote and support engagement at UNO, but the responsibility for initiating, maintaining, and supporting community outreach and scholarship remains the purview of UNO's individual divisions, colleges, departments, and, some instances, individual faculty. This bottom-up approach has helped ensure the sustainability of engagement of UNO despite changes in leadership at all levels. For the Weitz CEC, it has also broadened the appeal of the facility across the campus. Five of UNO's six colleges are represented in its partner organizations, and students and faculty from all colleges have participated in the Service Learning Academy and community service activities.

Sharing Physical Space. UNO does not charge rental fees for community events held in the Weitz CEC. This includes events ranging from small meetings of four people to comprehensive conferences and workshops with over 300 in attendance. Offering the space, including its technology, for free has made the Weitz CEC the central place for holding the full array community and campus-based engagement events. In doing so, it has offered myriad opportunities to place UNO in the forefront of community activities – making it an ideal spot for strategic planning forums, decision accelerators, and other complex events. In fact, in 2014, the Chamber of Commerce used the entire building – including all of its informal workspaces – for an intensive media workshop for young media specialists. Over seventy-five participants developed Omaha's new brand during the two-day time period.

Dedicated and Adequate Parking. Focus groups held during the design phase were unanimous that ample visitor and partner parking had to be adjacent to the Weitz CEC. Forum attendees described UNO as an island surrounded by a moat with limited access into the campus and a "you can't get there from here" impermeability. The Weitz CEC includes an adjacent, dedicated parking lot with eight-five stalls, with a gatehouse and attendant, with flexible access to seventy more stalls if needed. Building partners have secure parking underneath the Weitz CEC.

Shared Space and Access. One of the primary purposes of the Community Engagement Center is to increase access to the UNO campus by providing meeting space in which critical decisions about the issues facing the Omaha area, region, state and beyond can be deliberated and determined. The flexible, state-of-the-art space in the Weitz CEC meets a significant need for this in the community, and in doing so is drawing key decision makers – including those residents affected most by the decisions – together to have peaceful and productive dialogues. By making the space free of charge, the "playing field" has been leveled and all types of organizations are gathering in the Weitz CEC spaces. On any day, it is common to see Omaha's most influential donors meeting at the same time, and sometimes in the same space, as students, government leaders, consumers of services, community advocates, business executives, and nonprofit leaders. Not only do formal meetings occur, but informal gatherings in the Weitz CEC's plentiful casual gathering spots and lounges are locales for serendipitous conversations.

From Vision to Impact

The Weitz CEC has surpassed expectations in terms of its initial impact. In its first twenty-seven months of operations, over 12,000 events involving over 170,000 visitors and 648 separate organizations have taken place in the building. Thirty-two partner organizations – eighteen community-based and fourteen from the UNO campus, share collaborative office space in the building.

Weitz CEC Anchor Organizations

Four permanent anchor organizations (UNO Service Learning Academy, Office of Civic and Social Responsibility, William Brennan Labor Institute, and the Buffett Early Childhood Institute) are housed within the building, allowing expanded capacity and outreach for both UNO and the University of Nebraska. However, it is important to note that while the Weitz CEC houses these important entities, the vast extent of UNO's outreach and engagement activities continue to occur within the campus's six colleges, Criss Library, Athletics, and Division of Student Affairs.

The UNO Service Learning Academy (SLA). The SLA supported over 200 classes with more than 3000 UNO students in AY 2015/16, including those from its nationally recognized P-16 Initiative. The P-16 Initiative involves over 1500 UNO students and over 2500 K-12 students working with at least 50 community partners. With a full-time staff of six and twelve graduate students, the SLA utilizes the CEC as a base for drawing partners to campus for culminating events, partner fairs and workshops, and project meetings.

The Office of Civic and Social Responsibility (OCSR). OSCR has expanded from a full-time staff of one to a staff of 3.0 FTE and over thirty-five student workers. Leveraging additional private funds gained since the Weitz CEC opened, OCSR now includes a student-run food pantry in the Weitz CEC for UNO students and staff; a volunteer resource center; a signature days of service coordinator; and the Collaborative for Student Service and Leadership (the Collaborative), through which student leaders develop and lead community service teams with nonprofit organizations. In 2013-2014, over 5,400 UNO students, P-12 students, and community volunteers participated in 20 Signature Service Days for almost 38,000 collective service hours.

The UNO William Brennan Institute for Labor Studies. The Brennan Institute operates from the Weitz CEC and leads its training program for union leaders on site. Previously, the institute was housed in a state office building in downtown Omaha, isolated from the campus and with limited access to meeting space. Now, it is proximate to its home college, campus leadership, and multiple community partners. It has strengthened its campus bonds and heightened its visibility while building its capacity in the Weitz CEC.

The Buffett Early Childhood Institute (BECI). With a goal of making Nebraska the "best place in the United States to be a baby," the institute has grown from a staff of three in 2014 to over twenty-five since moving into the Weitz CEC. This University of Nebraska initiative focuses on programming and outreach to improve learning outcomes for children ages 0-8 throughout the state.

Other roles of the CEC
In addition to housing community/university partners and anchor partners, and hosting community events, the Weitz CEC plays additional roles.

- Supporting the scholarship of engagement by offering dedicated spaces for faculty involved in applied research in collaboration with community partners, as well as space for communities of practice focused on an engaged research theme.

- Serving as a conduit for the community for university service resources.

- Promoting campus events occurring in the Weitz CEC that are open to the public.

- Offering capacity building support to nonprofit partners in the building.

- Collaborating with the Avenue Scholars Foundation to fund AmeriCorps volunteers from Metro Community College as interns for CEC partner nonprofits.

Lessons Learned Through the UNO Experience

The lessons learned through UNO's experiences with community engagement, the SLA, and the Collaborating Center provided the basis for the values-based, partner-driven approach and business practices that UNO is utilizing in the Weitz CEC today. Through the experiences of operating an incubator, UNO's leadership—for both academic affairs and business—has relied

on a strong foundation of expertise and artifacts with which to launch successful partnerships, develop reasonable facility and business agreements, and manage expectations.

Invest in, learn from, promote, and celebrate bite-sized successes. Then repeat. The Weitz CEC capitalized on the momentum gained from numerous, entrepreneurial engagement efforts of individual faculty or administrative units. Initially, there was limited return on investment: minimal recognition from the community or campus; challenges in navigating and communicating campus complex policies and procedures to community partners; and limited support, and sometimes resistance, in fundraising. Despite these challenges, these initiatives - such as UNO's Service Learning Academy and the Collaborating Center - moved forward and grew in size, visibility and scope. They grew new sub-initiatives, such as the P-16 Initiative, that continued to fan out and broaden the impact and visibility of UNO's engagement efforts and engage even more faculty and students. UNO administrators learned from failures as much as successes. The experience with the Collaboration Center, for example, demonstrated that proximity to partners was a key to success and that the interaction led to emerging partnerships and programmatic initiatives that would not have happened otherwise. The lack of student interaction in that same space showed that engagement of students with each other and with community partners cannot occur in a significant way unless they were physically connected to each other in some way.

Today, the Weitz CEC nurtures multiple, small initiatives that emanate between building partners and UNO faculty. For example, a collaboration with Girl Scouts, Black Police Officers Association, and the Nebraska Watershed Network (a UNO student based organization from the UNO Department of Biology) is working with Sherman Elementary to engage low income girls as citizen scientists to collect water samples on a research project. These small collaborations build into broader networked projects with additional campus and community partners, funding, and visibility, and in turn growing interest in community engagement

There is great value in the university being a neutral convener. The impartial role of UNO in helping launch and administer organizations such as the Neighborhood Center, Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless, and Hunger Free Heartland has had real benefits for the campus. While it is behind the scenes work that often does not allow for the UNO brand to shine through, it has connected or strengthened the bonds between the campus and a broad range of service providers and government agencies throughout the community. It has served as a conduit for its students and faculty to find opportunities in service learning, community service, internships, and applied research. It also has solidified the university's reputation as a dependable partner and backbone for community impact efforts. Despite the university taking a back seat role in terms of "calling the shots," the importance of the campus in filling the convener role has increased its exposure to local donors, some of whom are active issue-focused supporters who otherwise have had limited experiences an engaged metropolitan university. This experience has also demonstrated that this role as "neutral convener" cannot be taken for granted. Trust and social capital built over years can be lost if external partners perceive that the campus and now, if the Weitz CEC itself has a clear partisan interest in the outcome of specific issues. One of the more challenging aspects of hosting organizations and events in the building is for the university to welcome debate and dialogue around controversial concerns and at the same not be seen as an advocate for a particular position.

In launching a major initiative such as the Weitz CEC, tap the institution's hidden assets for support. Institutions of higher education correctly identify student and faculty resources as being critical to their community engagement efforts. Allocations of space and funding to support direct personnel expenses are also highly valued by campus leaders (Campus Compact 2012, 2011, 2010, 2009). In addition to the above, UNO's fundraising and communications efforts played a vital role in the development of the Weitz CEC. However, the support and partnership of UNO's business and finance division was a critical key to the successful design, launch and operation of UNO's Weitz CEC. Led by the vice chancellor of business and finance, the division was actively involved early in the design process, not just in the physical design of the building, but also in determining how the Weitz CEC would be *supported* as an engagement facility, used by community and university partners alike.

Key to this design orientation was the concept of *access*. The vice chancellor personally set this tone early on by convening key facilities personnel and asking them to take an approach not of *control*, but of *access*. For example, this approach meant that community partners and visitors using the Weitz CEC would access immediate parking, unfettered by confusing signage and cluttered access points. This was a turnabout from the presumptive theme of *control* that had dominated the campus's approach to parking for decades.

Giving community partners physical, logistical, operational and network access to the campus and the Weitz CEC required the cooperation and assistance from a broad array of campus services, many of which had not been involved in the *business* of engagement in the past. Accounting staff created cost centers for community partners and simple procedures for billing rent, copier charges, and miscellaneous expenses. Parking Services has worked with CEC staff to provide a customer-service focused approach to managing its visitor lots. Information Services had to create mock identities for community partners who defied definition by standard campus categories: not an employee, volunteer, alumni, nor student, but someone who needed secure access to buildings, parking permits, recreation facilities, and a MAVcard. Telecommunications created multiple options so that partners could utilize the campus telephone system or bring in their own private provider. The campus compliance officer developed a facilities agreement template for the partners.

The level of cooperation and responsiveness that was provided by the division of business and finance, and that continues to occur, has been critical to the Weitz CEC's success. This has been achieved through a commitment to transparency, through which problems have been addressed head-on between the Weiz CEC director and the corresponding department head. More significant problems or challenges are directed to UNO's senior leadership (the vice chancellor for business and finance, senior vice chancellor for academic and student affairs, and the chancellor) or the chancellor's cabinet for discussion and resolution.

Free space pays big dividends. UNO made a decision early in the planning process not to charge any fees for the use of its meeting rooms or corresponding technology. This has proven to be a major win to the campus, resulting in over 100,000 visits to the building in its first 21 months of operation. The Weitz CEC's policy is to be open for free community and campus events that are "for the public good," excluding fundraisers, political campaigns, and press conferences. The

Weitz CEC's open door policy has extended the campus to individuals who have never been to UNO before as well as to alumni who have not been returned to the campus for many years. The free space is especially valuable to federal and state agencies that are not able to pay for meeting and conference space for trainings, workshops, and webinars. Nonprofit organizations hold public dialogues, client fairs, board meetings, and strategic planning events. Local elected officials hold town halls, dialogues, and stakeholder meetings. Local foundations hold grant writing seminars, bring in national speakers and panels, and convene planning forums around major issues.

In offering this space for free, UNO's leadership has quickly realized that the gains vastly overweigh lost potential revenue from booking rooms. The university is now a *community destination* from where positive change can take place, where community problems are solved, and where civil dialogue occurs. While there is a value placed on the free space UNO provided: The Weitz CEC also broadened the range of visitors to the campus: *potential students*, attending chess tournaments, slam poetry contests, or inclusivity events; neighborhood association members from the areas surrounding the campus, many of whom had never been to UNO; *business leaders* attending Omaha Chamber board meetings; *policymakers*, including members of Nebraska's state senate, city council, county commission, and Washington delegation, all attending a broad array of meetings; and the broadest array of *donors and potential donors*, attending board meetings, stakeholder events, community dialogues, and even informal gatherings in the Weitz CEC's collaborative nooks. Of course, in all of these circumstances, the opportunity to connect or reconnect UNO with a parent or alumni through the Weitz CEC is always present. "I met ____ at the Weitz CEC last week" has become part of Omaha's local vernacular. Often, visitors to the Weitz CEC take advantage of the building's central location to explore UNO's walkable campus, often visiting the institution for the first time. This has served as an excellent recruiting tool for potential students and parents, as has the Weitz CEC's partnership with the UNO recruitment office, which provides promotional materials (with the event coordinator's permission) at building events involving youth.

A decentralized approach to engagement works, but it still requires coordination. The Weitz CEC's university partners represent five of the university's six academic colleges, Academic Affairs, and Division of Student Affairs. All Weitz CEC partners agree to abide by the stated values of the center. Otherwise, each is only accountable to protocols or expectations within their home department and college, not to a centralized community engagement office at UNO. The Service Learning Academy (SLA) serves faculty and students from all of UNO's colleges as well as students attending University of Nebraska Lincoln classes held on the UNO campus, but there is no mandate for faculty to participate outside of occasional departmental expectations. The SLA operates from the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Civic and Social Responsibility runs through the Division of Student Affairs, and students participate voluntarily.

UNO and the Weitz CEC's leadership has been careful to define the Weitz CEC as *a portal* for the institution's engagement efforts, not *the container* for the entirety of the campus's work in this regard. While it houses UNO's signature engagement programs (SLA and OSCR), both of these are focused on working throughout the campus, involving faculty and students from throughout the academic and student affairs enterprises. Weitz CEC staff assist with connecting the building's partners with potential university collaborators from throughout the institution,

make referrals for internships, capstones, practica, and engaged research opportunities for inquiries from throughout the community, and assist campus organizations in hosting community engaged events. However, even broader efforts, such as supporting faculty in scholarship of engagement through the tenure and reward process, civic engagement grants, and emphasis of UNO's metropolitan mission all promote community engagement as well.

This approach has led a broad-based sustainable focus on engagement at UNO that has endured for decades despite leadership changes at the campus, division, college, and departmental level. Decentralization is not without its challenges: as it makes it difficult to identify and quantify engagement activities on a campus level; measure overall outputs and outcomes; and communicate the depth and impact of engagement on students and the overall community. As UNO strives to demonstrate the value of the Weitz CEC and its "proof of concept," capturing and sharing this institutional-level information is even more crucial. The commitment of resources and human capital spanning twenty years, two chancellors, and multiple deans, vice chancellors and other campus leaders along with extended relationships with key donors and community partners led to the realization of the Weitz CEC. This moved from a combination of individual commitments to one that reflected a shift in the institutional culture.

UNO is working to overcome these challenges by utilizing campus wide measurements such as the National Survey of Student Engagement's civic engagement module, a community perception survey, standardized assessments of service learning courses, a more comprehensive approach to evaluation and student portfolios by the Office of Civic and Social Responsibility, and a year-long university engagement data collection process led by the Office of Academic Affairs. In the summer of 2016, a broader campus evaluation of engagement will begin. All of the data collected will be shared on a new "Campus Commitment" page under the "Engagement" portal on the UNO website.

Building for engagement requires flexibility in physical design and ongoing approach.
In the design of the Weitz CEC, the UNO leadership team acknowledged that the building's design would be fluid and flexible as the realities of collaborative co-location emerged. There was no prototype nor design basis to learn from in shaping the physical design of the space. Luckily, there was sufficient funding left in the budget to allow for multiple modifications of workspaces, office areas, and project rooms during the first twenty-one months of operation. The office furniture in the partner spaces is modular and allows for redesign. Other spaces, such as a large filing area, have been removed and replaced with open work areas while others have been reconfigured to accommodate hoteling spaces for drop in users and large tables for informal meetings.

This flexibility has also allowed for a focus to continuous improvement. Working with the Weitz CEC advisory committee, Weitz CEC administration utilizes building statistics, surveys, partner feedback and observation to examine use patterns and make changes. A new, concierge-style reception desk will ensure a volunteer or student will greet all building visitors even when a major conference claims the larger front desk. An underused resource room will soon be repurposed into a flexible classroom. A major partner is planning to vacate the Weitz CEC as it outgrows its current space, opening up opportunities for new programming and innovation.

When engaging in partnerships, clarify expectations upfront and achieve agreement regarding common terms. UNO's experience with the Collaborating Center and Service Learning Academy has underscored the value of achieving a common understanding of expectations regarding partner roles and contributions. In the operation of the Weitz CEC, coming to agreement around certain terms is especially important, as its partner organizations are expected to "collaborate," "communicate" and be "reciprocal," among others (CEC, 2015). However, these terms can be ambiguous and carry different meanings, depending on the context. The values-based approach to managing the Weitz CEC has helped clarify these expectations, as each value is defined during the application process and reiterated in multiple ways, events and artifacts. SLA uses multiple strategies to clarify expectations and agreement, including employment of a full-time community liaison and holding an annual, week-long summer workshop for its P-16 initiative, attended by over 150 faculty, K-12 and community participants. By working together to clarifying and operationalizing common terms, partners, faculty and Weitz CEC administrators better understand expectations around what will be gained in a collaboration or partnership and how the work will be done.

Conclusion

The Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center represents vast opportunities for future growth in UNO's outreach and engaged scholarship efforts. Its flexible design and decentralized approach, along with the commitment of university leadership, means that the center will play an important role in developing additional collaborations, new community service opportunities for students, the ongoing expansion of service learning, and increasing the level and impact of engaged research.

The Weitz CEC demonstrates the value of engagement at every level of the institution. From unit-based initiatives like Neighborhood Builders, which later gave rise to a college-based nonprofit incubator, to a small faculty development office promoting and supporting service learning among a few faculty champions, UNO was able to demonstrate the value it provided through its faculty members, staff and students in addressing critical community issues. Accompanied by a solid strategic plan that reiterated the value of community engagement and the concrete role of UNO as the city's metropolitan university, these initiatives took root and steadily grew and gained momentum in terms of visibility, speed and impact. As their velocity increased, so did the attention paid to them by critical stakeholders within and outside of the university: government decision makers, community stakeholders and partners, and donors. Ultimately, these donor-champions participated in the planning process for the Weitz CEC, sharing the vision that emanated from the lessons learned in service learning projects, neighborhood engagement, collaborative workspaces, and values-driven partnership.

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Shared Spaces, Shared Learning: University/Corrections Partnerships that Transform Thinking

Deborah Smith-Arthur and Amy Spring

Abstract

By partnering with correctional facilities, institutions of higher education are well positioned to create shared learning communities that provide profound educational experiences. Portland State University offers several courses involving university/corrections partnerships; these courses meet inside carceral institutions. This article highlights three of these courses and the shared learning spaces they involve. We address the negotiating of these partnerships, development of the courses, and the creation, maintenance and outcomes of these complex learning environments.

Keywords:

Prison education; Community based learning; Engaged learning.

Introduction

Imagine: University students have signed liability releases which delineate the inherent risks of entering a correctional or detention facility, and ask them to wholly assume those risks. In great detail, they have been told what and what not to wear, and they have been carefully advised of the statute making the introduction of contraband into a correctional facility or detention center a felony. Now they are physically at the facility, which will become their classroom for the term. Admonitions from family members or friends perhaps echo in their minds: "Don't go there! It's dangerous!" Walking from the parking lot, under the razor wire, and through a locked gate that requires them to be buzzed in so they can enter the institution, makes them wonder what awaits them. A corrections officer asking them to produce their state-issued identification greets them. They sign in and are given a visitor's badge, and are often asked to acknowledge and sign a statement that, in the event that they are taken as a hostage, no one will negotiate for their release. They are instructed to stow their keys and cell phones in waiting room lockers, two of the many strictly prohibited personal items not allowed in the facility. They pass through the metal detector—sometimes several times, shedding belts, shoes, anything that may contain metal, in front of their colleagues. Occasionally during this disrobing process the officer in charge will publicly admonish students for not adhering to the dress code. Once cleared, students replace all removed items, and move forward, hearing the electronic grind of the heavy sliding door, which lets them inside the institution and into their classroom.

Meanwhile, on the inside, the incarcerated course participants—those living inside the razor wire—are also nervously wondering what's to come, what to expect. Perhaps their own

colleagues will disparage them as they get the call from staff to head to the education unit. They wonder what college students will think of them; they wonder how they will be perceived. Why do college students bother to come spend time with them? Are they on display? Can they handle the academic work? Will they be judged?

There are a variety of ways to think about shared learning spaces in higher education. Combining residence halls with academic programs, using technology to create virtual learning spaces or online classrooms, and developing frameworks for experiential learning in community settings are all among the various ways that we conceive of shared learning spaces. In this article, we focus on a unique setting for a shared learning space: the implementation of learning communities within carceral institutions involving both incarcerated learners and university students learning together, side by side inside a locked facility. These shared learning spaces bring these seemingly disparate communities of students together in a physical, social and intellectual way, creating a powerful learning community. Through experience we have learned that these spaces have attributes, challenges, and rewards unique to the setting; the restrictive rules and regulations that are layered on this educational setting are like no other learning environment.

The creation and maintenance of a university/corrections partnership, of course, involves negotiating the complex bureaucracy of both institutional bureaucracies. There is growing interest in developing these partnerships as evidenced by the January 2016 publication "Building Effective Partnerships for High-Quality Postsecondary Education in Correctional Facilities" (Vera Institute, 2016). While other types of shared learning spaces might involve partners in the general community, contending with the regulations, needs and logistics of correctional institutions present particular and heightened challenges. Additionally, courses involving learning communities within carceral settings involve students from seemingly very different educational paths and life experiences. This collaboration can be somewhat disorienting, thus also providing potential to be particularly transformative. Close monitoring of and support for the feelings and emotions, as well as the academic learning, of all the students and participants is required. The thorough preparation for the experience, the design of the physical space, the providing of tools and support for engagement across perceived difference, and the creation of opportunities for all students/participants to collaborate together toward a common goal are all important aspects of managing and making the most of this cross-cultural shared learning space.

In this paper we examine the various aspects of shared learning spaces within carceral settings through the lens of three such course offerings at Portland State University. The first, developed by a faculty member who teaches the Juvenile Justice Capstone, involves a partnership with the Multnomah County Department of Community Justice, Juvenile Services Division, and with *The Beat Within*, "a publication of writing and art from the inside" of juvenile detention facilities nationwide (www.beatwithin.org). This course brings writing and art workshops through *The Beat Within* into the Donald E. Long detention facility in Portland, Oregon. The next course offering, "Women's Prison Gardens Capstone," partners with the Oregon Department of Corrections, and specifically the gardening program at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility, a women's prison about 40 minutes south of Portland in Wilsonville, Oregon. Through this course, students make three trips to the prison garden to learn gardening skills from the incarcerated women gardeners there. The last course, "Inside Out Prison Exchange: Civic Leadership"

partners with the Oregon Department of Corrections. This course has been offered at both Columbia River Correctional Institution in Portland and Coffee Creek Correctional Facility. Students in this course study and practice civic engagement and civic leadership. The correctional facilities where these courses take place are within a driving distance of roughly 45 minutes from the Portland State University campus; their proximity to campus is in large part why the instructors chose these institutions as partners.

The Capstone Program's Curriculum: Making these Courses Possible

Portland State University is a 50-acre campus situated in downtown Portland, Oregon, that enrolls more than 22,500 undergraduate and 5,600 graduate students. This urban-serving university celebrates its well-known motto "Let Knowledge Serve the City" by animating the student and faculty teaching and research experience with engagement opportunities that bring the campus community into applied teaching and learning settings in partnership with community organizations. In the early 1990s PSU reformed its undergraduate general education requirements to include a six-credit senior-level multi-disciplinary community-based Capstone course (Metropolitan Universities, 2015). Capstones are the culminating experience of the University Studies curriculum, PSU's innovative general education program. In the Capstone, students and faculty work with community partners collaboratively to respond to a community-faculty identified concern. Each of the courses featured in this article are Capstones, and the students enrolled in these courses are nearing the end of their undergraduate requirements. The aim of the Capstone is for students to demonstrate the sum of their learning through application and engagement with a real problem, working in collaboration with others. All Capstone courses have a community-based learning element, and students are required to work with or on behalf of a community partner. These courses are limited to 18 students, thus allowing for a small seminar-type of learning environment. All of these curricular and administrative elements described above contribute to our ability to develop an educational experience of this type.

Physical Space and Tools for Learning and Engagement

Juvenile Justice Capstone

The Juvenile Justice Capstone course partners with the Multnomah County Department of Community Justice (DCJ), specifically the Juvenile Services Division. Portland State University and the Multnomah County DCJ have a mutually beneficial, long-term partnership, of more than twelve years. The Juvenile Services Division of Multnomah County DCJ operates the Donald E. Long Juvenile Detention Home (JDH) (multco.us/dcj-juvenile). This facility houses youth, typically ages 12-18, from Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington counties. The majority of youth are being held in detention pre-adjudication, and the average length of stay is 14 days, but youth can spend anywhere from 1– 241 days in the facility. Roughly 60 percent of youth are incarcerated under Oregon's Ballot Measure 11, requiring automatic waiver to adult criminal court for youth aged 15 and older charged with certain crimes, as well as mandatory minimum sentences upon conviction (ORS 137.700, multco.us/dcj-juvenile, n.d.).

Through this Capstone, PSU students bring a writing and art workshop into juvenile detention, through *The Beat Within: A Publication of Writing and Art From the Inside*. The Beat Within has

been in existence for twenty years. Founded in 1996, the program began in almost an impromptu manner, following the death of Tupac Shakur, a famous rapper from the late 1980's and 90's whose music often focused on violence and hardship in inner cities, racism and other social problems. David Inocencio, founder of The Beat Within, has commented on how impactful Shakur's death was for many youth, and he wanted to give youth a forum for expressing their feelings. Out of that idea, *The Beat Within* was born (Hilton, 2010). Now *The Beat Within* allows over 5,000 incarcerated youth nationwide the opportunity to reflect and write on the same topics each week, and also to read how others are responding to these same topics. Responses are typed, lightly edited, and sent to the editorial board of *The Beat Within* in San Francisco. A number of pieces are chosen for publication. Printed bi-weekly, the magazine is distributed to a wide variety of stakeholders in the juvenile justice system, including policymakers, judges, attorneys court counselors, and of course, incarcerated youth.

In order to participate in this Capstone, PSU students must complete and pass a background screening through the Multnomah County DCJ. As PSU's 10-week terms means that roughly 15 Capstone students are undergoing the clearance process at DCJ approximately every 12 weeks, this clearance process requires substantial time and resources on behalf of DCJ staff. The strength of the partnership is dependent upon the willingness of DCJ to facilitate this process. However, DCJ also recognizes and appreciates the benefits to their clients and the support of their mission that the partnership with PSU provides. In preparation for facilitating Beat Within workshops, the class tours the detention facility and begins the process of being oriented to the culture of detention. Additionally, the class thoroughly reviews *The Beat Within Volunteer and Training Manual* as well as *Editing Guidelines*. By the third week of the term, students are ready to begin facilitating workshops.

While the incarcerated youth who participate in the workshops do report increased interest in writing, and in reading, the emphasis of the partnership is not on developing youth into polished writers, but instead on positive pro-social engagement between university students and incarcerated youth (Catching, 2013). *The Beat Within* is the vehicle for that engagement. On days when youth may not be interested in participating in the writing or art, for a variety of reasons, students and youth participants engage in a discussion about college or perhaps play a game of dominoes. Even more important than the writing and art produced is the pro-social engagement between the detained youth and the PSU students. After the weekly workshops, Capstone students type and lightly edit each piece of writing, according to specific guidelines provided by *The Beat Within*, and then submit that work to editorial board at *The Beat Within*. Editors at The Beat then review the submissions and various pieces are chosen for publication. Additionally, each young person who submits work receives a personalized response from *The Beat Within*.

The shared physical learning space of this course is situated within housing units, or "pods" within the juvenile detention facility. Most of the activities during the day for detained youth, including their learning, eating, recreation, and sleeping, happen within that space. Consequently, this is where the partnership and the engagement with the Capstone class happens as well. Students and detained youth who participate with *The Beat Within* workshops are situated at tables in an open area of the unit. Sitting around these tables, youth participants and college students are in circles together. The dynamic of the circle helps to put all at ease, and to

dismantle any sense of hierarchy. Corrections staff, or "custody service specialists," are always present. However, over the years of the partnership, trust in the background process and the training has been established, and in fact most custody staff see Capstone as "a part of the culture of detention" (Lefebvre, pers. comm., 2015). Therefore, while remaining present and engaged, most of the facility staff allow Capstone students to lead and run the workshops without interference.

This shared learning space results in differing, yet complementary, outcomes for the various stakeholders. From the perspective of the Department of Community Justice, the Capstone class and The Beat Within workshops enhance their mission by "assisting youth in developing creative problem solving skills, empathy, and tools to express emotions appropriately." (Bolson, pers. comm., 2015). The course provides pro-social engagement and community connections that DCJ staff cannot provide. In fact, the course was recognized with a "Volunteer of the Year" award from Multnomah County in 2011.

For Capstone students, the shared learning space of *The Beat Within* workshops inside juvenile detention offers them an opportunity to examine and transform how they perceive those labeled as juvenile delinquents and how they understand criminal and juvenile justice policy. Through anonymous end-of-term evaluations and reflective writing assignments, students have reported that the experience of working with the youth has changed them profoundly. Specifically, they report having learned that the youth are "brilliant, unique, smart, talented, thoughtful, kind and reflective" which is not how they perceived incarcerated youth prior to the course. Additionally, the experience of working directly with incarcerated youth inside a detention facility situates the academic component of the course within a real and applied context. Just as Paulo Freire advocated "reading the world" as a key pedagogical strategy, this critical place-based educational experience allows students to reflect upon that place (juvenile detention) and has an impact upon their relationship to it (Gruenewald, 2003). Indeed, "...firsthand experience can become an important way to shape an audience's sensitivity for processing arguments calling for social change regarding the prison-industrial complex...and prepare [students] for a critical examination of incarceration policy" (Hinck et al., 2013, 40).

For the detained youth who participate in *The Beat Within* workshops, engaging weekly with university students leads to a positive sense of community engagement, and conversely, decreased feelings of isolation (Catching, 2013). During the closing circle at the end of each term, in which PSU students, incarcerated youth, and DCJ staff sit together to reflect upon the experience, many youth have expressed that through their engagement with college students, that they are "not forgotten," and that they are appreciative for the involvement and for the fact that they have been "given a voice." Shared learning space and engagement with university students provides for growth that extends beyond academic learning and leads to a better sense of belonging and well being.

Women's Prison Gardens Capstone

While the Juvenile Justice Capstone utilizes writing and art as a tool for prosocial engagement between college students and young people experiencing incarceration, the Women's Prison Garden Capstone utilizes gardening as the tool for that engagement. Incarcerated women teach

organic gardening skills to PSU Capstone students, sharing their expertise and skills that they have developed while planting and maintaining the garden inside the prison yard. The physical space of the shared learning happens within the prison, outdoors, in the ½ acre garden area, which was created by the prison gardening program. Oftentimes, all participants are on their knees in the garden together; physically in the dirt. This dynamic is disarming and leads to a shared sense of participation and a sense of equality among participants.

The developer and instructor of this course was already a volunteer with the Department of Corrections, and was instrumental in creating that gardening program. The PSU Capstone program was viewed as a way to expand and sustain the gardening program. The Instructor proposed the offering of the course as an adjunct instructor, and the Capstone Committee, a small group of seasoned Capstone faculty who review all new course proposals, approved it. Her pre-existing relationship with the Department of Corrections made the partnership development between the Department of Corrections and the university relatively uncomplicated.

Gardening programs in prisons can soften the effects of the harsh prison environment while at the same time assisting with preparation for reintegration into society. Exposure to gardening skills offers people experiencing incarceration prosocial tools for self-support and for coping with stress (Lindemuth, 2014). Beyond gardening together, however, the gardening program at CCCF and the partnership with PSU Capstone offers incarcerated women and students both an opportunity to engage with one another as peers. The instructor has noticed that participants also push beyond the stereotypes of one another they may have held previously (Rutt, D., pers. comm., 2016). Again, varying yet complementary learning outcomes are achieved. Despite the fact that in this course students make only handful of visits to the prison throughout the term, this place-based pedagogy makes the academic learning, involving an examination of the experience of women in prison, and the social change related to the prison-industrial complex, more real and impactful for the university students. As indicated through reflective writing and discussion in the course, students find that they have a deeper understanding of the issues and challenges faced by incarcerated women, and their previous course work in their various disciplines becomes more focused and fine-tuned. For the incarcerated women, teaching gardening skills to university students gives them a sense that they indeed have meaningful contributions to make, and also helps them to feel more connected to the world beyond the prison walls. Through her extensive experience with the garden and the course, the Instructor has shared her belief that the garden and the attendant engagement with outsiders creates a healthier environment for everyone there, incarcerated women as well as staff (Rutt, D., pers. comm., 2016).

Inside Out: Civic Leadership Capstone

The Inside Out: Prison Exchange Civic Leadership Capstone course has been offered once per year for the past 10 years. This course provides an opportunity for a small group of students from PSU, "outside students," and a small group of residents from a prison within close proximity to PSU, "inside students," to study and learn together. The shared learning space for the course is physically located within the prison. Each week, "inside students" and "outside students" work together in a structured peer and collaborative learning environment. Students (both inside and outside students) examine their own perceptions about crime and justice, the criminal justice system, and corrections through a policy analysis lens. All students gain a deeper understanding

of the criminal justice system through the marriage of theoretical knowledge and practical experience achieved by meeting together weekly. Students in the class also work together to complete a culminating project, through which they propose a project or policy change that they believe is organizationally viable and would improve the lives of those incarcerated in the facility.

The shared learning space for this course takes place in a classroom space made available to the class within the prison. Higher education courses are not readily available to incarcerated people, yet there is growing recognition and data that educational programs in prison promote safer communities, safer prisons, and are cost effective (Vera Institute, 2016). From the perspective of prison administrators, the course allows college level instruction to be made available to the carceral community without cost to the inside students. The PSU students, however, pay full tuition and bear the cost of instruction, thus making it possible for the instructor to offer the course at the prison as part of their teaching load. The course also provides inside students with regular opportunities to engage with outside community members in ways that reinforce prosocial engagement in an academic community. As confirmed by student reflective assignments and in class conversations, inside students regularly report they feel connected to a larger community of caring and thoughtful people on the outside and feel a sense of confidence as they consider their release that they otherwise would not have gained. Given that the learning community involves college students, and both communities of students complete the same assignments and readings, the shared learning space provides inside students with an opportunity to have the role of student modeled for them by a community of students that are perceived to be academically accomplished (Collier & Morgan, 2008). This modeling reinforces for the inside students that they in fact possess the intellect and skills to perform in a college level course. As with the two previous courses, the shared learning space for the PSU community of students allows them to challenge their assumptions of who incarcerated people are and how the policy practices of incarceration play out in the real lives of real people. The inside and outside students in this class report being moved to rethink their assumptions about the "other" and this often results in them seeing themselves as more alike than different.

Portland State students who enroll in this course are nearing graduation. They have taken dozens of classes on campus over the four plus years of their academic career. They enter the Inside Out Prison Exchange: Civic Leadership course with a sense of confidence that they know how to effectively perform in a college class to learn and be rewarded with a commensurate grade. Many of these college students are drawing on tacit knowledge that they are not even aware that they possess, but that help them perform successfully in their classes (Polanyi, 1966). Although some of the inside students have attended college prior to being incarcerated, the great majority have not or were last in a college class many years prior. Therefore, the inside students in this class are often not able to draw on the same informal and implicit knowledge about how to perform well in a college class as the outside students. In general, the inside students believe that to do well in the class they tend to complete all the assigned reading and follow with precision the assignment guidelines. The attention to detail the inside students bring to the class reading assignments, homework, and class discussions is a regular reminder that preparation and rigorous engagement with the course content is essential in this course.

The class is a highly interactive class where students complete assigned readings and in small groups (of both inside and outside students) facilitate discussion of the readings. There is always a group project in this class where the students complete a community engagement project that results in a change within the prison. Projects have included: (a) setting up an institution-wide recycling program; (b) the introduction of lower calorie, healthier meal options to a system that only offered high carbohydrate, high calorie options; and (c) the establishment of a clothing closet for indigent inmates without access to clothing suitable for life upon release from prison. Students analyze power and resources, and learn and improve proposal writing and presentation skills. All of these course elements build a set of knowledge and skills that civic leaders must master to be effective change agents in their communities. Students repeatedly report they are surprised at how receptive the prison administration is to their ideas and how the power dynamic between prison staff and the class shifts slightly while the class is taking place.

This intensive course provides a life-altering experience that allows the PSU ("outside") students to re-conceptualize and rethink what they have learned in the classroom, in the media, and through public policy about marginalized, incarcerated communities. In the words of a former outside student, "I have learned to see my inside classmates as individuals and people with hope and dreams like everyone else instead of as their crime. I used to view all individuals in prisons as criminals. Through my experience during this class my view has changed in such a way that I believe will be with me for many years to come" (quote from a reflective assignment, 2008).

Through gaining these insights, this class inspires outside students in a variety of ways. For those who view themselves in future criminal justice careers, through reflective writing assignments it is clear that the experience of spending intensive time with incarcerated people serves to humanizes that population. Additionally, as is often reported in reflective papers and in classroom discussion, students in this course develop a desire and a commitment to work towards a more socially just prison system. While further research is warranted, it is at least anecdotally clear to the Instructor that the experience of the course encourages students to pursue employment and community work that leads toward an effective, humane, restorative, criminal justice system. At the same time, the class challenges the incarcerated ("inside") students to place their life experiences into a larger social context, to develop or rekindle their intellectual self-confidence and interest in further education, and to encourage them to recognize their capacity as agents of change in their own lives, as well as in the broader community.

Partnership Development with Corrections Departments

Partnership development between community organizations and educational institutions that make community-based courses like Capstones possible is never an easy task. An established and growing body of literature details that reciprocal, collaborative, sustained partnerships require the parties involved to invest time and resources in establishing trust, clear and open communication, establishing a set of common goals for the partnership (Sandy & Holland, 2006; Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, 2007; Creighton, 2008). Organizational culture and the roles and authority individuals have within their organization influences the development of these partnerships. Kevin Kecskes (2006) reminds us of the importance of understanding the culture of our organization's "belief system" to effectively employ partnership development strategies. Development of the partnerships with prisons, jails, and detention centers can be

replete with various levels of attendant challenges. The primary concern of locked facilities is safety and security. In large part a high level of investment in restrictive rules and a strong chain of command achieves these goals. Colleges and universities prioritize education over safety and security and often go about achieving this goal in an organizational culture with significantly less structure than most organizations, while locked facilities represent an extreme example at the other end of the spectrum. The general philosophy and supportiveness, or lack thereof, of a particular correctional facility toward educational programming can impact the development of these partnerships. Over the years of developing partnerships with a variety of correctional facilities in Oregon, Portland State University faculty have successfully overcome the seemingly divergent goals and organizational cultures to create these shared space partnerships by addressing some important corrections concerns. The sustained commitment of the teaching faculty and the accompanying curricular structure are essential elements to the success of these partnerships. Recognizing that building a partnership between organizations with very different cultures takes time, knowing that the investment will yield a shared learning environment that will serve many hundreds of students over time makes it completely worthwhile.

Establishing Trust and Credibility

All partnerships must be based on a foundation of trust. Correctional facilities perceive that having a group of college students come into the facility to take classes with a group of currently incarcerated individuals presents the facility with a level of risk that they are likely not to assume unless they have significant trust in the instructor who leads the class. The instructors who have successfully developed the partnerships that have resulted in these shared spaces for learning, trust and credibility was established through one of three paths:

- A successful partnership was established from an existing relationship the instructor had with the corrections facility;
- An instructor who had existing professional expertise in corrections and that expertise helped facilitate the establishment of the partnership;
- An instructor established a partnership by following the administrative processes that govern the development of new programs at the prison.

Trust for both the Juvenile Justice Capstone and the Women's Prison Garden Capstone was initiated and established because of previous relationships that the faculty had with the community partners, as volunteers and in relation to previous work history. In the case of the Juvenile Justice Capstone, a decade of previous juvenile and criminal law practice allowed the faculty member to access the working relationships within the Department of Community Justice, which operates the juvenile detention facility where the course is based. Based on those pre-established relationships, it was fairly easy to navigate the correct protocols for development of the educational partnership. The mission of the Donald E Long detention center is "to create and maintain a safe, secure, stable, and enriching environment for juveniles in our care, while protecting the community" (https://multco.us/dcj-juvenile). Additionally, Multnomah County Juvenile Detention is one of the four original local model sites established through the Annie E Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI). (www.aecf.org/work/juvenile-justice/jdai/). Multnomah County was one of the earliest sites to implement the JDAI. Part of the strategy of the JDAI is to improve the conditions of

confinement. Partnering with Portland State University to participate in the writing and art workshops offered through The Beat Within fits nicely within both the mission of the DCJ and the strategies implemented through the JDAI. Therefore, DCJ was very welcoming to the idea of the partnership with Portland State University, and the Juvenile Justice Capstone course.

As mentioned above, an instructor who enjoyed an established relationship with Coffee Creek Correctional Facility and the Oregon Department of Corrections developed the Women's Prison Gardens Capstone. Prior to developing her course, the instructor was working with the facility manager at the women's prison to revive the prison garden and to develop the gardening program at the prison. That established relationship helped a great deal with developing the partnership between the Department of Corrections and PSU for facilitation of the Women's Prison Gardens Capstone. The initial motivation for the development of the course grew out of a felt need at Coffee Creek, a need to engage more volunteers in the gardening program as a means to launch the program and sustain it over time. PSU's reputation for strong community engagement, and the Capstone Program's community-based learning pedagogical approach, made the Program a logical and creative place to turn for increased volunteer involvement.

The Inside-Out: Civic Leadership Capstone class was created and offered by an instructor without a prior relationship with the prison system and without a professional background in criminal justice or corrections. The prison where this course was initially offered was not responding to an expressed need. In fact the prison was not terribly motivated or interested in launching additional educational programs. All of these elements made cultivating this partnership difficult. Given these significant barriers, trust and credibility were hard-won and ultimately established by navigating the administrative structures that govern and guide the adoption of new programs at the Department of Corrections (DOC). The instructor of this course developed a proposal and presentation that was submitted to the Director of Education at DOC. That Director had a vested interest in trying to offer educational programs uniformly throughout all facilities managed by the DOC. Obtaining state level approval for the course signaled to the local prison facility that the DOC Education Director was in support and was giving them license to take the "risk" associated with offering a course of this type. The requisite approval at the state level followed by approval at the local prison proved to be an important sequence that moved the partnership forward. With course approval established, the instructor also was required to participate in the rigorous 60-hour Inside Out Prison Exchange Program training to help inform teaching practices within a corrections setting (http://www.insideoutcenter.org/training-institute.html). The instructor was also required to have her class supervised by a corrections staff member for a probationary period. These essential phases of development allowed the instructor to establish credibility within the institution. While certainly a more onerous process than experienced in the development process of the previous two Capstones highlighted here, nevertheless partnership and course development was indeed possible and ultimately successful.

Security Concerns. Correctional facilities are rightfully highly concerned with safety and security. Bringing a group of college students into the facility repeatedly over the course of 10 weeks presents corrections staff with multiple concerns. These concerns include the potential problem of people experiencing incarceration building lasting, personal relationships with college students. The DOC does not want classes of this type to be the venue where inmates and college students develop lasting personal and possibly romantic relationships. They view these

kinds of relationships as potentially coercive and present increased opportunities for the exchange of contraband, both safety and security taken very seriously in corrections. The Oregon DOC has a system-wide training that is required of all of their volunteers, and instructors must complete this training before being allowed to teach inside. Additionally, the DOC has established a rule that all instructors leading educational courses of this type must be trained and certified Inside-Out instructors. Inside-Out training is a one-week professional development program facilitated by the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program, located in Philadelphia at Temple University. Trainings are also offered in varying locations. The training guides instructors in teaching practices within a correctional facility that involves pedagogical techniques as well as tools to employ to prevent security breaches in carceral facilities. Dealing with these concerns directly through professionally led programs is an essential part of establishing and sustaining the partnership.

Of course the Multnomah County Department of Community Justice (DCJ) is also concerned with safety and security, and in addition, with confidentiality. Prior to conducting workshops, Capstone students engage in training regarding the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPPA), the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), as well as all Multnomah County rules and regulations relating to juvenile detention. Capstone students are screened each time they enter the facility, and Custody Services Specialists are always present on the units during workshops. Confidentiality is maintained by using only first names.

Staffing and Space Issues. Developing a partnership that results in an effective shared learning environment requires that the use of corrections staff - DOC or DCJ - and facilities resources be considered. With the DCJ, education and the creation of an enriching environment for youth is part of their mission. Thus, resources devoted to the partnership are considered well utilized. The DOC, on the other hand, does not mention education in its mission. Therefore, one barrier to successfully setting up a partnership of this kind can be the concern that the course will consume already limited staff time and classroom space for "non-essential" programming. The instructors of the Inside Out: Civic Leadership Capstone and the Women's Prison Garden Capstone have both successfully navigated this concern by becoming trained volunteers of the DOC, completing all the necessary protocols. The volunteer status they enjoy requires an investment of time, but once that status is achieved the instructors are able to perform some duties that would otherwise fall to the DOC staff and be in the position to contribute to the sustained the management of these courses overtime.

Securing access to space within the correctional facility can also be a barrier to establishing these partnerships. The instructors of these courses have used flexibility as a tool to overcome this issue. Flexibility in the types of classroom they are able to turn into a shared learning environment as well as flexibility in the time the course is offered. Partnership success is enhanced when DOC staff sees that the instructors are willing to take responsibility for support and management of the course and maintain flexibility.

Funding and Sustainability. The business model for this partnership is quite simple. As with all Capstone courses (and there are roughly 60 to choose from), all three of these courses fulfill the senior level general education requirement for PSU students. Courses are fully enrolled with 16-18 tuition-paying students. For the Inside Out: Civic Leadership Capstone course, as long as the

instructor is willing to offer the course at the correctional facility and willing to double their course enrollment with inside students, the University is willing to allow the course to be offered as part of the instructor's teaching responsibilities. The majority of inside students do not have the funds to pay for the course credit. Those inside students who enroll often take the course for their own personal growth and do not receive college credit. There has been a move at Portland State to secure funding to support differential tuition rates for inside students, which would allow inside students to take these courses for credit at more affordable rates. There is an intention to secure funding for inside student enrollment and to help sustain the partnerships with these correctional facilities, but to date it remains an element of the partnership that is unfunded. For the Juvenile Justice Capstone and Women's Prison Gardens Capstone, the workshops and gardening, respectively, are part of PSU students' community-based learning requirement as part of their Capstone course. The required academic component of the course, an addition to the community based learning component, does happen on the PSU campus, and incarcerated participants are not involved in that academic component of the course. Therefore, these courses are a regular part of the instructors' teaching loads.

Faculty and Student Preparation

As with all teaching, knowing and understanding place and the context is of utmost importance. In these shared learning spaces, it is critical to a successful experience for all involved that the instructor is well prepared to teach on the inside. While faculty may be very well prepared in their discipline, this alone does *not* make them prepared to teach inside correctional settings (Matthews, 2000). On the contrary, a second and perhaps more important factor in preparation is gaining an understanding of how teaching inside carceral institutions is different than teaching in a classroom, or in the community, on the outside. This factor is critical to the success of the students/participants and the course experience overall, and perhaps even to the continuance of the education program inside the facility. Significant differences include: limited or no access to technology, limited or no communication with students between face-to-face class meetings, power differential between those students who are able to come and go each class period and those who are incarcerated and must remain in the facility when class ends, race and class differences among the students, and the limited power the instructor has within the facility. Specific and focused training experiences are helpful in preparing the faculty to gain clarity on how to deal with these unique elements of this shared learning space on the inside.

As highlighted above, The Inside Out Prison Exchange Program offers a 60-hour training program designed to prepare faculty to teach college level courses on the inside (see www.insideoutcener.org). While this training- perhaps the most structured and organized such training of its kind currently offered nationally, is helpful, it by itself does not prepare someone for success in teaching in this setting. Spending as much time as possible inside detention and correctional facilities by becoming a volunteer and/or through participating in trainings offered on the inside, becoming familiar with criminal and juvenile justice laws and policies in the relevant state, such as mandatory minimum sentencing law and laws impacting waiver of juveniles to adult court are also essential to good teaching in this setting.

In his paper "Developing a Prison Education Pedagogy", Tony Gaskew (2015) argues that community colleges, rather than four year institutions, may be better suited to this work of post-

secondary education inside carceral institutions. He cites the physical proximity of community colleges to penal institutions, the lower cost of community colleges, and finally a critical cultural advantage that community colleges have over four year institutions, in that they have a more diverse student body. Noting that of the 2.2 million people incarcerated nationwide 40 percent are black males, Gaskew argues, and we agree, that understanding and accounting for the "pedagogical racial gap" does matter (68-69). Gaskew proposes the "humiliation to humility perspective," or the HHP. According to Gaskew, the HHP expands the pedagogical discussion of the "invisible three-dimensional elephant inside the prison classroom: Racism, White supremacy, and White privilege, by incorporating the narrative truths of the *lived* experiences of incarcerated Black males" (71). Having an awareness of and an understanding of this 'invisible three-dimensional elephant' certainly better prepares an instructor to be effective in this shared learning space.

In addition to delivering and exploring relevant content in a compelling and non-racist way to a diverse student group, faculty in these shared learning spaces need to be caring and compassionate with each student and with the classroom community as a whole, in order for a successful shared learning to develop. A faculty person who is perceived as "caring and compassionate" is going to be most effective in this type of shared learning space (Mageehon, 2006). Students in these classes have a wide variety of confidence and skill levels at performing academically; a gentle approach that allows all students to establish a voice in the classroom is essential to building a learning community where students can enlighten each other on the topics addressed (Zhao & Kuh, 2004). Faculty members also need to be creative. It is unlikely that the technology that many (most?) are now accustomed to teaching with will be available in the learning space inside the detention or correctional facility. Thinking through class sessions, content delivery, and assignments becomes a different process than many instructors have taken-for-granted in teaching outside of carceral settings (McCarty, 2006).

Just as faculty should undertake all opportunities to prepare themselves for the experience of teaching inside carceral settings, it is essential that all students and participants, coming from both inside the carceral settings and outside, are well-prepared to enter the shared learning space. In most cases, in order to successfully create the space that will be the learning environment for the term, separate sessions with participants who are students outside of the facility and with students or participants who are incarcerated on the inside is helpful, and, in the case of the Inside Out program, is required. There are many logistics and details to cover, including transportation, facility rules, starting to gain a familiarity with the culture of a carceral setting or of a college classroom, to name a few. This initial orientation meeting is also a time when the facilitator begins to create "...an atmosphere of trust in which students can be comfortable and engaged, ready to enter the group process and take responsibility for their own learning" (Pompa, 2004). Understanding of context and place is important for faculty and for students who engage in any community based learning, and these shared learning spaces are no exception.

Conclusion

Once all the various steps and hurdles described above have been handled and overcome, and all arrangements and preparations have been made, these shared learning spaces hold tremendous potential to provide transformative learning for all involved. Of course, research points to

educational opportunities for incarcerated people as being instrumental in reducing recidivism (Davis et al., 2014; Vera Institute, 2016). Even beyond the education, however, participating in intellectual and academic pursuits in collaboration with university and college students offers to inside participants/students an opportunity to develop and recognize their own sense of competence and self-efficacy (Allred et al., 2013). The dismantling of assumptions and the reflection that is an integral part of these shared learning spaces can help all students and participants alike to build and develop a habit of connection and reflection that will be supportive of familial and community relationships in the future (Catching, 2013).

The transformative quality of these courses is in part achieved through the magic created in the shared learning environment. In sharp juxtaposition to their worries at the start of the experience, students are often surprised at how, in a relatively short period of time, they have been moved intellectually, emotionally, and interpersonally (J. Gardner, personal communication). The learning environment is challenging and stimulating and the time always passes too quickly. At the end of an individual class session, students are surprised when the instructor, reminded not-so-subtly by corrections staff, lets students know that it is time to wrap up and to exit the shared learning space. Much is left undone, and it is not uncommon for students to leave with already building anticipation for the next session together. Students often remain unsettled when the last class of the term creeps up, even though at the first class meeting the instructor foreshadows the end of the class and warns that it will come all too soon. Students are informed that although they do not know each other, over the weeks the class meets they will come to know one another and will be sad when they have to say goodbye. At the start, students typically find this hard to imagine and largely do not believe that when they are required to say goodbye at the last class meeting there will be tears shed. In the last emotional moments of this course, because of safety and privacy concerns, students are reminded that they are not to have contact with one another after the conclusion of the class. Reminding them of this abrupt fact often inspires the students to share what the class has meant to them, and often students will include a story of a particular moment in the class that stood out as significant to them. A shared learning community has been built where and with whom it had not been expected. In many ways, liberation has occurred—liberation of thinking, and of assumptions. This liberation could only have occurred in communion together, and it is our hope that this sense of liberation each term will indeed be a step toward the dismantling of the larger prison industrial complex.

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Building Community through Shared Spaces and Intention

Maureen P. Hall and Christine M. Panarese

Abstract

Present-day educational approaches in higher education and K-12 privilege only cognitive gains from students, who are sometimes only seen as test scores, while neglecting the development of the whole human being. This article documents three unique Building Community events at a public university in the northeast, which were designed to embrace the full development of human potential. These events were created to offer novel approaches to education, highlighting and operationalizing Social Emotional Learning (SEL) through mindfulness, literacy, and social justice. The documentation is two-fold: 1) to provide descriptions of each of the three events and the connections between and among Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and mindfulness, literacy and diversity, and 2) to provide an analysis of feedback data and a descriptive framework that makes clear the processes and theories underpinning the events, all of which may provide a beginning roadmap for others to replicate this important work. Qualitative findings suggest that the integration of SEL into classroom theory and practice may be one route to improving and humanizing education.

Keywords:

Social Emotional Learning (SEL), democratic professionalism, mindfulness, literacy, social justice

Introduction

This article tells the story of a unique case study in university outreach. The Building Community initiative brought together a diverse group of individuals from the local regional area, all of whom were interested in learning about new ways to improve education through caring, understanding, and respectful citizenship towards their own and others' learning. At the center of this initiative is Social Emotional Learning (SEL), as referenced in the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). According to CASEL, there are five social and emotional competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making (as cited in Dorman, 2015). Likewise, success in education must involve an education of the "whole" person, which attends to students' and teachers' emotional and cognitive learning needs (Waxler & Hall, 2011). These Building Community events provided ongoing opportunities for educational stakeholders to discuss their own ideas, listen to others' perspectives, and to collaborate on how the seven competencies of SEL can assist in improving the present state of education. SEL, as the overarching focus of these events, served as a guiding constellation of concepts on which organizers were able to craft three unique Building Community learning experiences for all stakeholders.

Building Community through Mindfulness: Where Literacy and Diversity Intersect

In this first Building Community event and all subsequent events, SEL was at the center. Experts shared presentations on theories of mindfulness, literacy, and diversity allowing participants to expand their awareness of educational processes. The first session was led by a neuroscientist who explained how mindfulness, as a brain-based process, can positively affect learning. The second session, led by an English professor and author who focuses on the power of literacy for learning and self-development. The third session was led by an English Language Learner (ELL) guidance counselor who shared her own experiences as a non-native English speaker, as well as her experiences supporting ELL students and families. Information from participant feedback sheets collected at the end of this event provided guidance for the design of the second Building Community Event.

Building Community through Mindfulness: Knowing the Self and Connecting to Others

Growing from the momentum of the first event, participants called for examples of SEL theory into practice. The evening began with three keynote speakers who gave short talks on mindfulness, literacy, and community-building, providing a necessary a foundation for the breakout sessions. After these opening talks, participants were given a choice of attending bridging SEL theory-to-practice sessions on the following topics: (a) Exploring teachers' inner landscapes through metaphors and poems, (b) Literacy and social justice, (c) Creating community partnerships, and (d) Mindfulness and literacy. The goal here was to move beyond theory and have participants experience SEL in practice. Feedback forms from this second event were more detailed and there was some evidence that participants demonstrated self-reflection on SEL in theory and practice.

Building Community through Mindfulness: Bringing Theory to Practice

For this third Building Community event, the sessions were held at a local community school. Experts shared best practices and examples for how they utilize SEL in a variety of settings. Moving away from the breakout sessions, all participants were provided examples for SEL theory into practice through the following sub-topics: (a) Mindfulness, Learning and the Brain, (b) The Power of Deep Reading and Mindfulness in the Classroom, (c) Mindfulness and Literacy: Lessons from the Field, and (d) Social Justice in Education. The kind of feedback collected for this event was in the form of reflective writings on the value of SEL and how it might influence teaching practices.

Review of the Research

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Research evidences the benefits of systemic integration of SEL learning inside classrooms assisting students in the acquisition of skills that allow for better understanding and awareness of the self and others. Further, SEL learning focuses on helping individuals learn how their emotions influence their thoughts, choices and response actions towards others (Brackett & Rivers, 2014, Salovey & Mayer, 1990). "There is growing recognition at the local, state, and federal levels in the United States (US) and around the world that schools must meet the social

and emotional developmental needs of students for effective teaching and learning to take place and for students to reach their full potential." (http://casel.org/research/sel-in-your-state/)

For SEL, the main focus is on developing skills that promote social and emotional learning (SEL). SEL is defined as the process of acquiring the skills to recognize and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, appreciate the perspectives of others, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle interpersonal situations effectively. A growing body of research and literature supports the premise that effective SEL programming is a key to children's success in school and life (Durlak et al., 2010; Greenberg et al., 2003).

SEL, as a broad construct, has deep connections to mindfulness because it must be embodied, and it grows from self-knowledge and management of one's own emotions to awareness of others' perspectives and emotions. Mindfulness is inextricably connected to SEL; research on mindfulness interventions in K-12 settings is broadening the field and showing how attention to SEL is a conduit for improved teaching and learning. For example, a range of studies on mindfulness evidence that both teachers and students build skills needed, such as emotional regulation, perspective-taking and emotional recognition (Greenberg & Harris 2012; Shapiro et al., 2014).

In the research study by Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015, the development of curriculum content and activities were guided by the research and theory in the area of mindfulness and its relation to well-being and positive psychology (e.g., Clonan et al., 2004; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005a, b). Schonert-Reichl et al.'s ME program (Mindfulness Education), "mindfulness" refers to bringing one's complete attention to the present experience on a moment-to-moment basis with a non-judgmental stance. The four key components of the ME program include:

1. Quieting the mind—listening to a resonating instrument (chime) and focusing on the breath
2. Mindful attention—mindful of sensation, thoughts, and feelings
3. Managing negative emotions and negative thinking
4. Acknowledgment of self and others. (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015)

Literacy and SEL

Deep reading provides a mirror for reflecting upon the self, and allows for the development of empathy toward others to understand both the characters in text and the human dimension in our modern society. Deep reading of literature acts as the foundational stepping stone to develop and expand students' comprehension of text and also acquire the life skills that allows them to apply this same skill set to interact and understand others. This type of emotional intelligence is critical for students to learn if they are to have a quality, positive and productive life (Goleman 2013). Deep reading and deep listening, as building blocks of education, are important for all levels. Literacy skills are rooted in the individual's ability to sustain focused attention, suspend judgment, and maintain present-moment awareness.

Mindfulness and SEL

In connection with SEL, mindfulness practices can help students to regulate their emotions, increase their attentional capacities, and create positive habits of mind (Davidson, Dunne, Eccles, Engle, Greenberg, Jennings, & Vago, 2012; Roeser, Skinner, Beers, & Jennings, 2012; Waxler & Hall, 2011). Mindfulness is just one way to bring the learners into the depth of the present moment and into a meaningful space created where all other distractions are put aside. Kabat-Zinn's (2006) work, for example, has shown that mindfulness, which focuses attention on the mind, body, and context of the here and now, can reduce stress in people's everyday lives. Mindfulness skill acquisition can provide the entry point for cultivating the practices and embedding students' SEL through the practice of deep reading and deep listening that facilitates the engagement of individuals in rich, collaborative discussions that lead to greater understanding of the topic material.

Diversity, Social Justice, and SEL

Best practices in social justice in education involves the deep-seated belief that when all academic knowledge and skills are culturally and socially situated and made personally meaningful to students, engagement and interest increases (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Noguera, 2000). As Watson (2016) points out, "since learning is relational, educators must remember that we are not teaching *content*; we are teaching *people*. Therefore, the identity and diversity of our students (linguistic, cultural, economic, social, ethnic, etc.) has everything to do with who we are and our ability to engage them affectively and effectively" (p. 3). Teachers can be more success in teaching students from diverse backgrounds if they are culturally responsive and create learning opportunities that help students learn through their own cultural filters (Gay, 2002).

Method

Participant Recruitment

The participants, numbering over 100 individuals, represented individuals from a medium-sized urban-serving university in the northeast that included pre-service, graduate students and faculty. The majority of these individuals were from the teacher education department of the university with about 50 percent of these individuals representing pre-service graduate level students. In addition to this group, individuals from the local community also participated in all three events, which helped to provide an inclusive learning space for sharing of the different perspectives from this diverse group of educational stakeholders. Invitation by way of descriptive event brochures were made available using various media as the approach to solicit interest in attending each of the Building Community events.

Research Design

The adopted method for the collection, synthesis and reporting of the data using a qualitative research design to capture the rich, descriptive inner thoughts around the understanding and potential use of the SEL concepts for their own as well as their students' learning benefit. By using a qualitative study design, the authors were able to apply a deductive form of logic when synthesizing the three individual data collections (Cresswell, 1994).

Measures/Procedures

One of the obstacles encountered when trying to gather data from participants was the idea that data collected from each of the participants from the first Building Community Event may not be available for the second or third Building Community events if the person did not attend all three events. For this reason, the authors' intention for this research project was to structure it so that it would be iterative. Using the information from each of the events the data collection tools were structured using the information gathered from the previous Building Community event. This necessitated the use of three connected, but different data collection tools: (a) Satisfaction Survey, (b) constructed participant responses focusing on learner needs, and (c) journal writing using structured prompts. These individual tools were administered to event participants at the conclusion of the final workshop in each of the event series. Participants were asked to provide event facilitators with autonomous, open and honest feedback on the teaching and learning that had just taken place.

Participant comments were captured in written form and then coded at the conclusion of the events. This collection of data was synthesized and combined with the observation notes taken by panel experts, which led to the emergence of several critical themes as a result of the community-building events hosted at the university. This multi-source data was then synthesized using the online qualitative/quantitative analysis tool, DEDOOSE®. By using this systematic analysis process, authors were able to craft a method for answering this study's research questions from the rich body of information gathered from multiple sources that included separate participant feedback forms, facilitator field notes and structured journal entries from members of the Building Community event three.

Results

As a result of these varied data collection tools, the reporting of the results from this series of Building Community Events will be presented in three parts.

Data Analysis from Building Community Event One

Findings from the first event's data collection and analyses indicated an overwhelming positive participant response in the desire for continued learning and implementation of the concepts of SEL. This analysis prompted event facilitators to continue with the use of Mindfulness techniques as a conduit for learning and growing a trustful, engaged community, as it provided a diverse group of participants with a common experience. Mindfulness, as one of most basic ways of knowing, provided a route to self-knowledge and an individual's construction of identity. These ideas about creating a community align with Palmer's (1998) concept that one must have knowledge of the self before constructing understanding and expressing any compassion for others.

Another aspect of common interest synthesized from the event one data collection was the request for classroom examples of SEL implementation. Lastly, analysis of the participant feedback tools found that while this initial Building Community experience offered them the opportunity to connect with and engage in compelling dialogue with individuals from different

areas of education, feedback also indicated that group members felt a greater sense of self-awareness, focus and agency to meet the learning needs of the students they served.

As a result of the feedback received by respondents from this first Building Community event, facilitators structured the second event in this series (Fall 2015) so that participants would be offered a choice of workshops focusing on the particular interests garnered from the first event's data collection.

Data Analysis from Building Community Event Two

The second in this series of Building Community events, was developed to build upon participant's knowledge of the neuroscience research around SEL and how embedding the use of mindfulness can assist in student's attainment of their learning goals by promoting students' literacy skills, ensuring an environment that fosters and sustains social justice, and meeting the needs of individual learners.

The emerging patterns of respondent feedback for this second event were concentrated on how the event learning could transfer into instructional practices to assist in the learning of marginalized students. For example, many participants spoke of their increased understanding of students' diverse language needs. Teachers need to "distinguish between times when their students are confused about content and times when they are simply having difficulty communicating their understanding," one participant wrote that teachers "need to differentiate lessons in order to accommodate a variety of learning styles, cultural backgrounds, and language abilities." While another participant wrote of a similar problem from the SEL perspective, "Students who have been made to feel stupid for the way they communicate their ideas will not contribute to classroom discussions. On the other hand, students who feel validated and understood become active members in the classroom community." Yet another participant stated "Community flourishes when diversity is celebrated."

One participant, who disclosed he was studying to be a teacher commented that he would "ask his students to name their personal metaphors for learning so he can learn what works best for them." He noted that in the middle and high school classrooms he has had experience in, "so many students learn differently, and if I can show that I care about them as a community, they may just learn better than they would otherwise."

Data Analysis from Building Community Event Three

Structured journal prompts were provided to all participants at the end of the third and final in this series of Building Community events. As a result of many participants reporting that they acquired additional skills that provided them greater internal insight and self-understanding, this finding helped to validate the measure of the effectiveness of the series' content, delivery and participant learning. One participant noted, "I learned how to center myself and focus on the moment in which I was experiencing." Other participant responses centered on the collective experience and value of the learning as a result of mastering through practice the deep listening exercises. One respondent commented, "I now acknowledge the difference between listening just to wait for your turn to speak and actually listening to the person speaking to you." Naming a

personal metaphor for authentic reflective experiences that improve teaching and learning was another common thread found among event participants' journal entries. One person poetically expressed that this learning experience had "led to insights" and described his learning as a wave. "At first, I recoil like I am building up my knowledge, then after a while I crash into the sands of confusion and wash over the lines in the sand and end up more knowledgeable than I was before."

One of the most compelling and transparent disclosures found in the third data collection was from a particularly reflective educator who wrote that he realizes that he "learns like a hammer – breaking apart the knowledge and understanding each piece," but that he teaches "like a pile of Legos® – I give all the pieces and expect students to put it all together." This tension in discrepancy of theory and practice led him to reflect and bring about a new awareness as evidenced through this statement, "I could never learn from myself" thus providing him with critical insight with important implications for his ongoing growth and development as a teacher.

This type of participant's acknowledgement and shared self-insight in identifying one's own preferred learning style and experiences in relation to their actual classroom instruction allowed authors to visibly understand his thoughts and thinking around the events' learning. By making himself vulnerable and publicly challenging his own thinking to the members of this learning group, he allowed for others to validate his authentic entry into the instructional reflective practice and observe the development of the changes that will advances his teaching and his students' learning.

Other findings in the themes from the analysis of participant journal entries for this last session in this series of Community Building events included a common feeling among the community for increased motivation and sense of agency. One teacher commented on the use of mindfulness to improve students social emotional and academic skills, "I can help kids understand how to listen to their classmates better and understand what they are reading." Another individual spoke more broadly on the "take away" value of this community learning experience and stated, "I can help to be a mentor and show [children] how powerful education and communication are…" Yet another participant noted that the building community event "really encouraged me to a greater awareness of the benefits of literacy and mindfulness for all students. Because of this, I have decided to emphasize and incorporate these ideas in my teaching."

As a result of these community building events, educators demonstrated by their disclosures during participation and feedback a self-motivated willingness to learn and adopt mindfulness practices for improving students' social emotional and academic learning inside their classrooms. Analyses of the data gathered from these events' satisfaction surveys and journal entries indicated that nearly all educators who were in attendance expressed a desire for another Building Community event that would provide them with additional learning opportunities in the use of mindfulness practices as a classroom tool for assisting students in their self-regulation and learning.

The above example of participants' entering into undisciplined, voluntary, community facilitated examination of the "self" in a group environment diverges from Dewey's idea that human reflective processes that lead to learning are highly structured and are activated when an

individual begins to think about and gather additional information needed to solve a problem (Bugg & Dewey, 1934; Dewey, 1938; Rogers, 2002). This contrast in ideas leads authors to construct an alternate theory on the circumstance of when and how individuals come to reflect upon their inner thoughts that lead to the planning of their external actions.

Discussion

The Building Communities initiative was created through the gathering of committed, diverse educational stakeholder groups from K-16 and from the local community. Through participants' conversations and connections across multiple subject matter disciplines, bridges were created through a shared goal of improving education. These events operationalize the model of Democratic Professionalism (Dzur, 2010), which is a broad-based reform movement that aims to heighten civic engagement and promote active participants in a democratic society. In other words, when educators use their skills as professionals to bring people together around a shared goal for improving and humanizing education, they are acting as bridge-agents connecting the school to the community and the community to the school. SEL was at the center of this initiative and manifested through mindfulness, literacy, and diversity. As part of the event debriefing process, an illustrated evolutionary process was created to assist others in the establishment of a foundation for building a community of committed, diverse educational stakeholders (see Figure 1). The work of the Building Community initiative is ongoing, and these phases represented may be iterative and not necessarily meant to be linear or prescriptive. Groups coming together must create spaces that are designed to fit their particular goals, along with their school and community contexts for learning.

Figure 1: Phases in Community Building

Literacy, mindfulness, social justice, and democracy are also inextricably linked. In order to make informed choices and be active members in a democratic society, literacy skills are required. Literacy must always be understood in context, with attention given to the larger social and political dimensions of that particular context. In a Freirean (1987) sense, all literacy begins with the person's lived reality and their current understanding of the world through their own words (Freire and Macedo, 1987). This ideal parallels Palmer's (1998) concept that a person who does not understand the self is unable to understand, reach, and teach others.

Conclusion

In the foreword to *Contemplative Practices in Higher Education*, Parker Palmer notes that for many of today's leaders, "expert knowledge—and the power that comes with it—has not been joined to a professional ethic, a sense of communal responsibility, or even simple compassion" (Barbezat and Bush, 2014, p. vii). Palmer (1998) argues, "The growth of any craft depends on shared practice and honest dialogue among the people who do it" (p. 144). This shared practice of open, trustful dialogue that is preceded with the practice of mindfulness, an attention to literacy and diversity, opens people's eyes to see their "truth" or mindful thoughts that guide their personal decisions and actions so they are able to see the "truth" in others and in the circumstances in which they live. In order to humanize education, shared spaces for dialogue and embodied learning are needed. Approaches that celebrate SEL in teaching and learning, approaches which value the development of full human potential, are also needed.

The data collected from this case study suggests that Building Community events, ones designed to create safe and respectful spaces for sharing ideas about teaching and learning, holds potential for improving education and for bridging theory into practice. In addition, individual and group reflection may lead to growth in internal motivation for stakeholders. The discussions themselves, where all voices are heard and valued, can be a springboard for ongoing collaborative efforts needed to build a strong community, a place where new resources can be created and deeper connections can be made.

These Building Community events provide hope; they are encouraging signs that transforming education is not only desirable but also possible on both an individual and group level where people from diverse backgrounds and interests can find common ground. People joining with each other, coupled with a consensus of intention to improve education, can produce real change—or at least a start on positive change. When people come together, such as in these embodied learning experiences provided by the Building Community event series, real progress can be made. In the case of this Building Communities initiative, the overarching focus was on SEL as it is operationalized through mindfulness, literacy, and social justice. The best kind of community involves a true symbiotic relationship between schools and the community, where the schools' needs and the communities' needs are reciprocated. The interactions and conversations act as a springboard for ongoing collaborative efforts needed to build a strong community, a place where new resources and connections can be made.

Creating community takes time; individuals need time to get to know one another and feel affiliated, to create trust, and to discover shared goals. Just as fear can be contagious, courage to transform education and build community can also become contagious. Along with time, the creation of community calls for perseverance, action, and an ongoing commitment from the parties involved. Freire, in his work empowers this idea and calls for people to apply their individual and collective thought processes to transform education by defining the term *conscientization* as "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions—developing a critical awareness—so that individuals can take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire, 1970, 19). Events that work to build community, when designed effectively, hold promise for improving and humanizing education. They involve shared spaces,

shared understandings, and shared intentions – all of which are needed for unlocking the inherent learning potential in all people.

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Oklahoma City's Emerging Hispanic Community: New Partnerships, New Successes

Mark A. Kinders and Myron L. Pope

Abstract

The University of Central Oklahoma's new strategic plan sought to increase its connection to the emerging Hispanic community in Oklahoma City. Simultaneously, the Greater Oklahoma City Hispanic Chamber of Commerce was seeking a higher education partner. This case study describes resulting new programs for Hispanic students and businesses. The relationship inspired the newly formed UCO Latino Faculty & Staff Association to connect UCO to the Hispanic community while providing greater opportunities for Hispanic student success.

Keywords:

University of Central Oklahoma; Greater Oklahoma City Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; Latino Faculty Staff Association; Latino Community Development Association; College-going Hispanic Students.

Introduction

If Oklahoma City is anything, it is a mirror of the trends in the past 15 years that has seen a near doubling of the Hispanic population in America's metropolitan areas. The context for the partnership described in this article may best be set in the context of the demographics of the Sooner State's capital city and the nation (Barker, 2012; Borgerding, 2012). A U.S. Census Bureau report (2014; see also, Barker, 2009) indicates that of 620,602 Oklahoma City residents, some 17.2%, or 106,743 Hispanics, call the state's largest city their home. Of those, about 80% are of Mexican heritage. From 2000-2010, the community's population increased by 88.4%. That proportionate concentration slightly trails the U.S. average of 17.4%, but nearly doubles the Oklahoma percentage of 9.8% Hispanics among its 3.87 million residents. One-third of Oklahoma Hispanics are immigrants (Brown & Lopez, 2013; see also, Llopis, 2012).

In addition, Hispanic owned metro businesses exceed 7,660 enterprises, or about 4.1%of all city businesses (Greater OKC Hispanic Chamber 2015a; Lopis 2012). That percentage nearly doubles the state rate of 2.3%, but lags behind the U.S. average of 8.3% by more than half. In 2007, the last year reported by the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014), OKC Hispanic-owned business generated $1.7 billion in sales receipts and employed 8,940 paid employees. According to the Hispanic Chamber, statewide Latino purchasing power tallies $6.2 billion, with 763% growth in the past decade.

Nearly one in five children under the age of 18 in the OKC metro are Hispanic. This is reflected in Oklahoma City Public Schools, which since 2000 has experienced a doubling in the enrollment of Hispanic children. Hispanic students comprise 49.6% of the 40,400 young people in the state's largest school district as shown in Figure 1 (Neu, 2014; see also Institute for Child Advocacy 2013; Postsecondary Education Opportunities, 2012).

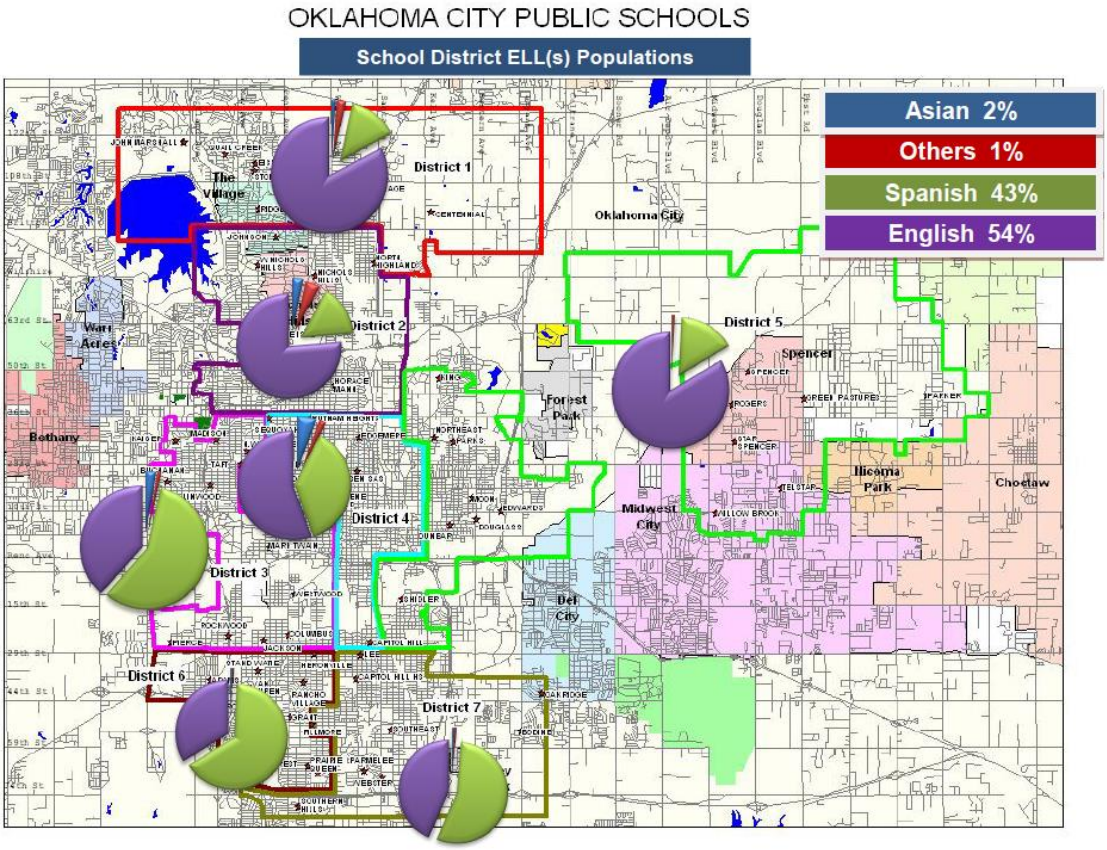

Figure 1. Distribution of Oklahoma City Public Schools Students by Language

What also exists is a clash between multiple cultures. Hispanics are now the largest minority population in Oklahoma, exceeding the enrollment of the 39 federally recognized Native American nations and tribes in what was once "Indian Territory." Hispanic community leaders explain the growth surge by citing Oklahoma City's family-friendly atmosphere, neighborhoods free from gangs unlike major metro areas in adjoining Texas, and business opportunities in one of the nation's healthiest state economies. The Oklahoma Legislature, however, has passed some of the most restrictive immigration laws in the nation, with some legislators contending that Hispanics are not acculturating into mainstream society quickly enough (Lavandara & Sabo, 2011). Even with restrictive laws, an estimated 68% of immigrant youngsters in Oklahoma are Hispanic, with Oklahoma City Public Schools indicating that 43% of its households speak Spanish as the primary language. This latter statistic suggests the relative newness and importance of immigrants to the OKC community. Language challenges in part have affected the success of Oklahoma City Public Schools, as shown in Table 1. Further, the Metropolitan Policy

Program at the Brookings Institution (Wilson, 2014), reported an increase from half to three-quarters in the number of 16-64 year old Hispanics in OKC who had limited English proficiency. Wilson (2014) reports that 79.7% of OKC metro Hispanic households speak Spanish as the primary language, ranking OKC No. 17 among the largest 89 metro areas.

Table 1. Oklahoma City Public Schools Hispanic Trends, 2014				
Characteristic	OKCPS	Failed state student performance tests: Hispanic Majority	Passed state student performance tests: Hispanic Majority	Total Schools
Enrollment	40,383			
Hispanic Students	49.6%			
Bilingual Students	19,465			
Percent of Households with primary language other than English	43%			
Native American Tribes and Clans in student body	67			
Percent of students eligible for reduced lunch	26,186			
ACT average score	OKCPS: 18.4 OK: 20.7 U.S.: 21			
Elementary Schools		14	12	56
Middle Schools		4	3	16
High Schools		0	5	16

Notes:
Oklahoma elementary students are assessed in reading, mathematics, science, and social studies.
Oklahoma middle schools students are assessed in reading, mathematics/Algebra 1, science, Social Studies/ Geography/U.S. History, writing.
Oklahoma high school students are assessed in English II and III, Algebra I and II, Geometry, Biology I, U.S. History.

This paper describes the emergence of a shared-space partnership between the University of Central Oklahoma and the Greater Oklahoma City Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Its purpose is to provide acculturation, college-going, and business development opportunities to the Hispanic community. This convergence was the coincidental simultaneous strategic planning initiative of UCO to expand its reach as a metropolitan-serving institution and the Hispanic Chamber's planned physical plant expansion in which it sought a higher education partner to advance its educational and business services to its member and larger community. This partnership resulted in new services directly provided within the Chamber by UCO and the energizing of the university's Latino Faculty Staff Association to play a significant role in fulfilling the idealized partnership to the benefit of both organizations.

Partnerships like these between universities and their communities have grown significantly over the past couple of decades (Vidal, Nye, Walker, Manjarrez, Romanik, Corvington, Ferryman, Freibert, & Kim, 2003). There are numerous influences. These reasons include the need for communities and campuses to collaborate because of limited resources available to address complex community and social issues, an increased effort by higher education to develop a civic purpose in alignment with the community, and because many funding entities require multi-agency collaboration as a condition for fiscal support (Harkavy, 1999; Holland, 1999; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Walskok, 1995); Zlotkowski, 1999).

Scholarly literature is consistent in highlighting that Hispanic students face additional challenges when it comes to being successful in college. Torres (2006) notes that there are challenges to these students in terms of navigating two cultures – their native culture and the culture of the university. Others have carried this finding further and noted that issues of culture shock and cultural incongruity are major inhibitors to Hispanic student success (Castellanos & Jones, 2003; Gloria & Kurpius, 1996). Cabrera, Nora, and Castaneda (1993) found that those Hispanic students who have adequate financial resources to afford college have reduced stress and consequently are able to focus more on being successful. Further, Rivera and Monzon (2013) used the concepts of cultural, economic, and human capital as a framework for assessing those factors that contribute most to Hispanic college student success, and they discovered that these factors could be enhanced through more engaging programs and services. The programs that have been developed by UCO use this lens also to ensure that Hispanic students are successful.

UCO Metro "Equity Mindset" Strategic Plan

The University of Central Oklahoma has long been engaged with the metro's Hispanic community through partnerships with numerous educational and social agencies. These efforts were intentionally increased during the institution's strategic planning process in 2013 that resulted in the seven-year plan, Vision 2020 (UCO, 2013). In its previous planning process in 2008, UCO initiated a deliberate course to set itself apart from Oklahoma's other 24 public higher education institutions by pursuing designation by its governing boards as the state's only metro-serving institution.

The impetus for the designation was UCO's dramatic growth to 17,200 students, with a history dating back 125 years as Oklahoma's first state public higher education institution as a state normal school. In 1894, the school was located in the undeveloped community of Edmond, which has since blossomed into a northeastern suburb of Oklahoma City. In 2013 CNBC ranked Edmond, with a population of 100,000 and of whom 55 percent of its residents hold a bachelor's degree, as the most livable suburb in the United States. UCO is the only four-year public higher education institution located within an Oklahoma-designated metropolitan area.

During the strategic planning process, UCO President Don Betz reinforced UCO's commitment to the concept of an inclusive "equity mindset" (Ramaley, 2015; see also, Leiderman, Furco, Zapf, & Goss, 2002). In serving the ten-county metropolitan area. "We will accomplish this objective through building intentional partnerships with business, industry, government, non-profits, and educational institutions. These partnerships will enable us to draw upon the exceptional talent of our faculty, staff, and students to collectively address critical issues and opportunities" (UCO, 2013).

As more than 100 faculty, staff, and students engaged in a metropolitan area "deep dive" as part of the strategic planning operationalizing process, they reversed the typical Strength/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats (SWOT) process to TOWS. The former is the traditional planning process that can emphasize assessing the internal organizational structure to provide direction for an expansion of existing programs. By focusing on the external environment to evaluate its needs and opportunities TOWS adds the additional dimension of identifying new programmatic development and implementation. UCO teams conducted secondary research in an extensive environmental scan of all metro social, educational, and business issues, and then engaged over 80 external leaders in individual or panel interviews to mine their insights and gain their advice.

Three general observations emerged from the 2013 environmental scan:

1. UCO should "be bold" in extending its service presence throughout the ten-county metropolitan area. This comment acknowledged recent expansions by UCO into the heart of the Oklahoma City's downtown area with focused academic and service programs in music, performing arts, and business assistance. UCO's expansion is inspired by the "Stewards of Place" movement by its primary higher education association partner, the American Association of State Colleges & Universities to align its programs in response to the needs of its service area.

2. The growth momentum of the Hispanic community was palpable with extraordinary impact on the Oklahoma City Public Schools system. In the previous 10 years Hispanic student enrollment grew from a small percentage to comprise half the enrollment in the state's largest school district. This trend foretold dramatic changes in the composition of future college-bound students and workforce graduates.

3. No public four-year institution maintained a footprint south of Interstate 40, which served as the boundary—both geographically and psychologically—to the downtown area of Oklahoma City and its south side. UCO was encouraged to provide greater educational and outreach services to residents in the southern half of the city, which is increasingly being dominated by the Hispanic community.

Growth of the Greater Oklahoma City Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

The nexus for UCO's expanded footprint in south Oklahoma City occurred in 2014 with a proposal from the Greater Oklahoma City Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. President and Chief Executive Director David Castillo approached UCO to serve as the underwriter to develop a conference center and classroom in the chamber's new facility.

Founded in 2000, the Chamber expanded to include more than 400 members and had twice outgrown space provided to it by non-profits and a technical school (Greater Oklahoma City Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, 2015b). In 2013 the Chamber purchased and began redevelopment of an office building located in the heart of the Hispanic community in southeastern Oklahoma City, located some 19 miles from UCO's suburban northeastern Edmond campus.

Castillo, a former technical school educator and former OKCPS school board member, approached UCO in 2014 to sponsor the complete rebuilding of the conference room. Over the subsequent months, UCO staff consulted broadly with the Chamber, advising overall on information technology, color schemes, and finishing materials for the entire facility. The University funded the remodeling and outfitting of the conference/class room as shared space. UCO agreed to provide $25,000 per year as a sponsorship for a renewable, two-year contract. Funding was provided through the Office of Academic Affairs. UCO's Customized Education department anticipated that as its service expanded into traditional academic programs, tuition revenue would offset the sponsorship fee. UCO provides the additional service to the Chamber of providing access to the classroom's state-of-the-art technology for the Chamber's operational activities. Through this arrangement, UCO has access for classes, seminars, and workshops in a classroom/conference room that was branded to UCO's bronze and blue color scheme and logo.

"It's been a great relationship since then and we see a bright future ahead of us," said Castillo (personal communication, November 23, 2015). Based in part on Castillo's and the Chamber's leadership insights into the Hispanic community's family-oriented culture, business, and education needs, UCO has responded through numerous programs and consulting services. For example, Castillo noted that Hispanic entrepreneurs seek to start businesses but required assistance in such small business fundamentals of choosing an economically viable enterprise with training in business planning, finances, and marketing. As the Hispanic community continues to mature in its business development, Castillo predicted greater diversification and growth of its business community. UCO has

historically offered free small business development seminars to the Hispanic community taught by bilingual Hispanic staff, such as Carlos Amaya, an Hispanic small business development specialist and member of the UCO Latino Faculty & Staff Association, with 15 years of experience at UCO. With Castillo's advice, UCO is assisting the Chamber in surveying its membership to determine the scope of workshops its entrepreneurs require.

There clearly are needs and demands for those services, as reported both by the Hispanic Chamber and the Brookings Institution (Wilson, 2014). The Chamber shows the Hispanic OKC workforce is split into five sectors: services (27%); natural resources, construction and maintenance (24%); sales and office occupations (18%); management, business, science and arts, (17%); and production, transportation, and material moving (14%).

Language and education challenges are also impeding the workforce development for a significant portion of OKC Hispanics, according to Brookings (Wilson, 2014). More than 58,000 Hispanics who have limited English proficiency (LEP), making OKC the No. 11 metro of the 89 largest in the U.S. in that category. Among those, over 55% have less than a high school education. Nearly three-quarters of LEPs are employed, with 25% primarily working in construction. Their median annual earnings of $22,000 substantially trails the estimated 2014 mean wage of $40,850 for Oklahoma, reported by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014). The Hispanic Chamber found that overall Hispanic median family income in Oklahoma City to be $34,774, while the statewide average is $45,339. (The U.S. average in 2013 was $53,046).

In the sponsorship contractual agreement between UCO and the Chamber, the university has access to the shared space on evenings and weekends to offer classes, business seminars and college preparatory workshops. These programs are heavily promoted by the Chamber to its membership and community. College-going and scholarship sessions are attended by students and their parents, often overflowing the room's capacity, as shown in Figure 2.

The Chamber uses the conference room during the daytime and occasional evenings for its membership meetings and Chamber subcommittee planning meetings. Because UCO is continuing to develop its class and workshop programs to fill out its access schedule, the agreement between the two organizations enables the Chamber to use the conference room for its own purposes if the room is idle.

Figure 2. Hispanic students and their parents attended a Gates Millennium Scholarship Application Workshop in November. Conducted by the University of Central Oklahoma, the workshop was held in the UCO conference/classroom located in the Greater Oklahoma City Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. The workshop was one of many addressing college opportunities as well as business development offered through the facility. Programs often are delivered bilingually. Photo provided by UCO.

Student Engagement

The new presence of UCO at the Hispanic Chamber over the past two years has also provided numerous opportunities for engagement with Hispanic K-12 students, with more programs to be launched in 2016 based on the best practices reported by other institutions (Excelencia in Higher Education, 2015d). The impact has been significant, according to Barry Lofton, UCO executive director of admissions. This includes in 2015 a 21% increase in the number of UCO's Hispanic first-time freshmen and transfer students, from 388 to 409, and a 13% increase in all underrepresented groups from 1,328 to 1,499 students. This follows on 10-year growth from 2000-2010 with an 82% increase in Hispanic students as UCO's overall student population grew by 26%. The increase in Hispanic enrollment also reflects national trends, according to the Pew Research Center. In a 2013 report, it noted that Hispanic high school graduates for the first time enrolled in greater proportion than did majority students. That analysis also reported the third straight year of Hispanic enrollment growth nationwide (Lopez & Fry, 2013).

There clearly is room for substantial growth in the number of college-degree holders in OKC. The Hispanic Chamber (2015) notes slightly more than 14% of OKC Hispanic community members hold a two- or four-year or graduate degree. That new population also represents some challenges, with 39% of first-time Hispanic students not declaring a major, which places them at greater risk because of reduced connection to campus. Further, with a majority being the first in their family to attend college, these students also are lacking the safety net of family members who can draw on their own college experience to offer advice.

The magnitude of this challenge will only increase without a direct, compelling response by higher education institutions. The U. S. Census Bureau projects that the number of school age Hispanics will grow by 166% by 2050 compared to other populations. This growth will cause a significant increase in the number of students from Hispanic backgrounds who are college or workforce ready by 2020 (Jenkins, 2009).

Research predicts that second generation Hispanics, who are typically children of immigrant families, will represent 23% of the labor force growth between 2000 and 2020. Considering this reality, workforce training and career opportunities are essential to ensure Hispanics are able to acquire positions beyond low-skill, low-paying jobs. Additionally, ACT, Inc. (2009) and Blankenship (2010) have indicated that although the number of students has increased by 60 percent since 2005, the number of Hispanic students who have demonstrated college readiness in all four subject areas of the ACT test is only 10%. Most Hispanic students who make it to higher education either choose to enroll at community colleges (Crisp & Nora 2010) and urban public universities (Oseguera, Locks, & Vega, 2009). Working to establish structures to support these students is critical for colleges and universities. The work of UCO contributes significantly to this effort to increase Hispanic student enrollment and success.

Currently, no Oklahoma institution is included among the more than 600 Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) whose student bodies include more than 25% Hispanic population (Excelencia in Education, 2015a, 2015b; Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities, 2012). Three Oklahoma institutions are considered "emerging" with more than 15% of its

students of Hispanic origin, but none is a public four-year institution. UCO projects it will reach emerging status by 2018.

The impetus for enrollment growth and strategies at UCO is through the division of Student Affairs, with many programs offered at the Hispanic Chamber facility. For example, UCO Office of Undergraduate Admissions regularly collaborates with the Aspiring Americans, Inc., to provide helpful information to undocumented students and families. UCO is now linked to that organization, which seeks to assist undocumented students to attend college.

The programming at the Hispanic Chamber is varied and focused on assisting students to become college ready. General workshops focus on strategies to complete college admissions and financial aid applications, as well as mock interviews to assist them with scholarship interviews. Additionally, special Gates Millennium Scholarship Application workshops are conducted by UCO staff for parents and students. Funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, each year 5,000 of these scholarships are awarded to student from under-represented populations to attend any accredited college or university. Grant awards are based on the cost of attendance at the selected institution and financial need after accounting for other grants and scholarships assistance the students receive. Finally, a Steps to Becoming a Broncho Workshop is offered which provides general assistance to help admitted students to UCO feel more comfortable with enrollment steps.

Other Hispanic student recruitment activities and initiatives to strengthen and build partnerships are substantial. New partnerships have been developed with Aspiring Americans, Inc., the League of United Latin American Citizens, and INTEGRIS Southwest Medical Center. Existing partnerships that have been expanded include those with the Hispanic Chamber, OKC Public Schools, and the Latino Community Development Agency (LCDA). These efforts have focused on many best practices, including Stanford University's Bridge Project, which was a six-year national study focused on analyzing gaps in high school exit-level policies and college entrance policies. This research demonstrated that there are significant gaps that exist for parents and students regarding this transition, and consequently indicated that these gaps could be over come through three primary actions. First, students, parents, and educators must receive accurate, high quality information about becoming college ready as early as possible in middle and high school. Second, students should be provided with access to institutions that serve the majority of students as they provide the greatest benefit. Finally, articulating to students that getting to college is not the hardest part, but it is only the start. The ultimate and most important goal is to be successful in college (Venezia Kirst, & Antonio, 2003). These strategies have been the guiding force for developing programs at the Hispanic Chamber.

Through its efforts, UCO has experienced a significant increase in the number of Hispanic student applications as part of the outreach at the Hispanic Chamber. During the Spring 2016 semester, the institution witnessed a 32.6% increase in Hispanic enrollment compared to just five years before (UCO Institutional Research, 2016).

Impact on other UCO Hispanic Community Outreach Efforts

Engaging with partners who represent the communities of minority students can provide a vital linkage in mentoring opportunities for students. It also provides an opportunity for the institution to learn more about these communities and create conversations to assist in the development of strategies to enhance student success (Walshok, 1995).

UCO has worked diligently to develop these collaborative efforts which have accelerated significantly from face-to-face relationships by the UCO/Hispanic Chamber partnership. Since the partnership was formed, UCO hired three additional bilingual admissions recruiters. Since their arrival, UCO has expanded its outreach on campus and at locations across the metro in existing programs and has added many more.

Its community outreach, working with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, has been to participate in Super Saturdays at Oklahoma City Public Schools to talk about college opportunities, Latino Community Development Association scholarship nights, community celebrations such as "Fiestas de las Americas," the Hispanic Chamber Expo and Career Fair, providing weekly Spanish language campus tours for Hispanic families of prospective students, and providing Spanish translations for recruitment publications and marketing in Spanish language media.

With UCO participation in more than a dozen programs across the metropolitan 10-county area, the university increased its engagement in numerous settings. To familiarize parents with UCO and the process of admissions and enrollment is critical in the decision making for Hispanic parents who may not possess English as their primary language. A monthly Spanish Language Campus Tours for prospective students and families has resulted from the partnership because of the recognition of this need. This need was identified through the presentations at the Hispanic Chamber where many parents had challenges in comprehending the English only workshops for their children. In 2014, 45 students and five families participated in these main campus tours in Edmond.

Through this collaboration, UCO also expanded its prior relationship with the OKC Latino Community Development Agency (LCDA). Our representatives visited AP Spanish classes in local High Schools to provide admissions and scholarship information. Also, UCO participated in the LCDA Scholarship Night and Mentoring Program, where our team provided information in Spanish to the Hispanic community regarding financial aid and scholarships. These opportunities did not exist prior to the collaboration with the Hispanic Chamber facility programming, so the visibility of UCO was significant in enhancing this relationship.

UCO has been active in the Hispanic community during several major events. 2015 was the second year that UCO participated in the Fiestas de las Americas held in the Historic Capitol Hill Business District. This annual Hispanic event attracts thousands and boasts some of Southwest Oklahoma City's best flavors, educational and social services, and shopping experiences to its participants. UCO received a special invitation to participate due to our Hispanic Chamber collaboration. Also, UCO representatives were asked to participate in the Dia de los Niños (Day of the Children) at the Hispanic Chamber. Recruitment office personnel and a UCO Latino Faculty & Staff Association (LFSA) volunteer served on the planning committee for the festival and volunteered as stage managers for the entertainment portion. UCO Office of Undergraduate

Admissions also staffed a recruitment booth per a request from Hispanic Chamber staff members who felt that the attendees would benefit from UCO's presence.

Latino Faculty & Staff Association Acts as Advocate and Liaison

A major asset in ensuring cultural transitions, student success, and a bridge between UCO and the metro Hispanic community is the UCO Latino Faculty & Staff Association that includes 35 members. Formed in 2013, it has especially ramped up its activities following the objectives arising from Vision 2020 to expand UCO's relationship to the OKC Hispanic Community, and that has certainly been evident in programming at the Hispanic Chamber. Formally recognized by the President's Cabinet in 2014, its mission, in collaboration with the UCO community, is to support the success of Hispanic faculty, staff, and students at UCO by advocating for efforts, programs, and policies that promote an understanding of Hispanic issues within the University. They have embraced the notion of outreach to the Hispanic community in the metro. Following a 21% increase in Hispanic student enrollment at UCO, other institutions are now using UCO's LFSA activities as a model for their own programs.

UCO LFSA also has expanded its outreach activities in the metro to strengthen its relationship with the Hispanic Chamber by active participation in networking events, with Tango Public Relations, the primary Hispanic marketing firm in the metro to grow its business community, the Latino Community Development Agency, and Aspiring Americans, Inc. The extensive presence of LSFA members and other UCO employees at these events has drawn the continuing comment from Hispanic community members that "UCO is everywhere," Renteria Mendoza reports (personal communication, November 15, 2105).

The LFSA members have been engaged in other outreach activities on and off campus. Members partnered with the UCO Center for Excellence in Transformative Teaching & Learning and the Office of Diversity & Inclusion to sponsor a student panel that addressed issues and concerns faced by Hispanic students. They also have assisted in hiring three bilingual staff members for community outreach and student recruitment positions for UCO. Finally, to ensure that their voice in conversations about diversity on campus, UCO LFSA is represented on the University Diversity Committee.

The Alliance's members have encouraged the institution's leadership to initiate a formal institutional membership in the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) to ensure that UCO is linked to this national network. Presently, it is the only OKC metro institutional member to this organization. LFSA members have attended the HACU annual conference to harvest best practices to strengthen UCO's plan to hire diverse faculty and staff, and to expand upon services provided to students on campus. Many of the best practices promoted through HACU focus on collaborations between institutions of higher education and the community, so this membership will be beneficial in enhancing our strategies with the Hispanic Chamber.

The organization has also collaborated with the Division of Student Affairs to host a workshop by Aspiring Americans in Spring 2015, and has been actively working with this organization to assist current and incoming Hispanic students to be retained and graduate. There is special

attention provided to the estimated 60 undocumented students attending UCO. Undocumented students do not qualify for federal or state financial aid, including student loans, and pay their tuition out of pocket. In conjunction with the UCO Foundation and Aspiring Americans, has awarded matching scholarships to current students, and is raising funds for an endowed scholarship. As many students who are participating in Hispanic Chamber of Commerce workshops sponsored by UCO are undocumented, the collaboration has provided these students with the additional support needed to better understand the matriculation process and access resources to be able to afford college.

LFSA Hispanic Success Initiative

Among the most intensive projects engaged in by the LFSA is a new, ongoing team of three faculty and three staff who are members of LFSA, working with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, to pilot a program to foster an environment that promotes the success of Hispanic students. The program targets increasing retention and graduation rates, fostering greater appreciation for Hispanic cultural heritage, and connecting Hispanic students to the community through mentorships and service-learning experiences.

This Hispanic Success Initiative results from UCO experiencing a 36.8% increase in its Hispanic population over the past five years, to an enrollment of 1,434 Hispanic students in fall 2015. Students have expressed the need to connect with each other, with UCO faculty and staff, and the greater Oklahoma City metropolitan community. Hispanic students have also stressed the importance of exploring and developing Hispanic cultural identity.

At UCO, the average Hispanic GPA in Fall 2014 was 2.83 (2.63 for Hispanic men; 2.95 for Hispanic women). Through the UCO Student Right To Know cohort, 70% of Hispanic students in 2013 were retained from first to second year, which was about 5% higher than the average for all incoming SRTK students. However, the difference in the retention rate does not translate to higher graduation rates; 37.9% of Hispanic students in the 2008 SRTK cohort graduated within six years compared to 37.5% of the total 2008 SRTK cohort. Even within the Hispanic transfer student population, only 57% of the 2008 transfer cohort graduated in six years compared to 54% for the overall population. This lag in performance in retention and graduation rates by Hispanic students still significantly exceeds that finding of Hispanic college students nationwide, with a 15% graduation rate (Krogstad, 2015a). As a percentage of the population, Hispanics still represent just nine percent of all U.S. college degree holders (Krogstad, 2015b; see also, Excelencia in Education, 2015d).

The Hispanic Success Initiative seeks to increase the retention and completion rates of UCO's Hispanic students, along with increased confidence and a sense of belonging. This will be accomplished through several initiatives. First is a combination of learning opportunities associated with UCO's Student Transformative Learning Record (STLR), both curricular and non-curricular experiences that infuse the ACE VALUE rubrics throughout the curriculum and all student activities. Second, it provides experiences that foster development and exploration of identity through activities that foster connections between students, faculty and staff, and the OKC community, including community leaders. Third, a mentoring component is provided in which each participant is paired with two other peers as well as one faculty or staff mentor.

The HSI Initiative uses the Integrated Knowledge Portfolio Process created by Dr. Melissa (2015; see also, Peet, Lonn, Gurin, Boyer, Matney, Marra, Taylor, & Daley, 2011) from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. The UCO research team, comprised of faculty and staff, will examine the impact and benefits of the curriculum on the participants' sense of belonging in postsecondary education and their identity. The research team will also examine the effectiveness of the program overall and will share the outcomes with other institutions of higher education.

Fifty-one students were selected for HSI from 64 applications that were received and a total of thirty-nine students decided to participate (76% participation rate). Of the thirty-nine students, 63% are from low-income backgrounds and 75% are first-generation students. Other participant characteristics are: 55% first-time, full-time freshmen; 30% are transfer students; 67% are females; 33% are males; average high school GPA for freshmen students is 3.54; average cumulative GPA for non-freshmen students is 2.84.

The HSI has the support of various entities across campus including the Division of Student Affairs, Division of Academic Affairs, Division of Public Affairs, Center for Excellence in Transformative Teaching and Learning, College of Education and Professional Studies, and the Hispanic American Student Association.

The HSI program is directly tied to UCO's partnership with the OKC Hispanic Chamber. The HSI team has built a component where students are connected to leaders in the community by brining community leaders as role model speakers to students, as well as through a service-learning project. LFSA's connections that have been made through the partnership with the Hispanic Chamber will be capitalized on through this program.

Additional Considerations and Conclusion

Like many metropolitan areas across the nation, Oklahoma City is experiencing an unprecedented and unpredicted growth in the size of its Hispanic community. Through its strategic planning process, Vision 2020, the University of Central Oklahoma conducted a "deep dive" environmental scan of the ten-county metro employing a TOWS (Threats/Opportunities/Weaknesses/Strengths) format that focused on unmet metro needs and opportunities. The exercise synthesized university community thinking to place greater emphasis on serving the Hispanic community, whose children now represent almost half of the enrollments in the state's largest public school system (Perry & Menendez, 2011). By coincidence, the Greater Oklahoma City Hispanic Chamber of Commerce was seeking a partner as it sought to renovate a new headquarters facility to provide a classroom for business classes and college-going information to the Hispanic community. The new partnership cemented the relationship between the two organizations in ways previously unexpected. Some of the significant outcomes were a substantial increase in Hispanic students enrolling at UCO, increased business services outreach and college-preparatory workshops delivered on site at the Hispanic Chamber, expanded networking with continuous interactions through other scheduled social events affected by the recruitment of UCO Provost John Barthell to the Chamber Board of Directors. This was further cemented by the emergence of the UCO Latino Faculty & Staff Association as a critical

linkage to the Chamber, Hispanic Community, and on campus for the recruitment, retention, and personal and professional growth of UCO students of Hispanic heritage.

As the collaboration continues to grow, there will be many other opportunities to strengthen this partnership. The addition of academic classes and potentially academic programs at the location by UCO will allow affordable and accessible options for many who live in the community. Also, as an institution committed to the notion of being stewards of place, UCO plans to create service learning opportunities for its students through the Hispanic Chamber. The opportunity to conduct programming to enhance cultural competencies for these students, as well as faculty and staff, is another opportunity. The burgeoning relationship exemplifies the innovation that occurs when two distinct organizations unite to enhance their communities through shared spaces. The future opportunities seem limitless considering the capacities of the two current partners and potential additional partners who can work together to create solutions for the metro citizens of Hispanic backgrounds. Hispanic Chamber Executive Director David Castillo summed up the strength of the relationship by saying "the best is yet to come" (personal communication, November 23, 2015.

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Place-Based School Reform as Method of Creating Shared Urban Spaces: What is It, and What Does it Mean for Universities?

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Abstract

In this article, a layered conceptual framework for "place-based school reform" is presented as a way to link the concept of school reform and neighborhood development. Because many universities have been involved in community-school-university partnerships, the university community engagement literature will be connected to this increasingly attractive concept that seeks to both improve academic outcomes and to link a schooling system to a neighborhood. Implications for universities seeking to co-create urban shared spaces are discussed.

Keywords:

School reform; University community partnership; Neighborhoods; Social inequality; Community schools.

Introduction

Anchor institutions are an increasingly attractive framework to leverage large institutions in community development work in localities across the United States. By definition, anchor institutions are "large, spatially immobile, mostly non-profit organizations that play an integral role in the local economy" (Taylor & Luter, 2013, p. 8). Higher education is one major anchor institution within localities across the country because of its ability to purchase large amounts of local goods and services, its role as a major employer, capacity for research and development, and contribution to the local tax base (Harkavy & Zuckerman, 1999). Further, there is an element of "shared value" (Porter & Kramer, 2011) and ultimately shared space, when anchors engage in community development work. On one hand, the locality benefits when an anchor institution such as a university invests in a place through increased property values, more employment opportunities for residents, or increased prestige of the locality. On the other hand, the university is better able achieve its mission when doing such work, whether it is through educating students to engage in real-world problem-solving or through mission-driven public service activities. The anchor institution paradigm frames how universities seek to co-create new urban shared spaces with other social institutions within target places (Harkavy & Zuckerman, 1999; Institute for Competitive Inner Cities & CEOs for Cities, 2002), specifically neighborhoods (Clinch, 2009).

These "place-based" approaches linked to universities have not been complete up to this point because the literature and practitioners have failed to recognize the connection between neighborhood improvement and school improvement, given that school reform and neighborhood development are inextricably linked (Benson, Harkavy, & Puckett, 2007; Black,

1999; Chung, 2002; Shirley, 1997; Taylor, 2005). In a similar way that neighborhoods act to "fix" residents in class positions across generations, schools perform a similar function. Therefore, the issue of underperforming schools and underdeveloped neighborhoods should be addressed in tandem. The literature is thin on how exactly to link these concepts. Further, the notion of bringing together school reform and neighborhood development *facilitated by universities* has been even further under theorized. This article seeks to push the theoretical literature further by contributing a thorough conceptualization of the concept of "place-based school reform" (PBSR) in order to expose everything embedded in this term so that practitioners and researchers understand how to best co-create new shared urban spaces with anchor institutions. PBSR is a new concept in the literature, distinct from community schools, because it frames school reform as something that attempts to address both internal-to-neighborhood conditions, as well as external-to-neighborhood conditions.

Many university administrators, faculty, staff, and students are increasingly involved in place-based approaches that include a dimension of school reform, such as Promise and Choice Neighborhoods efforts. Trying to create shared urban spaces is a complicated task in itself, but it becomes even more complicated when schools become involved because of the relationship between schools, neighborhoods/places, and social stratification (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Hauser, 1970). If university stakeholders are not clear on the frameworks driving PBSR efforts, there will be missed opportunities to do this work in a meaningful way that accounts for the structural forces that create underdeveloped neighborhoods and low-performing schools. This paper argues that school reform for so-called failing schools in underdeveloped neighborhoods cannot be reformed within the current paradigm of school reform in which many universities are involved, known as comprehensive school reform (CSR), because these approaches ignore the structural forces that continue to (re)produce low-performing schools. In order to make this argument, this paper will clarify terms associated with place-based efforts, especially "neighborhood", "comprehensive school reform", "community schools", and "place-based school reform." If university administrators and their partners cannot clearly define neighborhood and other terms, then it will be difficult for them to work on place-based strategies that seek to link school and neighborhood improvement. While concepts like "community schools" and "place-based strategies" and "school-centered community revitalization" have been defined in the practitioner-oriented literature (e.g. Children's Aid Society, 2013; Jennings, 2012; Kronick, 2005; Khadduri, Schwartz, & Turnham, 2008), "place-based school reform" has evaded such a clear conceptualization. The purpose of the paper is for university stakeholders to have a clearer sense of how they might actually go about co-designing a school improvement strategy that is in coordination with (or, is linked to) a neighborhood development strategy. It will be difficult, if not impossible, to create shared urban spaces with schools if university stakeholders involved with school reform continue to ignore the structural forces that have created low-performing schools and underdeveloped neighborhoods

This article presents a layered conceptual framework for "place-based school reform." While the existing literature has provided clues to the nature and definition of this concept, an actual conceptualization does not exist. Interestingly, the empirical research literature has essentially left this concept out of the research vernacular with the exception of some scholar/practitioners who have written about community schools (Lawson & Briar-Lawson, 1997) and Promise Neighborhoods (Hudson, 2013; Miller, Wills, & Scanlan, 2013). First, "place" and

"neighborhood" are defined, drawing on urban planning and sociology literature. Then, the paper explores why neighborhood interventions need to address issues internal to the neighborhood (within the control of residents and social institutions) and those external to the neighborhood (outside of the control of the residents). Then, the dominant community schools intervention is critiqued because it cannot, as currently conceived, address the deep-rooted social structures that cause school poor performance. PBSR is then defined and conceptualized. This review of literature and concepts leads to several important reflection questions related to university involvement in school reform: What would it take for universities to become involved in these efforts to create shared spaces as authentic partners? What should universities take into consideration when entering into such community-school-university partnerships? Why are universities uniquely positioned to enter into these arrangements?

Neighborhood and Place

The concept of place-based school reform cannot be understood without an examination of "place" and "neighborhood." While this may seem obvious, the concept of "place" or "neighborhood" in the literature on place-based school reform is not well defined. Indeed sociologists, urban planners, and geographers have defined "place" (Gieryn, 2000; Johnson, 2012) and "neighborhood" (Jargowsky, 2005; Sampson, 2012); yet no consistent definitions dominate.

Some school reform efforts are considered to be place-based if services are offered to neighborhood residents (Potapchuk, 2013), but this is a shallow conceptualization because it misses the tight connection between the neighborhood transformation strategy and the school reform effort. Just because services are offered does not mean that a school reform effort is linked to a "place." While "place" on the surface means neighborhood or a particular physical geography within the city, the concept of place is deeper. Neighborhoods are not necessary "places," though it can be if there has been a process of placemaking (Sutton & Kemp, 2002). Should universities attempt to assist in connecting school improvement and neighborhood development and create shared spaces, the definition of "neighborhood" needs to be clear. There are at least six different components to a neighborhood:

- The Physical (Built) Environment (Chaskin, 1997): The start point in understanding the neighborhood as place is to know that the neighborhood geography is composed of buildings, houses, and structures, including shops and stores, vacant lots, and spaces that are in varying levels of physical conditions and organized in specific ways. Collectively, these things form a physical environment and a visual image of the neighborhood.
- The People (Chaskin, 1997): This includes the residents, stakeholders, employees, elected officials, and visitors which are the people who live and work in the neighborhood and has responsibly for shaping and influencing policies that impact its development.
- The Organizational Network (Chaskin, 1997): This refers to the web of organizations that are found in the neighborhood, both formal and informal, which the residents create to help them grapple with myriad problems and difficulties, along with enhancing their social life. Examples include formal coalitions and groups (block clubs, tenant councils) and informal associations (e.g. social groups). Organizations reflect the idea of the neighborhood as a social unit that is organized through voluntary associations.

- The Institutional Network (Patterson & Silverman, 2013): This network consists of all of the supportive services, including the schools and police, which are located in the neighborhood. Here, it is important to understand their individual and collective impact on the development of the neighborhood. The institutional network plays a significant role in mitigating the challenges that residents face and solving the problems they encounter.
- The Neighborhood Economy (Informal and Formal) (Sharff, 1987; Williams & Windebank, 2001): This component is comprised of the combination of opportunities for residents to participation in the exchange of goods and services. The formal economy is the group of exchanges that happen in the regulated environment. These can range from when residents patron businesses and commercial establishments to opportunities for formal employment. The informal economy refers to the set of unregulated transactions that occur between residents in order to secure goods and services. One example is childcare provided by a friend who is paid in cash (under the table) or in another commodity.
- The Neighborhood proximities and access (Maclennan, 2013): This is defined as ease of access to other city services and city institutions, both private and public. If residents must struggle to access city services or shops/stores, then this becomes an additional burden (the burden of "proximity") that residents encounter because of the neighborhood space.

Places are socially constructed, multi-layered, and dictate certain life outcomes for its residents (Gordon-Larsen, Nelson, Page, & Popkin, 2006). In other words, places are not neutral spaces that are fixed at one point in time. People derive meaning from a place based on everyday interactions with other people, with the built environment, with organizations and institutions, and with the economy (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001). Further, the place carries with it a reputation within the metropolis. When people living in an undesirable place disclose their place of residence, it can result in a stigmatization of the individual or group (Wacquant, 2008). These stigmas sometimes even become manifest when residents from underdeveloped neighborhoods attempt to participate in the formal economy. Job seekers from particular ZIP codes fight the stigmatization of being from that neighborhood, which may decrease their chances of securing a job.

The specific neighborhood of interest in this study is an underdeveloped (Rodney, 1972) neighborhood. One sociological definition of underdeveloped neighborhood is the spatial expression of social processes such as social exclusion, exploitation, abandonment, disinvestment, and racial stigmatization/domination (Kasarda, 1993; Sharkey, 2013). These places have been the result of decisions made in the development of cities and are byproducts of the capital investment and disinvestment process, thus they have been created by a series of forces beyond the control of one neighborhood (Slater, 2013). In particular, underdeveloped neighborhoods have been sites where the results of the intersection of race and class manifest. For example, once banks partnered with governments to offer loans for home mortgages, some banks engaged in "redlining," or the practice of not giving home loans to people of color, thus creating an exclusionary housing market (Taylor, 2011). Compounding the least desirable residential space is the economic oppression of blacks and Latinos in the labor markets (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Wilson, 1987). These limited resources prohibit low-income people from

enjoying the same comforts that middle- and upper-class people have: maintain their housing units, be able to purchase extracurricular activities for their children, purchase (or have access to) high-quality health care, and have connections with institutions that help navigate life issues (Duncan & Murnane, 2014).

Underdeveloped neighborhoods can either be siloed or collective/unified. When considering the variety of groups ("communities") of people and institutions within the neighborhood, it is important to understand the level of cohesion because it helps to show the neighborhood's chances of being a desirable place within the city. Distressed neighborhoods can also be siloed. In other words, groups within the neighborhood operate completely independent from one another. While there may be contact between groups through capital transactions (e.g. storeowner, customer), there is no unified sense of camaraderie. Groups within the same space are in competition with each other for resources in the city (Wilson & Taub, 2011). Institutions, while part of the neighborhood environment, are actually disconnected from the people, especially youth, living in the neighborhood which in turn makes individuals disconnected from the very institutions that exist to serve them (Lewis & Burd-Sharps, 2013; Roy & Jones, 2014). Unified communities, in contrast, are defined by higher levels of social cohesion and social capital (Gittell & Vidal, 1998). Struggles of different groups as they attempt to improve their life and neighborhood conditions are thought to be common to everyone within the neighborhood. Planning for the future of the neighborhood happens in conjunction with the many different groups (Sirianni, 2007). Groups within this particular place know and understand that improving neighborhood conditions cannot happen without a shared vision for a better place to live.

While factors within the neighborhood are important to determining life outcomes for residents, individuals are beholden to forces from outside the neighborhood. It is important to make clear these distinctions because they dictate the appropriate policy responses and interventions that attempt to ameliorate the factors that contribute to the level of distress of a particular place. Further, no strategy that seeks to fundamentally transform a place can ignore one category or the other, which is essential for universities to understand when they attempt to create shared spaces. Essentially, comprehensive place-based strategies must seek to address both issues internal and external to the neighborhood if they have a chance at being successful.

Internal and External Forces

Two distinct kinds of forces that shape distressed neighborhoods: internal and external forces (Figure 1). With the addition of the internal and external lenses, it becomes more clear that within-building, or building-based, school reform models do not provide a sufficient framework to address the variety of factors that could impact student performance. These factors are hidden, though, when using the individual student or the individual school as the unit analysis. Factors internal to the neighborhood suggest a set of factors that can hypothetically be manipulated in the context of the neighborhood environment. The "neighborhood environment" represents the set of factors, practices, and cultural norms that people (children and families) within neighborhoods directly see, hear, and breathe on a daily basis as they engage in public activities, referred to as micro- and meso-system influences (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Internal factors are concerned with the happenings within a neighborhood on a daily basis that can be studied, measured, and potentially manipulated. A combination of individual, familial,

neighborhood and institutional characteristics are located internal to the neighborhood. When looking at neighborhoods through the "internal" lens, a particular set of interventions become apparent and necessary to overcome these challenges. For example, some interventions seek to increase individual family income in hopes that it will help child development, in particular school performance (Duncan, Magnuson, & Votruba-Drzal, 2013).

The neighborhood effects literature has sought to explore the ways that neighborhoods exert an independent influence on the life outcomes of residents, thereby elevating the level of analysis to that of the neighborhood—not the individual. In the words of Patrick Sharkey (2013), these studies attempted to explore "the ways that structural disadvantage and aspects of social organization within neighborhoods can influence patterns of behavior within the boundaries of the neighborhood, thereby influencing the life course trajectories of neighborhood residents" (p. 20). However, the conceptual framework proposed here goes a step further and seeks to view external factors that actually shape the neighborhood environment as a result of processes that are independent of any one neighborhood. Looking at the external environment, involves examination of the various mechanisms that shape neighborhoods, yet cannot be directly impacted by residents within a given neighborhood. These external components shape experiences and constrain choices of residents within neighborhoods, yet are not easily manipulated through traditional place-based interventions. These represent various social processes that usually result in the distribution of resources between neighborhoods and/or cities and contribute to the stratification between them. For example, the land tenure system and the private land market dictate the cost of land and therefore who can purchase and control the land. Landlords further set prices that constrain who can live in their property.

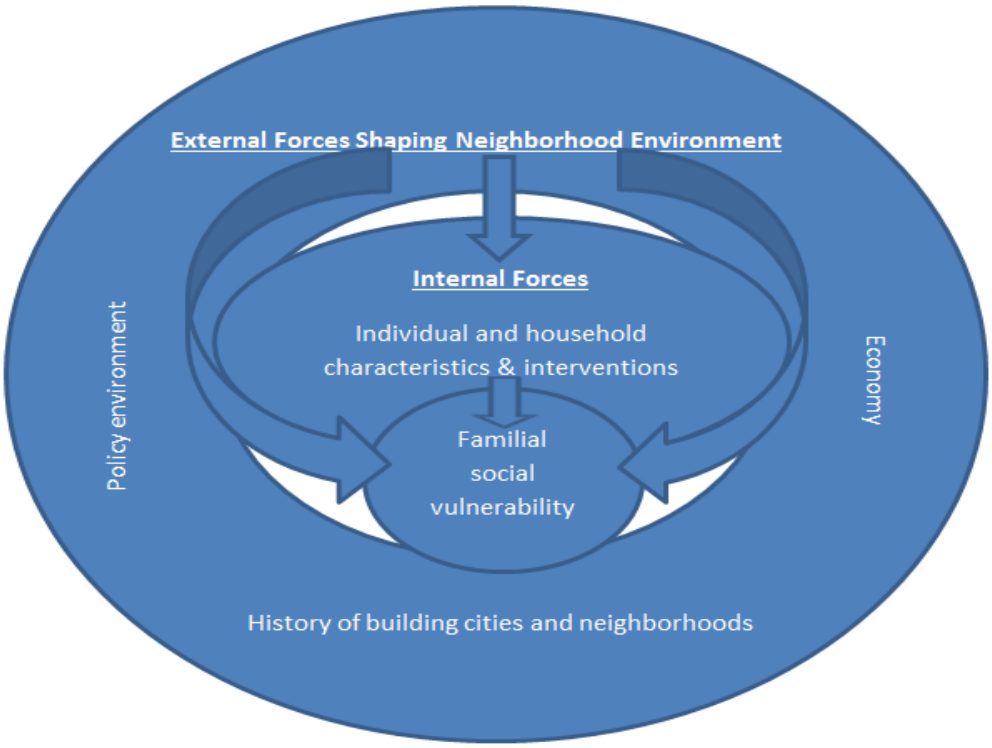

Figure 1: Path of social vulnerability

The "internal vs. external" framework suggests that place-based (internal) interventions will always be incomplete because they cannot penetrate the social processes (external) that have impacted (and continue to impact) neighborhood development (Table 1). If a family's level of social vulnerability is a product of both external and internal forces, then this level of vulnerability will not be fully addressed without both levels. Sharkey (2013) calls for a "durable" urban policy in this country that would attempt to ameliorate social vulnerability, which would involve actions at all levels of government. This requires confronting the mass imprisonment paradigm, a history of urban disinvestment, and the unfriendly-to-low-wage-workers world economy, among other things.

With the concept of place extensively explained, attention will turn to one particular component of a comprehensive place-based strategy anchored in one target neighborhood: place-based school reform.

Table 1

Mechanisms of Social Vulnerability Emanating From…

Internal to neighborhood	External to the neighborhood

People
- Family / home
  o Social capital
  o Family structure
  o Educational infrastructure (home, neighborhood)
  o Family social characteristics (SES, educational attainment)
- Social networks
  o Peers
  o Kinds of role models
  o Risky behavior exposure
  o Drug activity
  o Prevalence of violence
- Elected officials
Built Environment
- Housing quality
- Crime / perceived social disorder
- Social institutions
- Medical facilities
- Road conditions
- Green space
- Water purification systems
- Environmental issues (as a result)
Institutions and Organizations
- Amenities (commercial activity, food
	Policies (National, State, Local)
	- Housing policy
	- Education policy (curriculum, school staff)
	- Health policy
	- Transportation policy
	- Welfare policy
	- Transportation policy
	Political economy
	- Labor market
	- Hiring practices of companies
	- Financial institution locations across the metropolitan area
	- Criminal justice system
	- Anchor institutions (across the city and region)
	- Land tenure system
	Governance
	- City governance
	- Regional governance
	- Special purpose governments (housing authorities, utilities, school boards, etc.)
	Social phenomenon
	- Racism
	- Classism
	- Mass incarceration

access, entertainment, gyms, etc.) - Education (schools / child care) - Community building institutions - Extracurricular activities available to children/opportunities available to residents - Anchor institutions (in n'hood) - Fire/Police - Trash / recycling **Neighborhood Economy** - Jobs available - Formal sector - Businesses / commercial activity - Informal sector **Neighborhood Proximity and Access** - Travel routes and modes - Physical location of neighborhood in relation to other city/private services - Environmental hazards of neighborhood location	- Environmental degradation **City planning** - History of development within the city - Community development efforts - Exclusionary zoning laws - Suburbanization - City master plans - Other neighborhoods in the city **Metropolitan housing** - Segregation - Residential mobility patterns **Ideology** - Neoliberal - Progressive

Place-Based School Reform

As mentioned earlier, both neighborhoods and schools act to "fix" residents in class positions across generations. The contribution of schooling to the reproduction of the current status and economic hierarchies (a process called social reproduction) has been documented in the educational stratification literature (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Entwisle & Alexander, 1993; Hauser, 1970; Kao & Stephen, 2003; Weis, 1990). Serious disparities in educational attainment and achievement have been documented between racial groups, with upper-income whites and Asian Americans experiencing more success and blacks and Latinos experiencing less success in the educational system. These differences in educational attainment and achievement have an impact on later-in-life outcomes. The exact social processes that lead to educational disparities has been a source of considerable amounts of scholarship, but there is a broad agreement that school effects and neighborhood effects interact to reinforce one another (see Figure 2). In other words, students from low-income / working class neighborhoods tend to go to school with children from similar backgrounds. Because (a) school and neighborhood effects are conceptually difficult to unravel and (b) schools tend to reinforce (perhaps create) labor market disparities between racial and class groups, any attempt to improve one cannot be done absent the other. Neighborhoods and schools are both subject to external pressures that are beyond their control. So, efforts that attempt to reform one of these entities are beholden to certain factors that they will not be able to change when working in isolation.

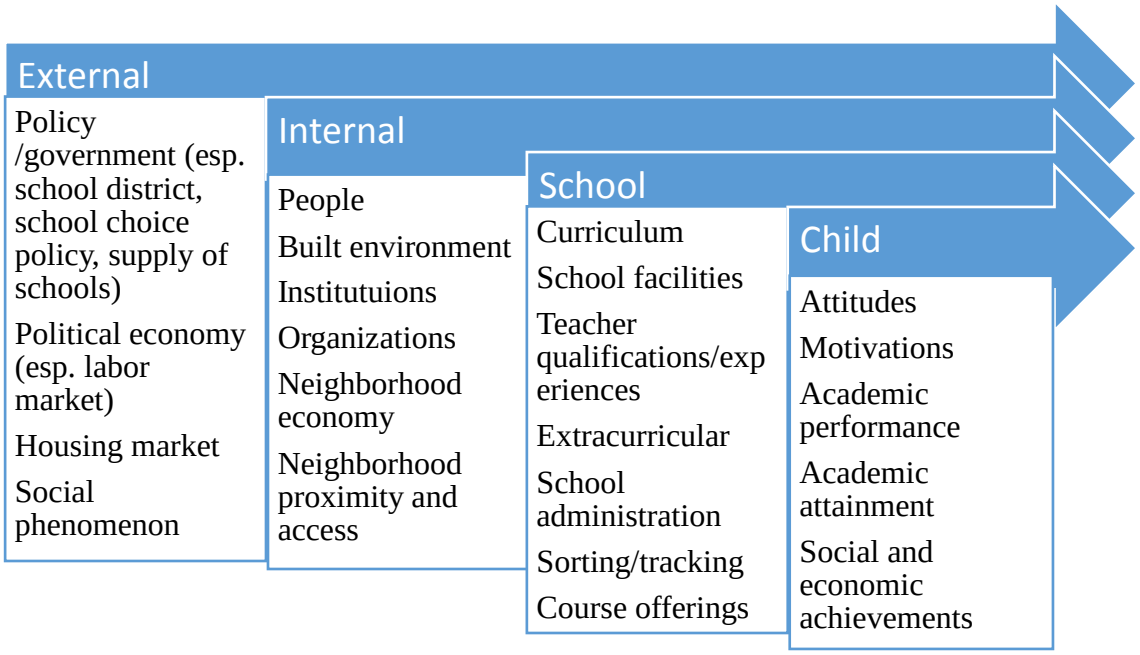

Figure 2. Basic path diagram showing how neighborhoods and schools impact child educational and social outcomes (inspired by Hauser, 1970)

Because of the complexity of this task, it requires new models that can address both school and neighborhood improvement. There have been some school-based and school-linked interventions that attempt to address the observable symptoms that children carry with them to schools, such as community schools which are associated with school-based and school-linked services (Kronick, 2005; Lawson & Briar-Lawson, 1997). The Children's Aid Society (2013) considered a community school one that has a strong instructional core, expanded learning opportunities for enrichment, and a full range of physical health, mental health, and social services available to children and families. Kronick (2005) conceptualized the theory driving what he calls "full service community schools" as collaboration between diverse stakeholders, a vision for promoting systems change between schools, community partners, and public systems, and preventing children from entering juvenile and criminal justice systems. These interventions are mainly service-based and ameliorative in that they operate with a theory of change claiming that students will be able to succeed academically and socially if they receive an intensive mix of service delivery (Say Yes to Education, 2012). Observable symptoms are stressed because any system set up to offer services to students who need it rely on the system's ability to "diagnose" a student's difficulty. If a system of service providers cannot tell (observe) a student is struggling with a particular challenge, it will go unaddressed. Further complicating the issue, these systems sometimes lack the capacity to help all students who they observe struggling with a particular challenge. Usually, community schools strategies operate within this framework because they operate individual programs usually at the building level. These efforts will sometimes reach out to parents of children to offer them services on an individual or case-by-case basis to families who show up to participate in these interventions. Their theory of change does not involve the

neighborhood because, as the theory goes, fundamental transformation of the neighborhood is not necessary if a student is offered an appropriate mix of services.

These efforts are likely to fail because they do not account for all factors that impact educational achievement (see Figure 2). While these efforts may produce a few "wins" in the short term (e.g. students who overcome neighborhood barriers), they will ultimately fall short of true transformation for entire populations of disenfranchised groups. These efforts are likely to fail because they ignore the root causes of the children's educational difficulty: the neighborhood, which has been created by a long history of exploitation, disinvestment, racism, and uneven development. A new model will be required to jointly tackle the challenges of schooling and neighborhoods. This new model necessarily requires partnerships beyond traditional school professionals (e.g. teachers, administrators). This new model will require a change of thinking that conceptualizes the school as a neighborhood anchor—the driving force behind the improvement of the neighborhood. This new model is place-based school reform, which can happen with other anchor institutions such as universities. This new model of school reform would create a new kind of shared urban space between universities and schools.

Place-based school reform (PBSR) embraces the comprehensive school reform model because it acknowledges that inner-city school curriculum needs to be transformed. New pedagogical strategies will be required to transform how students learn, but it does not stop there. Staff need to be equipped with different tools in order to teach in new ways that connect classroom learning to real-world problems. PBSR also accepts the service model because it acknowledges that students are facing difficult challenges that will require service interventions for families and children. Service providers in schools and neighborhoods should be linked in order to provide a coordinated service mix. PBSR goes a step further by confronting the challenges faced in the neighborhood. The place-based school reform strategy is a comprehensive approach to improving a particular *neighborhood's* educational infrastructure (Taylor, McGlynn, & Luter, 2013). The primary goal is not necessarily comprehensive school reform, as conceptualized in the literature. However, depending on the particular strategy, school reform may be a primary goal. Such strategies are concerned with creating interactive linkages and connections between neighborhood-based institutions with the goal of bolstering the educational outcomes for all children. These strategies can be characterized by getting institutions to align their work (e.g. programming, supports) with the mission, goals, and policies of the local schooling system. It places education in a broader context than just the school building, though schools are seen as important neighborhood institutions that shape the consciousness of children attending it. Instead, attention is paid to bringing together a multi-sector institutional collaborative anchored in a specific place, and these institutions commit to developing the educational opportunities for children in a particular neighborhood. Institutions located within a particular neighborhood come together to offer their services to residents who live in a particular place. Education happens through both formal programming and informal socialization of adults who live in the neighborhood, but also supportive and caring adults who work there. Further, these strategies advance work alongside neighborhood-based community groups and residents to infuse the home environments with tools necessary to support education for children. Examples of building educationally supportive home environments include desks in the home, a quiet place to study, a computer connected to the internet, ample school supplies, and someone in the family able to help children with homework. The commentary above is a vision created by using a PBSR lens.

Schools cannot engage in this work alone so must examine the university's role in creating shared spaces in neighborhoods using the PBSR approach.

Universities and Place-Based School Reform

Approaches to addressing underperforming schools can be placed into at least two categories: internal-to-school and external-to-school (Brighouse & Schouten, 2011). Internal-to-school reforms, sometimes called "comprehensive school reform" (CSR) approaches, are associated with strategies within a school building that are "most likely to affect student achievement: curriculum, instruction, assessment, grouping, accommodations for struggling students, parent and community involvement, school organization, and professional development" (Slavin, 2008, p. 256). External-to-school reforms, on the other hand, view that "background institutions" and the lack of social supports are the root causes of underperforming schools. Therefore, approaches to reforming schools need to include community development, health services, childcare, adult education, and other social supportive services (Noguera, 2011).

Up to this point, universities have mostly been associated with the internal-to-school reform efforts associated with CSR. For example, Success for All and Talent Development are two CSR efforts driven by Johns Hopkins University. Reading Recovery is another similar effort driven by researchers at Ohio State University. Universities also have curricular materials they produce and sell to schools, such as the University of Hawaii's Curriculum Research and Development Group. These efforts operate under the paradigm of researcher/experts having knowledge that can be distributed to schools to address the issues "most likely to affect student achievement," such as curriculum, professional development, and school organization. These efforts have been shown to achieve modest gains under certain circumstances and over long periods of time (Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2003; Borman, 2005), but are insufficient because the root causes of educational underperformance are deeper than the school can handle alone (Noguera, 2011; Rothstein, 2004), such as family background (Goldhaber, 2002) and neighborhood context (Crowder & South, 2003; Sampson, Sharkey, & Raudenbush, 2008; Sharkey 2010). As a result, universities looking to truly impact education reform might consider expanding their scope to consider more equity-minded school reform (Renee, Welner, & Oakes, 2011) such as place-based school reform.

The nascent movement of university-driven projects that seek to engage external-to-school efforts has struggled to gain a foothold in research, practice, and policy. Probably the most notable example of universities attempting to link school reform and neighborhood development comes in the form of the university-assisted community schools (UACS) movement, driven by the work of Ira Harkavy (Benson et al., 2007; Harkavy, 1998). In this model, the university links itself to both the school reform and neighborhood improvement goals established by the school and neighborhood, respectively. However, and ironically given the Deweyian public problem-solving framing of Harkavy, this movement has paid decidedly more attention to the internal-to-school mechanisms of change. Efforts that have attempted to incorporate neighborhood improvement explicitly into the work of the UACS effort (e.g. IUPUI, Grim & Officer, 2010; University of Pennsylvania's Netter Center for Community Partnerships; University of Buffalo's Center for Urban Studies, Taylor, McGlynn, & Luter, 2013; University of Maryland's School of Social work, Olson, 2014) have experienced some successes and some challenges. These efforts

typically fall under the "community schools" "service delivery" (e.g. extra programs available to the public, additional supportive services) frameworks. In Philadelphia's case where the UACS model was linked to a broader effort by the University of Pennsylvania to improve the west side of the city (known as the West Philadelphia Improvement Corps), concerns have been raised about gentrification (Etienne, 2012). These efforts might have benefitted from thinking about land use protections (see Policy Link's Equitable Development Toolkit, found online at http://community-wealth.org/content/anchor-dashboard-aligning-institutional-practice-meet-low-income-community-needs). Attempts to control against this kind of development can be found, for example, in the Duke-Durham Partnership (found online at https://community.duke.edu/) and the Durham Community Land Trustees (found online at http://www.dclt.org/).

Conclusion

For the place-based school reform movement to become commonplace in practice, changes in approach are needed. First, more universities might consider seeking out opportunities to build a neighborhood-linked school reform approach with existing partnerships in the community. Seattle University's Choice Neighborhood effort grew out of the university's Youth Initiative that was looking to connect with additional partners. The Seattle Housing Authority had been looking for ways to rejuvenate the public housing footprint, and then they connected with Seattle University's interest in advancing the Youth Initiative (see here: https://www.seattleu.edu/suyi/youth-initiative-in-action/engaging-neighborhood/choice-neighborhood-grant/). Yamamura (2014) recalled that Seattle University could not have done the work associated with the Choice Neighborhood effort had they not already developed relationships with the local housing authority and embraced a commitment to place. Seattle University "was thinking about education in the neighborhoods before anyone thought about applying for a Choice grant" (US Department of Housing and Urban Development, n.d., p. 3). Buy-in and support from community partners for these efforts only goes so far, as Yamamura also noted the importance of the broader university's support—from the president's verbal support to new funding sources available at the university to incentivize faculty to get involved. On the other hand, through dissertation research, the author (2015) studied a Promise Neighborhood effort in the northeast, which was geographically located adjacent to a major research university. The university's involvement was minimal because that university had not previously built a major presence in that local neighborhood. An opportunity to create shared urban space was missed because sustained relationships were not part of the university's history.

Second, place-based approaches might consider resisting the temptation to "fall back" on CSR models. Again, the author (2015) found that, when a Promise Neighborhood lead organization designed a school reform strategy to complement the neighborhood development strategy, they contracted with a university-based CSR consultant from another state. The university-developed CSR model was a curricular innovation centered on a new reading curriculum and intensive professional development for teachers. The strategy had little to do with linking neighborhood to the school. Further, the consultant later pulled out of the effort. As a result, the lead organization resorted to trying to take the most talented students from the high school and get scholarships for them to private schools (the stated logic offered to explain this decision was because these schools guaranteed path to college and/or a career). This strategy arguably was tone deaf to the

surrounding neighborhood and seeking ways to link their school reform strategy to a broader neighborhood-based effort.

Third, universities might consider becoming more comfortable engaging in the everyday politics of the localities in which they reside. The education world is riddled with politics, making universities reticent to become involved. However, if universities want to create new shared spaces, where they attempt to link their work and identity with a comprehensive place-based school improvement effort, it is impossible to dismiss or avoid these political realities. In fact, even some community engagement literature has suggested that universities be considered neutral conveners of discussions and should avoid the perception that they carry values about how to proceed toward public solutions (Kellogg Commission 1999): "The question we need to ask ourselves here is whether outreach maintains the university in the role of neutral facilitator and source of information when public policy issues, particularly contentious ones, are at stake" (p. 12). Creating the kind of school system that is rooted to a neighborhood requires that universities take a vocal stand on behalf of equity-minded policy that is willing to shift the "zone of mediation" (Renee et al., 2009).

Fourth, universities might consider adopting an anchor institution mission (Hodges & Dubb, 2012), which is "the conscious and strategic application of the long-term, place-based economic power of the institution, in combination with its human and intellectual resources, to better the long-term welfare of the community in which it resides" (147). Such an orientation also means a commitment to measuring progress toward social justice goals embodied by projects like the Anchor Institution Dashboard, which can be accessed online (http://community-wealth.org/content/anchor-dashboard-aligning-institutional-practice-meet-low-income-community-needs). This is all in the name of co-creating shared spaces with schools, with a vision for a more socially-just neighborhood.

The university community engagement movement has been around arguably for over 100 years beginning with William Rainey Harper's comments: "It is in the university that the best opportunity is afforded to investigate the movements of the past and to present the facts and principles involved before the public" (Harper 1898, p. 686). School-university partnerships have been around since the 1980s (Holmes Group, 1986; Goodlad, 1990). The Broader, Bolder Approach to Education has been advocating since 2008. The UACS model has been implemented since the early 1990s (Benson et al., 2007). Full service community schools rose to prominence in the mid-1990s (Dryfoos, 1994). None of these ideas are new, but the field has yet to integrate the different perspectives. Acknowledging that universities *actually do* share urban space with communities outside their walls is a bold step. It will require leadership within universities to co-create these shared spaces with a place-based frame, which ultimately moves cities in the direction of creating spaces that are democratically designed with equality and justice in mind. Universities indeed need to be bold if they are to become meaningfully involved in school reform that actually has a chance of improving lives for the most marginalized members of our society.

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