Affective Strategies in the Academy: Creative Methodologies, Civic Responses and the Market

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Regional Food Systems as Engines for Sustainable Economies: How do universities engage?

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Tendering for a Social Cause: Universities and social enterprise

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Reconsidering Humanities Programmes in Australian Universities – Embedding a New Approach to Strengthen the Employability of Humanities Graduates by Empowering Them as ‘Global Citizens’

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Civic Roles, Random Callings: Discerning the University Mission

Sukhmani Khorana
The journey of the association between apples and education began in the early days of the American frontier where teachers were given apples, considered then as a luxury, by students for their sustenance. Herbst (2014) informs that ‘families whose children attended schools were often responsible for housing and feeding frontier teachers’. She further contends that:

In the 1800s, apples and other fresh fruit had to be freighted to the settlers. A teacher was not paid very much at all in those days (sounds kinda like today, actually), sometimes working for just room and board. An apple was considered a luxury, so families would send an apple with the student, kind of as payment, since they were also cash poor. Chickens, or a loaf of baked bread, a cup of sugar, all those ‘luxuries’ were given to the teacher, but most commonly an apple or a pear.

With a long traditional custom of moral value and as a quintessential icon for education, the gift of apples as an appreciation for a teacher is not limited to western society but present in eastern societies as well. Also the apple is often used to communicate the many issues that plague the institution, such as a still life depicting a row of fresh apples and a rotten one. This image is associated with a recent event where teachers from the Finger Lakes area in New York delivered 1,000 apples to Governor Andrew Cuomo to protest their displeasure about education funding levels. Ironically, the office could not accept the apples, due to restrictions on officials receiving gifts (Edwards 2014).

The cover design for this issue of Social Alternatives uses the apple to communicate that higher education should be a rich site of knowledge and cultural diversity; that to replace these and other civic values with a narrow economistic approach, as exemplified in the loss of funding in the Humanities and Creative Arts disciplines, will have immeasurable impact on the very nature of what makes us human.

Reference:
Herbst, I. 2014 A Discussion of the Apple in Various Beliefs and World Views

ISSN: 0155-0306

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Social Alternatives

Social Alternatives is an independent, quarterly refereed journal which aims to promote public debate, commentary and dialogue about contemporary social, political, economic and environmental issues.

Social Alternatives analyses, critiques and reviews contemporary social issues and problems. The journal seeks to generate insight, knowledge and debate. Authors are encouraged to consider and reference papers previously published in Social Alternatives to promote ongoing discussion. Submissions should be double-spaced with page numbers on the bottom right. Academic articles should be approximately 3,000-5,000 words, commentaries and review essays between 800 to 1,500 words, book reviews 800 words, short stories 1,000 words and poetry up to 25 lines. Submissions must include:

- three - five keywords.
- abstract should be a maximum of 150 words
- title page listing contributing authors, contact details, affiliation and short bio of approximately 80 words
- copyright release form
- papers are subject to double blind peer review and should be emailed to the general article editor. Authors are encouraged to consider and reference papers previously published in Social Alternatives to promote ongoing discussion. Submissions should be double-spaced with page numbers on the bottom right. Academic articles should be approximately 3,000-5,000 words, commentaries and review essays between 800 to 1,500 words, book reviews 800 words, short stories 1,000 words and poetry up to 25 lines. Submissions must include:

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Higher education nationally and internationally is immersed in cultural change and fiscal challenge which is focused on competition and a ‘tyranny of excellence’ (Butler and Spoelstra 2015; Smith, 2015: 135). These demands on universities for greater social accountability have prompted a call for new kinds of universities – institutions which operate outside the ‘ivory tower’, and which are responsive to the challenges and needs of society (Barber, Donnelly and Rizvi 2013). These ‘new’ universities have been variously described by terms such as ‘open’, (Miller and Sabapathy 2011), ‘innovative’ (Christensen and Eyring 2011) and ‘public’ (Burraway 2011). Goddard’s (2009) concept of a ‘civic university’ also proposes that all publicly funded higher education institutions have a civic duty to engage with the wider society at local, national and international levels on issues of relevance. Goddard’s comments appear to support an era of university engagement which is tied to broader imperatives of relevance. Yet how is such relevance configured, and how does it shape the ‘third’, or entrepreneurial, mission of universities if recourse to research-led curricula or socially inspired scholarship is diminished? While inviting further deliberation, it is nevertheless clear that engagement is now core business of all universities.

This special issue of Social Alternatives asks how the contemporary university’s civic mission is constituted by highlighting the crucial roles of the Humanities and Arts in developing a picture of what civic duties universities may have. In this era of heightened engagement we called for critical-creative comment from an array of voices attuned to generating social and cultural change, ‘civic action’, from within current international paradigms. The papers outlined in this issue clearly illustrate both a struggle for change and a yearning for recognition of the complex of work being undertaken in these interrelated yet disparate fields. The papers also articulate passionate voices which ask how universities are to meet both internal and external challenges when expectations look clearly set at the limit of their potential. We refer here to such measures as university ranking and impact metrics. How should, for example, the civic or ‘third mission’ of university entrepreneurship be configured? Is it timely to inquire about the future of the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences whose deliberations, while distinct, are nevertheless collectively scrutinised, perhaps at times ignored?

Within Australia a number of challenges for academics combine to question what is constituted as being of value in university teaching and research, and what the criteria are for university engagement in civic life (Barcan 2013). University funding has been directed away from so-called ‘creative’ projects in the Humanities and Arts toward a focus on ‘innovation’ and measurable ‘impact’ (Lynch 2014) within the context of widespread governmental and public sector reform. Like many governments across the globe the Australian government is reviewing public sector service provision and implementing tax reform measures with a focus on returning the budget to surplus (ACOSS 2015). How do we, as academics, understand and respond to these challenges as public practitioners of learning and scholarship?

The development of this issue also came from discussions amongst ourselves as recently appointed academics to a regional university going through significant reorientation to its research agenda. The University of Southern Queensland has asserted a prioritised shift toward its core area of agriculture and the environment and emerging areas of regional systems, digital futures, computational mathematics and biomedical sciences (USQ 2013: 4). Notably, Humanities and Arts-based disciplines are absent in the priority document although the implicit suggestion is that these disciplines should contribute to identified priority areas.

In making explicit the centrality of qualitative and sensory understandings in social, cultural and institutional life, however, we begin this issue with Vicki Crowley and Lisa McDonald who draw attention to the complexities of the actual research climate and its contexts by foregrounding the ‘turn to affect’. With reference to the digital era, and the resulting proliferation of ‘data’, the paper explores if or how universities have been part of this significant turn. Crowley and McDonald argue that the contemporary university is ‘as much immersed in economics as it is in the bodies that inhabit its contexts’. Affect, emotion and the senses are therefore inherent in its operations. These writers refer to how universities have responded to ‘economic imperatives’ imposed by the Australian Research Council (ARC) and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) as exemplars. Universities are not immune to external shifts and the inclusion of the new ‘creative industries’ sees the combination of the...
imaginative and the pragmatic' as viable means of applied intellectualism.

This is followed by two papers focused on the challenges and realities of undertaking civic engagement within universities. Maura Adshead outlines how the current global financial crisis has impacted on funding for Irish universities and outlines the complex external and internal shifts that have occurred within the University of Limerick and provide much to compare with Australia. Adshead notes that academics are grappling with a tension between teaching, relevant research and civic service. The paper maps how the focus on ‘civic engagement has been seized by many Irish higher education institutions as a convenient response to a variety of national and international demands for change’. Within the University of Limerick Adshead outlines how civic engagement has shifted from being associated with volunteering and/or service learning to becoming embedded in three of the University’s strategic activities – Teaching, Research and Internationalisation. The fourth priority, community engagement, is seen by some as the ‘lost child’, and for others, this lack of direction sees academics undertake more ‘unorthodox and innovative community projects to develop, free from the increasing bureaucratic and administrative constraints that operate in other areas of university activity’. The paper outlines the UL Practicum as a possibility for ‘mindful engagement’ and a template for further development.

In asking the question, ‘What does it mean to engage from the perspective of the university?’ Andrew Hickey’s discussion centres on the ‘new university’ as less internally focused and more externally active and engaged in response to reformation pressures. Where universities were once sites for the generation and maintenance of knowledge, the contemporary university has experienced ‘an evolution from ivory tower exclusivity to “university entrepreneurialism”‘. But such change does not come without complication as universities enter an extended period of internal questioning about their social and institutional purpose and that of their academics. Through his own university engagement practice with local government Hickey notes that it is in the area of engagement that the question of value in universities can be opened. In particular, it is in the complexity of exchanges between universities and external partners that ‘economies of engagement’ occur which are a particular kind of ‘currency’ found in the operational ‘spillage’ of an engagement act.

From Malcolm Brown we learn that universities may be considered ‘social enterprises’ and should, as core to their mission, promote the success of the wider social enterprise sector. Brown defines a social enterprise as multifaceted, where ‘social, cultural or environmental’ criteria combine with a university’s economic trade imperative and identify it as an enterprise. He notes that, to fulfil a civic mission, universities as social enterprises must seek and sustain collaborative engagement with broader public and knowledge communities. Drawing on examples from Australian and UK universities, Brown argues that ‘enterprise’ need not be linked to for-profit outcomes but may borrow from their means of production to effect a ‘social return’ on investment. A social return may be, for example, the overcoming of poverty. Business objectives in the social enterprise university are therefore oriented toward an internally reciprocal model where any surplus generated is also returned.

Gerardine Neylon considers the implementation of Australia’s National Quality Standard in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). In 2008, a United Nations Children’s Fund report advocated the need for universal access to quality ECEC. Neylon details the processes of professionalisation in an emerging ECEC sector which now more closely resembles a teacher training model. This professionalisation involves increasing ECEC staff qualifications and the implementation of a national standard of quality. Of the educational and cultural shift toward greater pedagogical emphasis in the sector, Neylon notes a disparity exists between teacher recognition and remuneration, and childcare sector workers where the latter are nevertheless required to lead radical social and educational changes. Neylon discusses Australia’s Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and its centrality to emerging pedagogies in the field.

Patricia Inman’s paper is focused on developing regional food systems in the Midwestern US state of Illinois. The paper questions what is the role of universities in assisting and supporting sustainable economies? Inman establishes the disconnection between the environmental assets of the state (rich soil and plenty of water) and the low level of production of its own food despite the increased need for food security. Inman indicates how current ‘land grant institutions of higher education’ still reflect an emphasis on large scale industrial farming, while the education for smaller farming enterprises has not been a significant priority. The paper advocates for a more democratised system of farming, a shift, Inman argues, which has not been registered by university faculties traditionally concerned with agri-business. Inman argues that it is the Humanities and Arts which can make the most significant contribution to new regional food systems by creating a regional narrative and ‘finding those stories and telling them’.

In engaging an autoethnographic approach, Sukhmani Khorana exposes the lived detail of the at times irregular attempt to reform research production and curricula in the postcolonial university. The paper departs from the release of the Federal Government’s 2012 ‘Australia in the Asian Century’ white paper, walking us through the still problematic appearance of ethnocentrism and instrumentalism in higher education and the challenges these pose for the internationalisation of teaching and research. Referenced here is the work on ‘willfulness’
by Sara Ahmed (2014) that situates Khorana’s reflection on multiculturalism within activist parameters. In seeking dialogue with dissent, Khorana provokes the question of whether Australia’s ‘attempted engagement with Asia, and Australian universities’ all-round commitment to this goal, has room for such disobedience in that opening up to the ‘other’, without assimilation or alienation, can really only occur through an undoing of ethnocentrism’.

Dowling, Rose and O’Shea present the efforts of discussions between the engineering and humanities worlds on graduate attributes. The paper outlines how, within Australia, there is now the focused demand, from employers and accrediting bodies, for more defined ‘programme outcomes’ for tertiary education programmes. The recognition that ‘universities must support their graduates to foster collaborative applied and generic skills’ is posed with the focus on how the value of a humanities graduate can be further supported. The paper provides an overview on employability skills and graduate capabilities and how humanities graduates are currently perceived by potential employers as being unable to ‘sell themselves’. The paper outlines how one humanities discipline, Archaeology, has consulted with its stakeholders to support the development of a national set of graduate outcomes as a template but urges caution that reviewing programme curricula is a ‘complex task’.

Finally, Professor Ken Udas, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Services) and Chief Information Officer at the University of Southern Queensland offers an incisive commentary on what it means for a university to have a civic role. Whilst noting that universities are ‘conservative in our governance and methods, we are by definition progressive in spirit’, Udas provokes the questions, ‘What is a university, and what are its purposes?’. While a distinction is drawn between ‘the professoriate and the students as the university [and] what remains as the university-corporate’ in a manner not unlike the body-corporate’, Udas notes that it is via academic programming and outreach activities that a civic role emerges as public intellectualism. Udas stresses that this civic role should be radical and questioning of civic life, where a university is active in conveying institutional and scholarly values. Udas questions further, that if we remove ourselves from this civic role, will a more corporate identity flourish? The need to resist this shift is paramount as we constitute ‘the university’ to reassert and reflect upon our ‘civic role as a public intellectual’.

The papers within this edition inject into our own discussions a high level of engagement with timely and widely felt concerns. In their apparent ‘randomness’, they articulate with precision how the Humanities and Arts effect much needed interventions, without wild displays of self-conscious grandeur, in higher education teaching and research, often taking the lead in creatively intellectual civic partnerships. We hope this collection provides for its reader a volatile spark with which to reassert and reflect on their own contributions to learning, scholarship and engagement. As Lynch (2014: 13) argues ‘academics need to reinvigorate the vision of the university as a place for universal learning, for challenging received orthodoxies, and for promoting social justice and equality’.

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Affective Strategies in the Academy: Creative methodologies, civic responses and the market

VICKI CROWLEY AND LISA MCDONALD

Australian Universities face a ‘tough’ Federal government of sector deregulation and increased student fees following the Universities Australia policy, A Smarter Australia: an agenda for Australian higher education 2013-2016. New technology, globalisation, productivity driven innovation and scientific method are the contexts through which research outcomes, on tighter budgets, will be made. In this paper, we redraw attention to the complexity of research contexts, including media sites, industry and digital worlds. In particular, we foreground the ‘turn to affect’. Recent years have witnessed a complex revision of understandings about lived worlds by considering intangibles: affect, emotion and the senses. Universities have also included the performing arts and the digital arts and sciences. The turn to affect is, then, significant beyond discourse, and universities would be wise to encourage less tangible research strategies that impact and respond to the market and, indeed, allow the market responses to affect.

Introduction

We are becoming well-used to the academic phenomenon of ‘the turn’ in the humanities, arts and social sciences as we encounter global flows, economic and political shifts and the need to rethink and reconfigure our attention in changing times. The Internet and digital era, the ‘digital turn’ (Barker et al. 2012), has heightened attention to identity, space and place as it recalls the pre-digital cultural turn through the logics of representation (Olkowski 1999). The turn to place has included an intensification of, for instance, post-colonial analysis and has slowly created a much-needed opening for Queer Indigenous and First Nations knowledges (see Driskill et al. 2011), along with access to the scholarship and material lives of Asia, South America and Eastern Europe.

Likewise, our access to the experiences of others has been made immediate and proximal through the proliferation of digital devices such as smart phones and computer tablets, and the almost ubiquitous presence of applications such as Twitter, Pinterest, Google+ and Instagram. The massive reach and exponential growth of Facebook, Google, and Linked-in (eBizMBA Guide 2014) has also contributed to a sense of proximity with the academic efforts of elsewhere such that one’s own are now assessed within this reach, with social media, or ‘non-traditional’, outputs increasingly legitimised (Australian Research Council 2012: 8).

The seeming ubiquity of human connectivity in the digital era, despite the manifest global inequalities that exist beneath and within it, has placed the affective body centre stage in critical pursuits, but almost ironically, by way of the ‘hard’ manipulations of mathematical algorithms. In doing so, the complexities of what has been termed the ‘neurological body’ have been emphasised through new capacities for reinvention and transformation alongside these machinic imperatives (Wilson 2004). This contested critical arena (Leys 2011) has been achieved through broadened access to digital publication, representative practices, and lately, social media engagements with the emergence of phenomena such as crowd-funding, ‘selfies’ and ‘photo-bombing’ exposing the wider paradigm of new media affect (Boyd 2014; Clough 2010).

Along with this heightened visuality, and thus also the physicality of the body (Mirzoeff 2006, 2011), there has been a turn to elements of representation through the senses, increasingly through attention to sound, and most palpably in the rise of attention to music (Frith et al. 2005). Perhaps less intently, an interest in the interrogation, presence and absence of sound is also evolving (Voegelin 2013). Much of these developments have occurred by way of the ‘turn to affect’ and its material and embodied relations (Massumi 2002a; see also Sedgwick and Frank 1995).

In what follows we aim to briefly comment on some of the ways in which the academy has, or has not, been a part of the ‘turn to affect’ in relation to research, civic responses and the market. The paper selectively maps particular terrain and posits some very general and loose questions while remaining curious and hopeful about the role of the university and its turn towards or away from affect.
Affective strategies

Thinking through a notion of affect understands the body as more than a subject of representation and has increased attention to the experiences of the body as immersive; both moving and feeling, yet also surprising and unforeseen. Thus the body in the digital era inspires considerations of bodily affect that interrupt the frequent conflation of affect with emotion (Probyn 2005), even though this is not altogether resolved. The political philosopher and social theorist Brian Massumi (2002a), for instance, has tended a theory of affect which cogently argues that affect (if it is intensity) and emotion are not synonymous and that we must account for bodily intensities and resonances, and for the body's 'unfolding relation to its own non-present potential to vary' (2002a: 4). The body can, however, be thought as and through affect, as process and potential – an event (Massumi 2002a: 5). The body therefore creates consideration beyond the discursive and cannot be reduced to the sum of ideological or linguistic imperatives. For Massumi (2002a), affect is neither stasis nor the psychological, that is, it is neither stable nor a schism attendant to change.

According to Gregg and Siegworth (2010: 1), bodily affect is about 'in-between-ness ... vital forces insisting beyond emotion', a body resisting intractability and all the while caught in its moment – moment by moment – a body's simultaneous affects and affected-ness (2010: 3). Commenting on the ubiquity of affect, Shouse (2005) writes that, 'it is important to take note that the power of many forms of media lies not so much in their ideological effects, but in their ability to create affective resonances independent of content or meaning'. In more recent times, critiques, such as those by Ruth Leys (2011), have acknowledged the salience and power of affect and the inseparability of emotion and affect. Not unlike Leys, Wetherell (2014) takes up the question of the relationship between affect theorisation and its relationship between the sciences, social science and social psychology. Affect, then, as part of a larger cybernetic fold (Sedgwick and Frank 1995), has disturbed disciplines in a major way and amounted, evidentially, to 'the turn to affect' (Clough 2007).

From these perspectives and for the purposes of this article, we take the turn to affect as being attuned to 'openness, emergence and creativity' (Clough 2010: 224), as thinking mind and body, as uncontainability, possibility and stasis, the ineffable and the material, event and things, matter and aesthetics across economy and economies of desire amid the strangle-hold of capitalism and its global flows in the digital era. This broad apprehension of the turn to affect calls us to reflect on the trends we observe in our respective spheres of academic and cultural engagement, and on the thematisation of affect in the academy, the corporate-civic, creative methodologies, bodily capacity and ethics, that we open here for discussion and debate.

Affect and the academy

While the turn to affect is now some ten to fifteen years in existence, it has occurred alongside the growth within universities of the creative industries, performing and visual arts and all that new digital media have generated (Banks et al. 2014). What has kept company, and been embedded in this, is a shift in the ways in which research is conducted. Indeed, there has been a burgeoning of new methodologies and methods, such as a/r/tography, culturomics, multi-site and cyber ethnography, webmetrics, source distance and cross-spherical analysis (Irwin and Springgay 2008; Markham and Baym 2009; Michel et al. 2011; Rogers 2013). These stem from the sometimes fragile affiliations between bodies and machines, and the greater complex of affects which underpins them (Paterson 2007).

It can therefore be said that what the digital era and its subsequent and emerging analyses hinge on is a relation, perhaps more precisely a reverberation, between material, interior and powerfully evocative worlds that also show how inseparably 'the academy' is aligned with affective economies. Such economies have elsewhere been termed 'economies of attachment' that show how subjectivities can be approached indirectly so as to better inspect the very intimate detail of bodily consumption (Probyn 2012). Perhaps always-economic, but certainly within the disparate affiliations of the arts, humanities and social sciences, the human subject in all its complexity remains integral to a digital era, whether implied, intentional or viscerally present, be it singular or collective.

So, today, the academy does not operate outside of interrelated and affective economies which exemplify national and international politics and trends as they attend to the machinations of larger educational folds. The academy is as much immersed in economics as it is in the bodies that inhabit its contexts, core business, national responsiveness and international reach and give that reach shape on a human scale (Stromquist 2007). At times this immersion has had dramatic impact on its varying operations through directly reduced funding and the range of constrictions placed on major funding bodies, such as the Australian Research Council (ARC) and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). The choices that institutions must make have situated the postmodern academy as responsive to economic imperatives (Hayes and Wynyard 2006) and such responses equally draw out the ever more complex entanglements with bodily affect.

Corporate-civic

Returning to Leys (2011), bodily affect is not separable from emotion, which, rather than being tied to what induces, manipulates or is thought subliminal about affect, puts the focus on the interplay between the potentials and strictures of research practice, on the
resonance, perhaps, of what constitutes research and of how research is enabled. Such a shift in focus can be said to disturb what may once have been seen as the struggle for hegemony (Kellner 1995) to what may be more fully elaborated in a new battle for resonance.

To suggest some recent examples, business and financial markets are not unmindful of industry trends and community affect. The Fraser Institute (2012a) (a conservative and right-libertarian Canadian think tank) has had, for instance, an extensive, thoughtful and careful discussion about the shift in the mining industry away from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to SLO – the Social License to Operate (Fraser Institute 2012c). The content and references clearly demonstrate a thorough engagement with global issues and response to community concerns and pressure – issues beyond political science and environmental impact – issues which take into account connections with land and histories of embeddedness that reside within those connections. The Fraser Institute’s Mining Facts note, for example, ‘that mining companies need not only government permission [or permits] but also “social permission” to conduct their business’ (Fraser Institute 2012b).

Similarly, The Equator Principles Association, which is a risk management framework seeking to assess and manage the social and environmental risks in projects and suggest a minimum of standards in ‘risk decision-making’, notes that their service gives critical attention to ‘social/community standards and responsibility, including robust standards for indigenous peoples, labour standards, and consultation with locally affected communities within the Project Finance market’ (Equator Principles Association 2011). The Association includes membership of Australia’s ‘Big Four’ banks and the export credit agency Export Finance and Insurance Corporation (Equator Principles Association 2011).

While without doubt the core business of these organisations is the generation of capital and further investment they also demonstrate the presence of affect and the interface of rigorous research that is impacted by affect. The shift in nomenclature outlines a practice of engagement that includes public affect – it recognises that ‘interests’ are not simply a base struggle over land tenure, but that land is experienced in deeply affective ways. The mining world of hard economy and industry also includes content and references that clearly demonstrate a very thorough engagement with global issues and responses to community concerns and pressure. In sum, it demonstrates the interface of rigorous research that is impacted by affect.

Notwithstanding, then, the scholarly, cultural and political debates surrounding supremacy in the academy, we can begin to see that affect has resonance and connections with ‘the outside’, with civil society, and that there are responses that may well be considered within the realms of the impact of affect. This impact may indicate an expanded empirical field, which should, in turn, suggest to universities the importance of research that affords methodologies that can creatively travel the road between theory and practice. This road between theory and practice, we suggest, is methodological.

Creative methodologies

The past decade or so has seen universities expand their teaching and research domain to include the performing arts and creative and digital industries past the provision of customary learning programmes. This expansion has criss-crossed the turn to affect and occurred beyond the traditional forms of academies, fine arts and conservatoria. This growth of evident embodiment has been fraught with disputation stretching from base-line argument over what constitutes research (see Candlin 2000; Woods 2007), idiosyncrasy (Brabazon 2010) and spirited debates, for instance, about the critical distinction between practice-based and practice-led research (Candy 2006; Dally et al. 2004). Traditional methods and methodologies neither fit the new arenas of research nor account for what Michael Taussig (2011: ix) refers to as ‘the blending of the inner and outer worlds, a practice that is not about the inert or making inert, but rather the alive’, and what Borg and Boyd-Davis (2012: 14) term as the ‘important interplay between external representation and internal conceptualization’.

While many of the ‘new’ fields have striven to achieve academic recognition by adapting traditional research methods, playing with its edges and potentials (Leavy 2009), it is the processes of affect that arguably demonstrate an energised and innovative cultural politics of affect. Artists, poets, film-makers, animators, light technicians, sound technicians and sound artists are working affect to affirm experimental lines of in-between-ness, the navigation of movement through an apparent grappling with the feel and unknowing-knowingness of the pressing vastness of our 24/7 worlds.

What we believe is signalled here can be described as the active pursuit of the imaginative and the pragmatic, and which, in turn, leads us to propose four planes of affective activity:

1. The material – the making of the artefact and the comment-making analysis of practice and approach;

2. The embodied – the affective receptor and generator;

3. The digital – whether it be the recording of the process, the actual digitisation or the digital as product/output/creative artefact, or conduit of the ‘tweet’, Instagram re-mix, social media post – the determination to be seen, heard and felt;
4. The economies and technologies of affect that constrain and incite spillover and immanence. Here, we recognise the unevenness of proximal struggle and note that adaptive practices are evidence of the interior-exterior nexus.

These planes of activity evidence the irrepressibility and spill of affect, creative desire and resistance. Yet they remain grounded in the materiality of everyday life and the cultural and economic politics of the digital turn. Wikileaks, the Golden Shield Project, The Committee to Protect Journalists and Pussy Riot provide examples of political containment inciting greater inventiveness and resourcefulness. Crowdfunding provides another example of innovative response to raising capital in climates of diminishing government support, resistance to large-scale corporate business models and visions, while insisting on autonomy in creative expression and participatory innovation. Here, we note too, that some universities in Australia have moved to include crowdfunding in their band of income source and research funding. This is both evidence of responsiveness to new cultural formations of affect and a smart response to economic strictures and pressures to move all academics towards individual fiscal viability.

Such examples illustrate global flows and connections that cannot be simply reduced to emotions or ideology. Significantly, in terms of creative methodologies and emerging research paradigms, they are adaptive practices and methodologies-in-the-flesh. Smart universities need to embrace the lines and flows of affect rather than eschew, over-administrate or subject them to excessive risk-management (Albrecht-Crane and Slack 2007). Deleuze and Parnet (1983: 79) suggest that, ‘the abstract overcoding machine assures homogenization of different segments … ’ yet multiplicities, unevenness and the seepage of affect continue to appear (see also Hickey-Moody and Malins 2007).

Affective capacities

Mobilising this unevenness is the methodology of touch through the popularisation of a digital input device commonly known as the touch screen. If there is an exemplar of the four planes mentioned above it is arguably found in this most ubiquitous of technologies. Inspiring an unprecedented expectation of technological mobility (McDonald 2014), and situating the body as its interface, the touch screen offers evidence of the material (artefact and comment), the embodied (actual receptor and generator), the digital (the complex of machinic/organic processes) and the economies and technologies of bodily affect (unevenness of attachment and adaptation) identified above. Through this kind of mobility, it has been said that research practice is challenged by a new world of ‘research subjects’ who are disinclined to sit still, (re)presenting themselves through, alongside, and from within heterogeneous mobile ‘data’ (Hine 2000).

Perhaps more importantly, we suggest these new touch technologies present further entanglements with methodological processes that require revision of the ways we approach ‘thinking and figuring the materialities of the intimate’ (Probyn 2012: 60). It is a notion of the intimate which can be said to be at the heart, if you like, of recent understandings of the technological subject, and which almost wholly informs how affects are produced in, with and through us as ‘end users’. Here, understandings of the intimate appear through dielectric relations in, with and of the body – its capacity to generate, store and release electrical energy.

‘Capacitance’ is the umbrella term from physics which describes the ability to store electrical charges, and because that ability has been refined to almost ‘pinpoint accuracy’ in new portable devices, the now pervasive smart phone and computer tablet have situated our bodies in the centre of their functionality. In short, ‘capacitive sensing’ utilises the capacity of the human body to both store and alter energy within a given field by a simple trace of one’s finger (see Hobbs 2014; Elert 1998). Capacitive ‘touch’, then, is its own performative (Bell 1999) as it traverses both constraint and spillover. While the question remains open in this paper, is it time to more intently ask how such a complex of relations can be mobilised without recourse to a separable logic between ‘body and machine’ at the always-already oversimplified level of ‘pure discourse’ (Gilbert 2004)?

Ethics

The four planes outlined above provide a framework for considering affective strategies, practices and evidence of affect. It would, however, be naive, perhaps simply wrong, to imply that affective strategies have only transpired in the humanities, arts and social sciences. As we have seen with the Fraser Institute and organisations such as The Equator Principles Association, industry, capital and the hard sciences are never outside of the political-economic nexus and this is never outside of affect. While at times the ‘turn to affect’ may be self-seeking and instrumental, it would be disingenuous to simply assume this is rhetoric. It is more important that we take evidence of affect as a move towards mutuality, a clear signal that there is space for participation and that this is material – happening on the ground in real as well as virtual space, as well as in our bodies – ‘emergence and convergence’ (Jones 2013: 31).

Here, we want to juxtapose the emergence of profoundly hybrid methodologies that are deeply embedded in affect, an insistence of embodied response and a refusal of distance – proximity and becoming, what might be, what matters. In effect, we have the layering of pragmatics, events as emergences and inclinations that have attachment and fidelity to that which is experienced as imminent – not yet, but nonetheless, present – an admixture of the aesthetic and the ethical. The aesthetic
is the determination to attempt to include rather than deny or elide, and the ethical resides in the fidelity to the more-than-can-be-named or nailed down. As noted above, the digital era has given rightful presence to the often obscured or ignored, and certainly to the notion of bodily affect beyond logic yet despite constraint.

Concluding possibilities

The turn to affect spills in contradictory and intertwined directions. It takes place within universities as they contend with shifting geopolitics that are global, local, idiosyncratic, deeply and superficially historical as well as multifarious. In this brief excursion into elements that impinge on and command research within universities, we suggest that what matters is not so much the specificity of what is being done. Rather, what matters is what happens when, through instrumentalist response, we attempt to erase viscerality and the necessary constitution of the mundane. On the one hand, a turn to affect would suggest that the active and reactive are synergetic or reciprocal, and that instrumentalism will almost of necessity effect action and reaction. Just how this will play out in the current climate is well beyond the scope of this paper, yet we can be sure that, as technologies and economies will adopt, co-opt and adapt, on the other somewhat more developed hand, creativity, inventiveness and experimentation will continue to emerge in the social, cultural and educative spheres.

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Leave Me Alone

i don’t care much about things
smaller than myself
or want much either

just real food from real soil
fruit & veg, lentils & rice
toast & honey, coffee & nuts

ok, warm sun & hot showers, too
a comfortable bed, a couple of people
& music

maybe dry white wine & a banana lounge
where i can read endlessly
the good bad poetry

i also like to write

Matt Hetherington,
Brisbane, QLD

Now we are 10

The equation is “10.”
I am single and free.
And he is not more.

His presence was a burden.
A life that I passed in a den,
Our marriage was an incident;
No, an accident that occurred
As a life imprisonment
I was sentenced to.

I lived those years
As if I were dying
Day after day-
Month after month-
Year after year
But now I have won the war finally.
One is to zero,
Yes “10” is my score.

I will rejoice.
I will sing.
As I were born again;
I am free today.

Amitabh Vikram Dwivedi,
Jammu & Kashmir, India
Engaged Scholarship at the University of Limerick: One response to the ‘civic shift’ in Irish higher education

MAURA ADSHEAD

The contemporary university agenda has shifted. Where there was once a desire to educate and generate research, these objectives have now become much more complex. Universities must attend to a variety of pedagogies and learning approaches. Research must now satisfy stakeholders, policy makers and taxpayers with plans for ‘knowledge transfer’ and impact studies. Increasing demands to demonstrate ‘value for money’ are accompanied by decreasing public investment and funding. This article looks at one Irish university’s attempt to respond to manage this shift in ways that preserve the central mission of the university whilst integrating new demands for a ‘civic shift’.

Introduction

The metaphor of the university as an ivory tower, where researchers fail to engage with ‘real world’ problems, is a cliché. Academics have in fact been attempting to work with their constituencies of interest in collaborative contexts for quite some time (Watson 2008: 43-8; see also: Lewin 1946; Corey 1953; Carr and Kremmis 1986; Stringer 1996; Nolen and Putten 2007). What is now different to earlier attempts is the way this research is being shaped by other broader educational contexts and principles. Internationally, key drivers for change, such as global competition, demands for internationalisation and bench-marking of teaching and research are pushing new ways of thinking about the traditional approaches to the work academics do. Nationally, the financial constraints within which higher education operates are fuelling demands for good use of public money and accountability in performance.

In Ireland, these trends are further amplified by economic recession and the state’s fiscal crisis. Higher education – something of a soft target for funding cuts already – has been squarely charged to demonstrate its value for money. It is in this context that ‘civic engagement’ has been seized by many Irish higher education institutions (HEI) as a convenient response to a variety of national and international demands for change.

Nationally, the Hunt Report was the first major Irish policy statement to give civic engagement equal prominence with the teaching/learning and research functions of higher education (Munck and Mcllrath 2011). According to this strategy:

Engagement with the wider community must become more firmly embedded in the mission of higher education institutions. Higher education institutions need to become more firmly embedded in the social and economic contexts of the communities they live in and serve (National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030) (2011).

At the European level, the EU Commission (CEC 2006: 8) refers to the need for universities to ‘communicate the relevance of their activities, particularly those related to research, by sharing knowledge with society and by reinforcing dialogue with all stakeholders’. Similarly, the Council of Europe’s Higher Education Forum (COE 2008) argues for a practical vision whereby higher education can promote citizenship and democracy through its research and teaching, and through student experience and community engagement. The OECD correlates the importance of education and an increase in civic engagement, and argues that educational institutions have an important role to play in fostering civic-minded citizens, which in turn contributes to challenging the democratic deficit (Lauglo and Øia 2007).

In practice, however, the experience of many academics points less to great synergistic experiences between quality teaching, relevant research and civic service, and more towards significant tensions between competing elements of work that require a good deal of time, preparation and practice to achieve successfully.

In order to examine how civic engagement might offer a means to reconcile the competing contemporary demands placed on HEI, this paper focuses on the experience of one university in Ireland. The University of Limerick (UL) is a mid-ranking provincial university in the southwest of Ireland, comprising a recently established
Graduate Entry Medical School, four faculties (Science and Engineering, Educational and Health Sciences, Business, plus Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences) with some twelve thousand students. The four institutional imperatives outlined by the University of Limerick as core values and strategic goals reflect those demands placed on HEI everywhere: to provide teaching; to develop research; to internationalise; and to engage with local communities. As such it is reasonable to suggest it is an organisation reflecting many of the contemporary concerns of HEIs elsewhere.

Civic Engagement and the University Mission in Limerick

For some time at the University of Limerick, as elsewhere, civic engagement was assumed to be an activity primarily concerned with student volunteering and/or service learning. In terms of research, the civic dimension typically comprised post-hoc rationale to outline either the research benefits, or the research impact. Community-oriented research (comprising action research, participatory research and emancipatory research methodologies) was considered the preserve of a few social scientists and enthusiasts. More recently the university’s own examination of the strategic priorities for teaching, research, internationalisation and engagement revealed recognition of the role civic engagement could play in each of the university’s strategic ambitions. This has evolved into an explicit recognition of the ‘value-added’ that mindful community-oriented research can bring to the institution’s other ambitions (Limerick University 2012).

The Student Experience

UL’s strategic plan (2011-2015) commits to providing ‘an outstanding and distinctive experience for all students, combining a commitment to having a strong and substantial impact on the communities with whom the university engages’. From this perspective, innovative, civically engaged pedagogy is consistent with these goals and is reflected in the university’s recent adoption of a formal ‘UL Graduate Attributes’ statement (available at http://www2.ul.ie/pdf/982103103.pdf) and ‘Engaged Learning’ Strategy (available at http://www.ul.ie/presoff/strategic-publications). Both are also intended to articulate the institution’s educational priorities and to acknowledge the important emphasis in UL education in ensuring students learn to be responsible in their communities.

This ‘civic orientation’ is exemplified by the institution’s founding mission – ‘excellence and relevance’ – designed to reflect a keen attention to the needs of the region and locale. More recently, the establishment of a new Graduate School of Medicine and associated health therapies has provided a further opportunity for the university’s approach to civic engagement. Contemporary technological healthcare and cultural shifts have presented a radical challenge to the traditional views of universities as secure repositories of knowledge. There is a demand for healthcare practitioners with new skills and competencies that can be met only if students have learning experiences outside hospital and classroom settings. Many students appreciate being involved in community-based projects that give them real-world experiences and allow them to integrate theory with practice. Through these experiences, students gain invaluable insight into community needs and resources as they move outside traditional health care settings. According to the UL Task Force on Civic Engagement: ‘[·] students from the school of medicine and many of our therapeutic and nursing students need communities to learn: our students require community experience to be the best that they can be’ (UL Task Force on Civic Engagement 2012: 10).

From this, it is possible to see the evolution of an organisational culture in UL that sees civic engagement as a two-way street, where mindful engagement is as necessary for the university to achieve its teaching ambitions as it is desirable for local communities to avail of its knowledge resources. It is this notion of civic engagement that positions the university’s praxis some way further on from more traditional service learning approaches that have been criticised for their lack of attention to asymmetric power relations between ‘the academy’ and ‘the demos’.

Research

The second strategic goal of the university attempts to build on the institution’s existing strengths in applied research by fostering ‘interactions between researchers, industry and professional practice’ and by collaborating strategically in joint ventures ‘that enhance our contribution to economic and social development and provide incentives for convergent research initiatives’ (University of Limerick 2011: 7). In this context, convergence ‘refers to the synergistic combination of different disciplines through which fertile new fields of knowledge emerge’ (University of Limerick 2011: 7, 33). Thus, in addition to the usual exhortations to publish, academics in UL are actively encouraged and incentivised (via the terms and conditions for institutional seed funding and research support) to develop inter-disciplinary research clusters.

Ironically, the parallels between institutional imperatives to do more community-oriented research and those to do more inter-disciplinary collaborative research are strong. For academics used to working in their own disciplinary area, using highly specialist technical languages and systems of inquiry, working with other academics from other disciplines may often present the same steep learning curve that engagement with local communities
In UL, attempts to bring together inter-disciplinary teams have typically focused on thematic and applied research with external communities. Over time, experience has shown that cross-disciplinary collaborations are most sustainable when organically developed in response to community-oriented projects that provide a common focus and purpose. Perceived advantages of collaborative work must outweigh the routine disincentives described above. It is in this context that the development of community-oriented research has gained an additional strategic dimension in UL, which goes beyond corporate social responsibility and the fostering of good community relations. On the one hand, much of the research carried out in UL benefits from working with participants from the local community. The respectful nurturing of good relationships between researchers and participants (and the communities from which they come) means local people become active and willing collaborators in research. These relatively small-scale community-oriented projects are significant opportunities to incubate new research teams and to test potential research collaborations. In short, fostering mindful engagement is a practice that is as good for internal faculty collaborators as it is for external community collaborators in developing effective research partnerships.

Internationalisation

In terms of its international focus, UL can easily claim to be the most engaged university in Ireland. Thirty-four percent of all UL undergraduates spend at least one semester overseas. No other Irish university comes close to this proportion. Thirteen per cent of UL undergraduates participate in the Erasmus exchange programme, compared to a four percent average across the rest of Europe. Despite significant internationalisation, the international market is changing. To maintain and potentially increase this competitive edge, the university needs to respond to changing demands from overseas students. Fifty-two percent of US students surveyed would like to study abroad for shorter periods than are currently offered and to take up volunteering and/or service-learning civic engagement opportunities. This requires the university to offer both credited curricular civic engagement activities and non-credited student volunteering opportunities.

The university’s Task Force on Civic Engagement noted that institutional support for student civic engagement is uneven. The President’s Volunteer Award (PVA) programme is supported by the UL Community Liaison Officer, but the Community Liaison Officer is not institutionally linked or connected to other engagement activities, missing opportunities to leverage PVA networks into other university civic engagement activities. Other community-oriented research projects received no formal institutional support at all – existing only as long as faculty were willing to engage in collaborative community research. The Task Force on Civic Engagement concluded that ‘without formal university recognition or support: this is not sustainable’ (UL Task Force on Civic Engagement 2012: 11).

In UL, the potential to develop an international focus through the development of civic engagement is very real. This fits with the Irish Higher Education Authority’s ambition to position ‘Ireland Inc’ as a niche market for higher education, developing its potential as a ‘one stop’ student destination, where international students can gain qualifications and/or educational credits, access to Europe and easy travel, plus civic engagement experience as part of their degrees (HEA 2011).

Civic Engagement and Community-Oriented Research in UL

The fourth UL strategic goal proposes that ‘a strong and enduring sense of connection to our communities is a defining feature of the University of Limerick’ (UL Strategic Plan 2011: 41). Within the institution, there are quite different perspectives on what kind of institutional support is required for civic engagement to flourish. For some, this strategic ambition is ‘the lost child’, lacking a clear institutional home or set of supports. For others, it is precisely this institutional ambiguity that has enabled more unorthodox and innovative community projects to develop, free from the increasing bureaucratic and administrative constraints that operate in other areas of university activity. In attempting to locate the dominant approach of the University of Limerick towards community-oriented research, it is useful to place it in comparative perspective.

According to Stoecker’s (2001: 4-9) empirical review of community-oriented research practice across the United States, there is a variety of identifiable variations for community-based research. These have been used as the basis to construct a simple typology of institutional models for community based research in the table below.
In the University of Limerick, it is possible to identify the first three of these occurring coincidentally. Different and various university staff and students were engaged in all forms of civic engagement activity (Hart, Northmore and Gerhardt 2010), however this was not uniformly recorded or evaluated, and more often than not, it is unacknowledged. The Task Force presented a variety of recommendations to add institutional and organisational coherence to these activities including support for one community-oriented research initiative designed to address the community, research and pedagogic priorities of the institution. This initiative was called the UL Practicum.

UL Practicum – An Institutional Template for Mindful Engagement?

The UL Practicum enables students to engage in faculty-designed bespoke research projects and civic engagement in collaboration with external community partners. Drawing upon the practical experiences gained in the community projects engaged in by staff at the Department of Politics and Public Administration and other like-minded initiatives in other departments and faculties, the UL Practicum is conceived as a mechanism by which staff and students across all of the university (i.e. in cross-disciplinary teams and projects) may engage with practical problems, build the core values of the institution, communicate the relevance of university research, and transform learning. It is a clear attempt by the University of Limerick to achieve a synthesis to a range of institutional imperatives within one integrated programme. Within this context, the UL Practicum operates on the premise that best practice community-oriented research provides an opportunity for mindful civic engagement to support and integrate other institutional ambitions. But what does ‘best practice community oriented research’ look like in UL?

Programme content

The programme comprises three key parts, which must be completed by academics, community partners and students together in order to frame the project as a collaborative and collective project between equally valued and alternatively skilled partners. This is important as a means of framing the projects as egalitarian, and growing an organisational research culture viewing community collaboration as a normal modus operandi. It is a means to gradually effect a change of attitudes towards community-oriented research within the institution. The first part is preparatory and taken prior to the on-site project component; the second addresses project placement and associated practical and academic work; and third, a mandatory ex-post evaluation of the project by all partners. The intention is to inculcate, from the start, a ‘corps d’ésprit’ that is collaborative and cooperative, to foster autonomy and responsibility, to set realistic expectations for project outputs and outcomes, and to negotiate the ways that outputs will be disseminated in academic and non-academic forums.

In the first part, the programme provides introductory sessions on emancipatory and community-oriented research principles and practice, and training for team-building and collaborative work, project planning and project management. These generic supports are supplemented with individual resource packs, targeted specifically to different kinds of team members. Packs for students include: necessary introductions to the course topics and academic resources, the nature of their service, as well as relevant information on the social, cultural, and historical realities of the host community (provided by the project’s academic). Packs for academics (provided by the UL Practicum in conjunction with the University’s Centre for Teaching and Learning) provide a range of pedagogical, practical and technical advice about how to set up alternative learning platforms and opportunities for student discussions, co-learning and reflection, as well as information and advice about providing formative and summative feedback. The packs for community partners give a clear, jargon-free account of how the programme works, how it is managed, what kinds of outputs might be realistic, what kinds of knowledge transfer possibilities the university is able to support, plus details and contacts for all relevant university staff.
The second part comprises the service placement, and is carried out under the direction of the responsible academic for the project. This enables the Practicum project to be supplemented by disciplinary-specific learning and resourcing through regular reading, group discussions and guided reflection. This component of the Practicum takes place over the course of two to eight weeks. Finally, the third part provides an opportunity for ex-post evaluation of the project outputs and the project process, designed to aid project participants to further reflect on their experiences and to critically assess the results of their efforts. As with the initial preparatory sessions, these final evaluative sessions are compulsory for all and are seen as crucial to fostering a genuinely reflexive approach to community-oriented research, as well as providing a means to respond to any issues that arise in the projects from any or all partner perspectives.

Encouraging Best Practice Community-Oriented Research

One of the key elements of this programme is that it is intended to set up an organisational infrastructure that supports mindful community-oriented research as well as inter-disciplinary collaborative research. It has already been suggested that both the collaborative and partnership dimensions to these endeavours entail more than just doing research. This programme structure is intended to lower the transaction costs to this kind of work, providing practical and technical support for collaborative research as well as some limited central administrative support. As with other areas of academic culture (like teaching quality and curriculum development), the key is to incentivise good practice. Practicum activities are centrally administered, registered and recorded, enabling staff to demonstrate their involvement in best-practice community-oriented research. The structure and supports provided by the programme present an institutional mechanism to encourage staff to engage in community research; to carry it out in a collaborative, consultative fashion; to be mindful of all stakeholders’ perspectives; to routinely carry out project evaluation; and to complete the project with appropriate knowledge transfer, feedback, dissemination and publishing opportunities pursued.

Encouraging Innovative Teaching and Learning

The inclusion of students in Practicum projects means there is a strong service-learning element to this programme. By incorporating the principles and practice of contemporary community-oriented research, the intention is to redress some of the key criticisms of service learning. These include an orientation to charity rather than social justice and that it often serves to reinforce social stigma by working within established professional and behavioural norms, rather than challenging them. In this respect, the placing of this programme within a dedicated (albeit small) civic engagement unit in the university underscores the intended cultural shift: that notwithstanding its capacity for innovative teaching and learning, this programme must also be judged according to other frames of reference, regarding best practice community-oriented research, effective collaboration, and appropriate knowledge transfer and feedback activities.

In this context the programme may be seen to contribute to teaching and learning much more broadly. In this respect, the programme architecture is designed to foster new learning between distinct disciplinary communities as much as it is between ‘external’ communities and ‘the university’. There are two dimensions where the cross-disciplinarity works to foster new learning between the ‘hard’ and social sciences.

It is more or less common that hard sciences are more inclined to team research than is typical for scholars in social sciences and humanities, where research is more usually a more individualised activity. Introducing this kind of team approach to students in humanities and social sciences enables them to develop those skills more typically or easily learned in sciences such as applied research, team work, collaboration, theory testing, evidence gathering and so on.

The learning is two-way. Science students, though typically more familiar with team work and applied research work, less typically have contact with the social realm or communities where their work will ultimately be used. Introducing this kind of team approach to science students enables them to develop a more nuanced understanding of the community contexts in which they work. This includes communication with non-experts. Communities may become active participants in applied research. For medics and health therapists, many of whom already recognise the significance and importance of community engagement in their teaching and learning, this programme presents opportunities for cross-disciplinary collaboration that might not otherwise exist.

The programme presents an additional means to offer a learning context. It provides a forum for those elusive ‘transferable skills’ so often referred to in curriculum development, but not so easily implemented in more traditional classrooms. Problem definition, problem solving, communication, and team-work are sometimes more easy to develop with a ‘real’ project – where the stakes genuinely are higher – than with an imaginary one. Of course, this need not be the case, but this programme provides a supported alternative for teachers who wish to try out a different pedagogic approach, with the assured security of some institutional support.
Managing the Programme

The Practicum Programme is managed and administratively supported by one central university Practicum Advisory Board, operating in much the same way that other cross-disciplinary course board teams work. The Board comprises staff representatives from all university faculties, and those units with an external remit (the international office, educational placement unit, access office) plus representatives from the students’ union and local communities. The Board is responsible for academic accreditation and associated programme monitoring and evaluation; for maintaining the central administrative resource (about real and potential Practicum projects, partners and supports, project evaluations); as well as publicity about practicum projects, project profiles, publications and other knowledge transfer and dissemination opportunities.

Before offering a Practicum project as part of any university programme, it must be approved by the relevant university course board, who ensure that the project has relevant, identifiable and appropriate learning outcomes for students. In addition to this, the Practicum Advisory Board also ensures that the project has relevant, identifiable and appropriate outputs for community partners, as well as a research dissemination and knowledge transfer plan that includes, wherever possible, mainstream academic outputs in the form of refereed articles or published work. Generic Practicum supports are provided centrally. Specific disciplinary supports are provided by participating academic staff. Responsibility for Practicum projects resides with the responsible academic staff in individual Practicum project teams.

Conclusions

Although it may be argued that universities have always incorporated a civic mission or dimension in their establishment (Watson 2008), since the 1980s especially there has been a growing tendency to articulate this dimension in terms of ‘civic engagement’ (Maurrasse, 2001; Ostrander 2004) and in ways that significantly impact on university research activity.

According to the OECD (2005: 2) the contemporary university agenda ‘has moved from a desire to simply increase the general education of the population and the output of scientific research; there is now a greater concern to harness university education and research to specific economic and social objectives’. The growth, recognition and relatively swift mainstreaming of ‘service learning’ as a core university activity (Lounsbury and Pollack 2001), attests to this shifting orientation in university teaching; but the impact upon university research activity has been equally significant. Arguably, a clear consensus about how civic engagement relates to core research activity in universities has been slower to emerge. It was not until autumn 2005 that a national coalition of college and university presidents in the United States began to clearly articulate the relationships between university research activity and civic engagement (Gibson 2006). The report identified three dimensions of engaged research – concerning research purpose, research process, and research products – each of which, it argued, offered an arena for developing conceptual clarity and assessment criteria. The case study presented here is one response to that call. A more substantive evaluation of the Practicum Programme as it is ‘road-tested’ in different research projects will enable us to assess the utility of this response.

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**Gestures**

thank you for the ribbon
now tied around
our dwarf lemon tree
looking up from a pot
to the future scalding sun
from a wicking bed
brim with stones and water
and soil

I send you this unfolded paper
with a trace of words
and a courtyard garden

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**Owen Bullock, Downer, ACT**

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**Frankie & the Monuments**

Teenage pain &
plenty of pills.
Every part is yours
not working properly.
Team Uncertainty
hopes for colour in the jerseys, hugs at half time
that blessed wafer you’re okay.

You know you’ll envy your 20s
in those dreary decades to come
but in it, seems mostly like a drag.
Time to start worrying
when you have to decide
whether to wash or shave the bed linen.
You talk about love.

Didn’t invite yourself to your 30th birthday. Everyone
wants a slice you’re Pizza-Jesus
feeding multitudes hung
out to dry. There is a beat but no music.
Respectable as a stiff wool,
despite unguents & soaking continuously
that stiffness becomes a callous.

The Roaring Forties whisper past, who can remember?
50 saw you fitter than ever
& falling apart.
60s it’s your lungs and heart -
decades are small things, the
timorous hopes brace the knees
then you say please.

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**Les Wicks, Mortdale, NSW**
The Economies of Engagement: The nature of university engagement in the corporate university

ANDREW HICKEY

University engagement provides the focus for this paper. With attention given to recent, dramatic changes to the landscape of higher education and the effects that the corporatisation of universities has exerted on the everyday actions of academics, this paper will suggest that university to industry/community engagement has become a new terrain upon which the workings of the corporate university gain currency. Although university engagement is by no means a new phenomenon, new formulations of what it constitutes have emerged in recent years. The concept of the economies-of-engagement will be suggested as a conceptual cue for these considerations, with a case example of the author’s experiences of engaging with a local government industry partner providing the basis for the consideration of the translation that featured as a central aspect of this engagement.

Framed by reconsiderations of the place and purpose of the university within wider public spheres, the question of how the university should engage has emerged in recent years as a prominent theme of discussion both within and beyond the academy. Read against a backdrop of increased expectation for accountability and the unprecedented regulation of higher education systems in many countries (OECD 2013), the value of the university to societal and industry concerns has been drawn into sharp focus, with emphasis given to the utility that academic pursuits might hold within globalised knowledge economies (Watermeyer 2012; Deem et al. 2007; Kerr 2001; Nossal 1997). These arguments draw from rationalist logics, and in keeping with viewpoints oriented by what has been designated as ‘neoliberalism’, position the purpose and structure of the university in predominantly economic terms. The outcomes of this reframing include the operation of universities as corporate entities, decreased (and decreasing) public expenditure on universities and higher education, and corollary increased reliance on private income sources and the often-uneasy arrangements with corporate sponsorship that these bring (OECD 2013; Marginson 2000).

One prominent demonstration of the workings of the contemporary, corporate university is seen with engagement. Whether termed outreach, community engagement, university-community partnership, stakeholder collaboration or permutations of these and similar other terms, the form that engagement has taken in the contemporary university provides a demonstration of the ways universities conceive of themselves as valuable public institutions. The measures underpinning this value, however, remain somewhat more vague and when considered in light of the stark and largely economic bases that have driven university reform in many countries in recent years, the core intentions underpinning university engagement initiatives remain difficult to ascertain. This paper will explore the dynamics of this seeming rush to engagement, and in doing so will highlight the pressures brought to bear on the contemporary university and those publics toward whom the engagement is targeted.

Value and the University

Although recent reformulations of the value-proposition of the university have positioned the economics of higher education as a principal measure of value, the realignment of what it is the university might deliver as a public good within this dynamic provides an interesting counter-point to older views of the university as existing in and of (and in some senses for) itself; an untouchable institution of repute and prestige functioning outside of the concerns of economics and societal strictures (Clark 1987). As a site of knowledge production, universities globally have been under pressure to explicate what purposes they might serve, how the products of academic labour might find value and ultimately, what returns on public investment they might generate. Older views of the university existing simply as a site of knowledge maintenance and production (Burnes et al. 2014) have given way to more outwardly focused, externally active and socially engaged visions; a shift in purpose that Etzkowitz et al. (2000) refer to as an evolution from ivory tower exclusivity to ‘university entrepreneurialism’.

Simon Marginson has been particularly prolific in detailing these shifts in the expectations of higher
education and the ‘social and cultural character of the outcomes or ‘goods’ produced by higher education’ (2007: 309). As he highlights, ‘[p]ublic good/goods in higher education do not emerge in a vacuum but under specific conditions that enable and limit what can be achieved’ (Marginson 2011: 420). In terms of the radical reconfigurations of public expenditure on the university, and the concomitant effects this has on the identity and sense of purpose of the university, a point of contention emerges around how the university might invest itself into purposes that are indeed greater than itself. As Marginson (2011: 413) notes:

... if we want to maintain distinctive higher education institutions, they need a foundational public purpose – one that is more than a marketing slogan; and one grounded in more than the survival of the university for its own sake ...

The uneasy evolution of the university into a corporate entity that is increasingly not of or for the publics in which it is immediately situated, places the contemporary university in a precarious position. A number of questions arise in consideration of this point; to what purpose does the university align if it acknowledges the distance it has from the publics with whom it geographically sits? How might the realities of global education markets and flows of wealth, knowledge and populations be negotiated? Balancing the seemingly crossed purposes of being locally situated but globally competitive is the challenge facing the contemporary university.

Within the university, and in company with more traditional measures of academic output (research publications and teaching quality as two examples), engagement has emerged as a significant mechanism through which the outputs (or indeed, products) of the university have been mobilised (Perkmann et al. 2011; McNall et al. 2009; Holland and Ramaley 2008). While these engagement initiatives are conducted variously because of, sometimes in spite of, but always in context of incentives extant from within the university to do so, the pressures (albeit subtle in most cases) felt to enact and then make known these engagement initiatives, and the relative publicity that accrue from these efforts, provide an interesting case-in-point for what is framed here as an economy-of-engagement. In particular, it is suggested that even when the hard-edged corporatisation of the university is massaged via engagement initiatives, the ‘clash of values’ (Marginson 2000: 29) of deploying engagement in an effort to appear interested and invested often results in engagement that amounts to not much more than veiled attempts to shore up enrolments, reputation and good-will. The outcome of this sort of positioning of engagement prefaces the economic challenges engagement is often deployed to meet. Engagement in this regard is reduced to little more than solicitation; the demonstration of the value of being present and active within publics, but all the while cast in terms of the economic returns it (potentially) produces.

The Nature of Engagement

An impression that might be derived from university attempts to engage over the last decade is one of a university forced to make meaningful to publics and industry the work that it does. Underlying this is a logic of relevance where a form of positive presence can be both deployed and measured as a panacea to reassure distrusting local publics and stave off threatening global education markets. This is intimated in Rowe and Brass’s (2008: 678) pointed summation that universities (and the staff within them) are often considered to be:

‘out of touch’, disconnected from the ‘real world’, outside the ivory tower, complacently and indulgently oblivious to ‘ordinary people’s’ needs and priorities.

Observations such as this highlight a perceived, if not real, problem of the function of universities in the current era. Dill (1982: 22) suggested some time ago when noting the dual-effect of ‘exogenous shocks such as the globalisation of higher education markets as well as alterations in endogenous processes such as the technology of information’ that the public perception of the university has shifted so much that the old ways of doing things while not yet redundant, now coalesce with seemingly endless administrative reporting tasks, the maintenance of solely income-derived research agendas, fundamental shifts in teaching and pedagogy and myriad other functions that are designed to provide empirical accounts of the value of academic labours. This layer of administrivia, however, is often considered secondary to the real work of academics but necessary for the maintenance of reputation. Frequently, engagement too is viewed this way – as a task not considered to be truly academic, but one that is demanded as fundamental for justifying the existence of the university.

Central amongst this is the very idea of engagement and what it historically has come to represent. When cast across an amalgam of activities as diverse as research partnerships with community and industry bodies, education outreach, media briefings, visits to schools and other education providers, the provision of community awards, provision of public services, the enactment of affirmative action initiatives and more (University of Western Sydney 2014; University of Melbourne 2014a; University of South Australia 2014; University of the Sunshine Coast 2014), the nature of engagement as it currently stands in universities is both complex and unwieldy in definition. In short, ‘engagement’ can come to mean all manner of activities that in one way or other derive an audience or point of reception outside of the university.
Central amongst this is the very idea of engagement and what it historically has come to represent. When cast across an amalgam of activities as diverse as research partnerships with community and industry bodies, education outreach, media briefings, visits to schools and other education providers, the provision of community awards, provision of public services, the enactment of affirmative action initiatives and more (University of Western Sydney 2014; University of Melbourne 2014a; University of South Australia 2014; University of the Sunshine Coast 2014), the nature of engagement as it currently stands in universities is both complex and unwieldy in definition. In short, 'engagement' can come to mean all manner of activities that in one way or other derive an audience or point of reception outside of the university.

Typical definitions of engagement used by universities are indicated in the following:

Engagement is a term used to describe the process and range of activities where the university interacts, connects and collaborates with its stakeholders to achieve wider benefits through its actions (University of the Sunshine Coast 2014).

Knowledge partnerships are interactions between the university and external groups or individuals and are essential to ensuring the university's public-spirited character. Melbourne will continue to expand the number and scope of its knowledge partnerships and ensure effective metrics to promote excellence in these activities. The university values its relationship with alumni, and acknowledges that there are many more opportunities to be explored (University of Melbourne 2014a).

A theme common to many of the definitions applied by universities is the promise of mutual benefit that engagement acts might result in. An expression of this is captured in the following:

As urban universities around the country have discovered, the engagement invariably turns out to be mutually beneficial (‘Engagement 101’ 2014).

The challenge at the time was to become ‘more accessible to non-academic communities, players, and potential partners’. Attention was focused on activities that fell under the description ‘knowledge transfer’, acknowledging that the university occupies a public space and is expected to contribute to intellectual, social and economic life (University of Melbourne 2014b).

The assertion of the value and role of the university within these views is predominant, but exactly how this is to occur remains somewhat more vague and spread across a number of sites of enactment. Engagement refers to an almost endless array of activities conducted outside the walls of the academy, but at core, contemporary iterations generally preface engagement being done with partners beyond the university, but in ways that remain ‘mutually beneficial’ and ensure a return on the investment of time and money.

Bruning et al. (2006) identify this approach to university engagement under a ‘town-gown’ model. In this conceptualisation the university maintains an outward focus, symbolically reifying a split between the university and the host community.1 Such an approach to engagement prefaces the university as having something to offer to community and industry partners, however on a more malevolent front, this approach also suggests something of the ways the corporate university might consider the community as a site of opportunity; as a site for the discovery of new student and research markets, or more generally as a location to assert a presence within the reputation-laden higher education landscape. If engagement comes to be deployed simply as an effort to shore up the university’s interests, then nothing much will ultimately change. Instead, Bruning et al. (2006) suggest that universities intent on genuinely engaging should enact engagement initiatives that enable community members to openly access the university, via such things as the provision of opportunities to access and participate in the intellectual, artistic and sporting cultures of the academy. A caveat to taking this approach, however, is that for the corporate university these activities may not readily translate into profit.

It remains that the tensions present within the ‘corporate university’ (Giroux 2011; Washburn 2011) will have an effect on how engagement initiatives are conducted, not least in terms of how individual academics confront the landscape of the university and community, but also in how community and industry partnerships might be welcomed into the university as genuine and mutually meaningful. This theme is important, as it suggests what might be referred to as a dialogic approach to engagement, whereby the roles of both the university and engagement partner have valuable contributions to make to the collaboration; a theme that will be touched on again later in this article.

What follows is an account of this author’s own experiences of engaging with a local government partner in professional development and research collaborations. Prefaced amongst a discussion of the pragmatic aspects of working mutually, collaboratively and with an ethic of respect, a theorisation of the differing ‘knowledge ecologies’ that both the author and his local government collaborators confronted as part of the engagement will be offered. Charted as an act of translation, the engagement experience functioned
according to the learning of each others’ languages; languages constituted by the professional practice, institutional dynamics and epistemic conditions of each institutional setting. Detailed here is an account of how engagement might be considered via these acts of translation.

**A Case Example: Working with Toowoomba Regional Council**

In early 2011, members of staff of Toowoomba Regional Council’s Community Development and Facilities branch approached the author to undertake an evaluation review of their youth community engagement initiatives. This progressed successfully and reports were prepared as each evaluation was conducted. Further collaborations were invited – in fact, in 2012 the author attended the branch strategic planning meetings and was invited to offer insights as a research collaborator. This led to a major project stream; one that is still running and is currently funded through the **Australian Centre for Excellence in Local Government**.

The ‘engagement’ became somewhat more serious at this point, as now it was being noticed both within the university and local government setting as well as by external funding agencies. This recognition afforded a currency to the work; not just in terms of the funding stream the grant provided at an immediate level, but also in terms of a noticeable, but far harder to quantify sense of prestige. This currency was formulated around what came to be understood as an economy of engagement, manifesting in such markers of prestige as public recognition and announcements regarding the funding success in university communiqués, positive recognition from colleagues mobilised through the recognition of expertise and the seeking of advice on matters of engagement conduct and practice, invitations to speak on research and engagement in university forums and so on. This economy of engagement carried a sense of status as its underlying currency. Although universities have long held their markers of prestige, whether through the vaunting of research, and perhaps more recently (but arguably less prominently) teaching success, engagement has also risen to a level of prominence. As a point from which prestige might be gained and status conferred, engagement affords a specific currency within the corporate university.

The form of engagement undertaken in the case detailed here was a blend of research and consultancy; consultancy via the provision of programme evaluations of the youth community engagement initiatives run by the Community Development and Facilities branch, but mobilised as research according to the opportunities this engagement provided to access case sites, participant groups and other sources of data. It was in these terms that the currency of the engagement materialised as something tangible, manifesting (eventually) in the form of written reports and, significantly, scholarly journal articles (of which, this article is itself an example).

The currency of the engagement drew attention to the ways that these outcomes were recognised as valuable. This functioned through a process of translation, with the act of translation core to this engagement initiative working on a number of levels. Firstly, and within the context of a university system that increasingly requires justification of the time and resources expended on initiatives such as the partnership I had formed with the branch, the value of the currency had to be shown in terms of the ‘measurable output’ (as they have come to be known); namely, journal articles published and other such outputs of value recognised by the university. Importantly though, the translation also needed to function back the other way and be of some meaningful significance to the branch as the ‘partner organisation’. While I had some form of control over the first of these acts of translation (through the production of scholarly publications and similar ‘outputs’ that drew from the data-sets captured during the engagement), the second was much more fluid and difficult. Ensuring that what emerged from the evaluations and research collaborations had some value (and meaning) to the local government partner involved preparing outputs that were not typically recognised within the university. It was with this that a dilemma emerged.

Ultimately, and in terms of the act of translation operating via the framing of understandings, what was at stake was the mutual creation of knowledge generated out of the engagement, but of which only selected forms were recognised as valuable. Although the branch as partner also had desires for what should result from this engagement, the outcomes of value required from the university invariably meant little in the partner context. Beyond highlighting some fundamental issues of the purpose and value of traditional scholarly outputs as mechanisms of knowledge transfer, what this emphasised were the competing forces at play within the engagement act. Something had to give; and in this particular instance this involved the preparation of reports, presentations and similar outcomes that were highly valued by the branch, but not necessarily recognised by the university (and most certainly not remunerated as a legitimate component of an academic workload).

There were two dimensions of this translation that marked the nature of this engagement. Firstly was the translation of respective measures of value for each institution; for the local government partner, the translation of consultancy funding into forms that would enhance organisational capability was key, with this demonstrated in such activities as professional development programmes convened as part of the wider engagement and the enactment of recommendations from reports prepared from the findings of research.
For the university, the translation charted a different set of outcomes to justify the time and intellectual labour applied to these engagement acts; predominantly the preparation of reportable research outcomes in the form of journal articles. This related to a wider economy of engagement where the value proposition of undertaking this work was prefaced on the translation of this academic labour into a recognisable form of value for the university.

The second translation occurred according to the coalescence of the knowledge ecologies the engagement motivated. As a fundamental aspect of the engagement, I had to learn my engagement partner's language, as they did mine. At the centre of this was a pedagogical encounter and one in which learning was central to the engagement. One moment during a consultancy program provided a key example of this (Hickey et al. 2014). I quickly realised that the way I spoke, the way I did things as an academic researcher weren't going to cut it when working with my partners in the branch. For instance, I was often encouraged by the manager of the branch and fellow participants in the programme to keep things straightforward, and avoid the academic jargon. My language, the language I took for granted but subsequently went to efforts to keep 'straightforward', didn't always enable communication with my collaborators. I also realised that the way my local government colleagues spoke and did things were in many instances foreign to me. Things like using certain acronyms and processes to describe practice and 'internal' structures didn't mean much to me, but were profoundly important for my colleagues. This was the inner working of the organisation on show; here was the expression of the knowledge ecology of this place, one that was rhetorically unfamiliar to me and epistemologically oriented in different ways. Just as my partners were learning my language, I too had to negotiate and learn theirs. This was important – the translation of the respective knowledge ecologies of university and local government became a prompt for learning – a pedagogical encounter.

This clearly took time. Collaborations such as this require the investment of time to form connections, generate trust and enable the flow of communication between partners. However, the measurement of this aspect of the engagement did not translate fully back to the university. Time spent on impromptu visits to meet with collaborators, in framing up aspects of projects at different stages and the process of generally getting down to the business of collaborating, did not count. This was the 'grey' labour of the collaboration. Unless included as a component of the financial costing of a formal consultancy arrangement – something that not all engagement activities can or should contain – this time remained invisible and was borne by, in this case, me as the individual academic conducting this work 'off the clock', in my own time. Although the realities of academic work are such that increasing portions of work are done on the individual's 'own time' (Damrosch 1995), it struck me how some things counted while others clearly did not.

The risk is that a rush toward engagement that only produces tangible outcomes for the university will result in the sort of engagement that is only interested in the 'survival of the university for its own sake' (Marginson 2011: 413). This will of course result in an aberration, and without mechanisms for recognising the value that extends beyond the economic alone, the risk will be the conduct of engagement practices that are mercenary and fixated solely on the gain of the university. In this approach to engagement, not only do opportunities to enact scholarly work beyond the university dissipate, but so too does the very purpose of the university as a public institution. In extracting only that which satisfies the balance sheet, so much more is missed. It also occurs at a very pragmatic level, that in seeking to engage but by limiting the possibility for recognising the real work of those staff who undertake the engagement, a basic neglect is present. Beyond seeing remuneration as a basic inducement to entice staff to engage with partners, providing mechanisms for effectively recognising the non-economic value of engagement would serve individual staff, and universities, well.

The Ethics of Engagement

The case example detailed above was conducted with an ethic for practice in mind; of expecting reciprocity and mutual benefit, of prefacing respect for other ways of knowing and doing things and maintaining equality of viewpoints and responsibility for ensuring that what I had to say as an academic actually came to mean something for my partners. It meant that the translation of the academic knowledge I carried remained of significance for my local government partners and that in return, the local government knowledge that I confronted provided new avenues for understanding to me. It isn't a case that as academics we know it all – that theory and method are somehow concentrated in the university ready for deployment in the wilds of community and industry. Similarly, it isn't to say that community or industry fulfil in entirety the role of repository of what it is the university is trying to get its hands on; whether this be some virgin case site for a research application or inquiry, or perhaps more mercenarily, as a source of funding.

What is at stake in effective engagement is the coalescence of knowledge ecologies. As academics we have our 'knowledge', just as industry and community have theirs. This is a type of 'situated knowledge' in the sense that Haraway (1988) might see it. There are logics at play within these situated knowledges – epistemological orientations that denote how things come to be done and known in each location. It is the shape and 'mood' of the knowledge ecology and what it prescribes of those ways of knowing that determines how the engagement will proceed. But at core, what
the engagement is about is the traversing of these knowledge ecologies via acts of translation to find some new terrain of shared understanding and collaboration. To borrow very loosely from Homi Bhabha (2004), this is the seeking of a ‘third space’ of understanding from which the engagement might become meaningful.3

The central point from this discussion is that the respective knowledge ecologies of the university and community or industry partner cannot in total be applied evenly to the other without some form of translation. Equally, the orientation from which this is done must take account of the ethics of engagement to honestly declare why the engagement is sought. If the engagement is solely interested in bolstering the economic position of the university, then some genuine declaration of these motives should be offered. If the engagement is, however, interested in genuinely seeking collaboration, then it would be wise to recognise that value from these forms of engagement extend beyond what can be reduced to economic measures alone. In the end, without asserting itself as an important public institution interested in the support of its publics through open and collaborative engagement, the university really has little actual function.

Final Notes: Some Thoughts on the Conduct of University Engagement

In terms of those engagement experiences noted above, what did all this mean? Firstly it came to say something about the implicit expectations core to engagement initiatives conducted by universities and the ways value is assigned to these. It also came to say something about the ways an individual academic might function and what limits and possibilities exist in the engagement act. Indeed, academics do have important and significant things to say, but these views are partial and specific to the knowledge ecologies that form them. As Paula Saukko importantly notes with regard to academic research:

Research is viewed as being not above or below, but in the middle, as one among many actors that forges connections between different institutions, people and things, creating, fomenting, and halting social processes (2005: 345).

This is important. If academics are to avoid halting social processes and to productively add to the creation of social relationships and settings, a deep consciousness of the limits of academic knowledge – the boundaries around this knowledge – must be recognised. This requires an ethic by which new knowledges might be broached via those acts of translation deployed during an engagement. Only then can new terrains of understanding be realised and the limits of the knowledge ecologies of the university be effectively traversed. Clearly, this also requires the acknowledgment of why the engagement is being conducted in the first place, and the exposure of the purpose to which the engagement is being put.

As a final remark to close this paper, what the experiences of engaging recounted briefly above offered was a chance to take stock of how it is that an external partner might be engaged from the context of the contemporary university. This involved understanding intimately what the context of the university prescribes of academics and intellectual workers operating within a climate of significant change and competition – largely as a result of the corporatisation of the university as an economically motivated entity – but also the extent to which university knowledge might be counted as useful outside of the ivory tower. The boundaries of the knowledge ecologies of the university, and the ways of knowing that these prescribe required translation for the engagement to occur, is the central point that must be acknowledged if engagement is to effectively proceed. It isn’t enough to impose university knowledge onto a community; instead an ethic by which the dialogic engagement of those knowledges created variously within the university and those beyond must come together if a meaningful collaboration is to ensue. This will require universities to come to terms with how value is recognised, and how it is that engagement might be positioned to provide insight into the concerns and needs of those partners engaged. If the knowledge produced in the university is to have meaningful significance and impact, engagement with community, industry and other partners beyond the university must certainly proceed. Acknowledgment that this might sometimes induce financial costs but open the possibility for other, less tangible, mutual and infinitely more significant benefits, will also need to be given.

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University of Western Sydney 2014 UWS Engagement


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End Notes

1. Something Rooney (2014: 2) notes when suggesting that ‘[t]he term town-gown itself typically conjures up acrimony and tension which has frequently played out when academic and community stakeholders have interacted.

2. This programme, the ‘Evaluation and Assessment of Community Programs’ professional development package, was a twelve module programme that worked through research methods and evaluation techniques. This programme sought to provide my local government partners with skills in conducting their own evaluations – to shift the knowledge of research and evaluation procedure out of the university and into the practitioner’s repertoire of skills. Hence, the label of ‘practitioner researchers’ was applied to my local government colleagues. They were now not only local government community engagement practitioners but also capable social researchers.

3. This is certainly the application Martin et al. (2011) make of Bhabha’s conceptualisation in their discussion of community-school partnerships.

Meaning of life

My moving body sets out with my floating soul; In an expedition to find out the meaning of life. And my life spreads its fragrance when the wind blows. It is an expansion; I often touch the essence. Then a divine voice murmurs-softly yet audible: Your soul is still waiting for the essence. I set off my journey again. For the one who can tell me the meaning of life.

AMITABH VIKRAM DIVIWEBI,
JAMMU & KASHMIR, INDIA
Tendering for a Social Cause: Universities and social enterprise

MALCOLM D. BROWN

The core argument of this article is that universities are part of the social enterprise sector and, therefore, that discerning and fulfilling the university mission means contributing to that sector. The paper examines the concept of social enterprise, and looks at ways in which universities already support the social enterprise sector through the core activities of research and teaching, and in more comprehensive ways. The article critically examines current practices, including an examination of the cooperative sector, and Muhammad Yunus’s concept of social business, to identify some prescriptions and proscriptions that will help discern and fulfill the university mission. Importantly, social enterprise means a complete break from the for-profit attitude, but with a willingness to use the tools of the for-profit sector. This combination can enable universities to contribute to healthy local economies and thriving local communities on which the health of the university sector itself depends.

There is a sense in which universities are social enterprises; therefore, discerning and fulfilling the university mission means contributing to the success of the social enterprise sector. Universities can support the social enterprise sector through their core activities – the production and dissemination of knowledge (in other words, research and teaching) – and also in a more comprehensive way. This paper examines ways in which this already happens internationally, in order to identify some innovative practices that can be emulated. It does so critically, through an examination of the cooperative sector (which has a lower failure rate than the private and charity sectors) and Muhammad Yunus’s (2010) concept of social business, in order to identify some prescriptions and proscriptions that will help to discern and fulfil the university mission.

What is Social Enterprise?

Firstly, however, we need to look at the meaning of social enterprise. Jo Barraket and her colleagues define social enterprises as:

- organisations that: are led by an economic, social, cultural, or environmental mission consistent with a public or community benefit; trade to fulfil their mission; derive a substantial portion of their income from trade; and reinvest the majority of their profit/surplus in the fulfilment of their mission (Barraket et al. 2010: 4).

In the current political climate, universities arguably fulfil all of these criteria.

Whereas the private sector is the sphere of competition for economic capital, and the public sector is the sphere of competition for political power, civil society is the sphere of cooperation, not competition, leading to the accumulation of social capital. The concept of social capital is contested (e.g. Bourdieu 1986, Putnam 2000), but it commonly refers, like economic capital, to something that reproduces itself (Brown 2013: 102), and it ‘implies the development of trust, civic spirit, goodwill, reciprocity, mutuality, shared commitment, solidarity and cooperation’ (Ridley-Duff et al. 2011: 83-4). The need to cooperate for social capital is a feature of social enterprises, including universities. Therefore, universities are invested in the success of the whole social enterprise sector. What benefits the sector benefits universities.

This means that we need to transcend a conception of the university sector as *sui generis*, and of universities as being in competition with each other. Yet there is something of a prisoner’s dilemma here. If universities and social enterprises all cooperate, then they all benefit. However, if one breaks ranks and decides to compete, then it stands to gain something relative to the others, but at the expense of the entire sector. Sometimes, for example, leading universities and well-funded disciplines campaign to allocate an even larger slice of the pie to themselves. This has an immediate negative effect on other universities and disciplines, and in the longer term it has the potential to destroy the university sector in all but name. All universities and disciplines are invested in the need to look after the whole university sector, and the wider social enterprise sector of which it is a part, in order to fulfil our mission of benefiting the public and the
community through the production and dissemination of knowledge.

The Production and Dissemination of Knowledge

We should note that Barraket’s definition of social enterprise is itself one product of the Australian university sector as it seeks to fulfil this mission. That might sound grandiose – it is merely a one-sentence definition after all – but discussions about the definition of social enterprise are actually discussions about values, and they ‘feed ... into policies and practices (both internally and externally)’, affecting, for example, which organisations are eligible for social enterprise support (Ridley-Duff and Bull 2011: 56). For that reason, academics should not apologise for spending time on such definitions. Although it is an exercise that social enterprise practitioners understandably find frustrating, it is important work. It contributes to the understanding and fulfilment of the university mission, and the mission of social enterprises. It is relevant to the ‘kitemarking’ of social enterprise – which, like the Fairtrade kitemark, assures customers that their purchases really are from social enterprises (see Paton 2003: 99-118; Brown 2014a: 192) – and, perhaps more importantly, it guards against ‘mission drift’, ensuring that values remain at the core of the social enterprise and university sector.

This does not mean that the creation and dissemination of academic knowledge (in the form of research, publication, and teaching) about social enterprise is solely about definitions. It is a rapidly developing field, and it is one that has global reach. For this reason, I have identified three broad social enterprise paradigms, defined geographically, and each with its own distinct set of values (Brown 2014b: 4-5): the American approach, also called social entrepreneurship, which emphasises the role of the entrepreneur (sometimes caricatured as the ‘lone hero’); the European (including British) approach, which views social enterprise as an evolution of the cooperative, from the New Lanark of the industrial revolution to the Mondragón of today; and the Asian approach, the social business paradigm, which is rooted in the work of Muhammad Yunus (2010), and to which we shall return later.

These paradigms provide a context for university research and teaching in the field of social enterprise. The dissemination of the results of academic research through publication does not always lead to that knowledge reaching a wide audience. In this field, however, there is a genuine crossover between academics and practitioners, who benefit from each other’s work. It would be impossible to review the academic literature in social enterprise in this space, although there is a useful annotated bibliography by Anderson et al. (2012). It is also worth pointing to journals such as the Stanford Social Innovation Review and the Journal of Social Business, which are read by academics and practitioners; they broadly reflect the American and Asian paradigms respectively. Textbooks such as those by Ridley-Duff and Bull (2011), and Chamberlain et al. (eds) (2014), while aimed principally at university students, are of value to social enterprise practitioners; the former is written by scholar-practioners, and the latter is an edited collection whose contributors include people from both academic and social enterprise backgrounds.

University social enterprise courses include those at MBA level, and at some of the world’s most prestigious business schools such as Harvard and INSEAD. These provide an advanced training in social enterprise theory and practice for practitioners. The University of East London may have been the first university to introduce an undergraduate course in social enterprise in the early 2000s (see Chamberlain 2014: 70). Such courses are by no means confined to business schools. Griffith University has until recently had a social enterprise core stream in its Bachelor of Arts degree giving a large number of students outside of business schools exposure to the values of social enterprise and the practical skills that it requires through a mixture of traditional classroom-based activity and work-integrated learning (see Chamberlain, Foxwell-Norton and Anderson 2014: xix-xx). This pedagogy has also been carried into a Cultural Theory and Practice major (Wise 2014: 74-80).

Unfortunately (and short-sightedly), the core stream has been discontinued, and social enterprise courses are still concentrated in business schools, but this does not mean that pedagogic innovation in the field has ceased. At my own university, the University of Southern Queensland, social enterprise is discussed in a second-year undergraduate course on ethics and human rights, and it is playing an increasing role in a final-year ‘capstone’ course, in which students participate in interdisciplinary group projects on community problem solving.

A More Comprehensive Way

Internationally, some universities have adapted to social enterprise in a more comprehensive way, and it is to be hoped that this will become a feature of the Australian university landscape. The social entrepreneurship network Ashoka certifies a number of universities as Changemaker Campuses (see Ashoka U 2005-13), where the values of social innovation and social entrepreneurship are demonstrably central to the university’s ethos and practices. Changemaker Campuses are mainly in the USA, where Ashoka was formed, but they also include Northampton University in the UK and the Universidad de Monterrey in Mexico.
Within the European cooperative tradition of social enterprise, the Mondragón Corporation is the largest business group in the Basque Country and one of the largest in the whole of Spain (Mondragón 2013: 3). It is comprised of a wide range of cooperative enterprises, including a university, and there are signs that this may inspire emulation elsewhere in the international university sector. It should do, not least because cooperatives seem to have a lower failure rate than either private businesses or non-profit organisations such as charities (see Bibby 2013).

Unsurprisingly, Mondragón University’s cooperative ethos is reflected in its courses and research output. However, a cooperative university sector would have other features requiring some courage to implement. For example, the ratio of lowest salary to highest salary at Mondragón is not allowed to exceed three to one, with the exception of the rector – the university's CEO – who is paid five times the amount of the lowest paid worker. In the UK university sector, the ratio is over fifteen to one (Matthews 2013). It has also been observed that co-operatisation can be held back when unions are locked in to a conflict model of the work place, and subverted when managers attempt to manipulate the process for their own ends (Ridley-Duff and Bull 2011: 49-51), and there is no reason to assume that these challenges are less relevant to universities than to any other sector. However, neither is there any reason to assume that these challenges are any closer to being insuperable in the university sector.

Social Procurement

While the production and dissemination of knowledge through research and teaching is the most obvious way in which universities can contribute to the social enterprise sector while fulfilling their own distinct mission, their investment in the success of the whole social enterprise sector implies a necessary commitment to social procurement. This is defined by Barraket and Weissman (2009: iii) as ‘the use of purchasing power to create social value’. The concept of social value, in this context, is unpacked by Bonwick and Daniels (2013: 6) as ‘social outcomes beyond the products and services they [buyers] require’. Bonwick and Daniels (2013: 6) identify the following benefits of social procurement: ‘bringing people into employment from a specific marginalised cohort’; ‘maximising economic stimulus in a needy community or region’; ‘promoting ethical employment and work practices’; and ‘building a diverse supplier base’.

This shows us that universities can benefit from practising social procurement, especially in regional areas where it stimulates the local economy and develops thriving local communities in which ‘town and gown’ have a symbiotic relationship. In the long run, a healthier local economy means a larger potential student market. In a remarkably early contribution to this field, Ingrid Burkett and her collaborators show that social procurement (they use the expression ‘social tendering’) contributes to the social capital of large organisations (Burkett et al. 2005: 52) and, as we have already observed, social capital is something on which universities depend.

They also identify concrete practical steps that larger organisations can take to facilitate social procurement:

(i) ‘individual work unit audits’, i.e. brainstorming the economic activities that staff undertake that could provide opportunities for social procurement (e.g. workplace catering, and, more innovatively, ready-made dinners to take home);

(ii) ‘contractual opportunity audits’, which involve examining contracts, supply chains and provider relationships to identify opportunities for social procurement (e.g. transport, professional services, office supplies, office cleaning and waste removal);

(iii) ‘identifying economic inefficiency anomalies’, where small-scale work is inappropriately carried out by large contractors (e.g. small parks and gardens being maintained by large contractors with large machinery);

(iv) ‘identifying “new” possibilities’ beyond those identified elsewhere;

(v) ‘identifying areas that could benefit from a “socio-economic multiplier effect” whereby a relationship with a social enterprise could stop money leaking out of a local community and help to recycle money through local businesses’ (Burkett et al. 2005: 44-6).

The final point highlights the benefits that large organisations, such as universities, can accrue from social procurement. It is emphatically not a charitable contribution to the local community.

The University of Southern Queensland has made some small steps in this direction, and one of the on-campus cafés is now run by Bounce, a Toowoomba-based social enterprise that provides training and support for people, including people with disabilities, re-entering the workplace. The collection of paper for recycling is now undertaken by Endeavour Foundation (see Endeavour Foundation n.d.).
Northampton University in the UK has been more ambitious with respect to social procurement, and has launched a ‘£1 billion University Challenge’ (University of Northampton n.d.; University of Northampton 2012), which is a campaign for the UK university sector to spend one seventh of its procurement expenditure with social enterprises. This has included some major products; for example, desks and office furniture have been supplied to the university by Goodwill Solutions, which employs ex-offenders, thus reducing recidivism in the local area. The university benefits from the supply relationship (as the prices are competitive), and from being located in a subjectively and objectively safer community. The university is also building a new innovation centre, and using social enterprises for plastering, painting, and cleaning (University of Northampton n.d.; University of Northampton 2012).

The UK’s Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 was introduced ‘to require public authorities [in England and Wales] to have regard to economic, social and environmental well-being in connection with public services contracts; and for connected purposes’, an ethos that is shared with the £1 billion challenge. This should lead us to consider the specific modalities of social tendering and procurement, and we can identify three broad types: the practice of a larger organisation and a specific social enterprise negotiating a procurement contract, without it being out to tender; contracts being put out to tender, but restricted to social enterprises and/or similar organisations; and a social return on investment (SROI) model, in which awarding organisations take account of the social benefits that will result from particular bidders being awarded their contracts, often on a monetised basis. The SROI model is certainly the most sophisticated, but it can also be the most bureaucratic. The ‘social enterprise only’ model has been pioneered in Australia by the Gold Coast council, which also prioritises local social enterprises (City of Gold Coast 2012). As a result, 76 jobs were provided for disadvantaged members of the local community in just over a year, the proportion of the council’s procurement budget spent locally increased by fifteen per cent in 2013, and the council was awarded the ‘Buy Social’ Award at the Australian Social Enterprise Awards in 2014 (Social Traders 2014).

Such models can help large organisations, including universities, to stimulate local economies and develop thriving local communities, thus facilitating their own efforts to fulfil their distinctive missions.

There Should Be Criticism

Deakin University has engaged in some innovative partnerships, including one with the crowd-funding site Pozible for the purpose of research initiatives (see Pozible n.d.), and another with the large infrastructure maintenance company Transfield ‘to create a knowledge base that enabled them to work more closely with the local community’ through social procurement (Bonwick and Daniels 2013: 8). This latter partnership, however, highlights some issues with university partnerships in the social enterprise area, and the need for academics to maintain a critical perspective, as a vital part of the university mission. As Edward Said (1983: 28) wrote:

... even in the very midst of a battle in which one is unmistakably on one side against another, there should be criticism, because there must be critical consciousness if there are to be issues, problems, values, even lives to be fought for.

I am on the side of social enterprise and social procurement, but Transfield has controversially been involved in contracting for the Australian government’s detention centres for refugees in Nauru and Manus Island, and has therefore been criticised due to the conflict of interest between value for shareholders and welfare for refugees (Australian Associated Press 2014). This led to a threatened artists’ and audience boycott of the Sydney Biennale (of which Transfield was a sponsor), and it has led to calls from the National Tertiary Education Union for UniSuper (the main provider of superannuation for Australian university staff) to divest from Transfield. Yet there is a tendency in social enterprise circles to argue that the ends justify the means; that we should even cooperate with the devil if it leads to beneficial social outcomes. This seems like a very short-term perspective, and one that confuses the tools of capitalism with the values of capitalism.

Although Northampton University has been in the vanguard of university social procurement and engagement with the UK’s social enterprise sector, its management has created resentment by linking social enterprise engagement to pay, denying increments and promotions to staff who cannot demonstrate a social enterprise component to their work. The Mondragón experience shows that this is the wrong approach: social enterprise depends on voluntary cooperation, and this is undermined either when unions are locked into a conflict model of this workplace (which, in this case, management is actively sustaining), or when managers manipulate the system to their own ends. Not only does this undermine the university mission in a way comparable to the inflated salary differentials noted earlier. It can also mean, as Carl Bankston (2011) warns, ‘that efforts to teach “social responsibility” through “engaged pedagogies” such as service learning are trying to program students into a doctrinal orthodoxy about the individual and society’, which undermines, even betrays, ‘the unique role of the university as a place for seeking truth through the exchange of ideas’.
Conclusion

For the reasons addressed above, I propose that we return to the definition of social enterprise, and particularly the Asian social business model associated with Muhammad Yunus. Yunus identifies seven principles of social business, which, in his words, are ‘key characteristics’, ‘the core of social business’, ‘a touchstone and a constant reminder of the values that are at the heart of the social business idea’ (Yunus 2010: 2-3), and which, I have argued elsewhere (Brown 2012: 10), represent the spirit of the social enterprise idea more generally:

(i) ‘The business objective is to overcome poverty, or one or more problems (such as education, health, technology access, and environment) that threaten people and society – not to maximise profit’;

(ii) ‘The company will attain financial and economic sustainability’;

(iii) ‘Investors get back only their investment amount’ and ‘No dividend is given beyond the return of the original investment’;

(iv) ‘When the investment amount is paid back, profit stays with the company for expansion and improvement’;

(v) ‘The company will be environmentally conscious’;

(vi) ‘The workforce gets market wage with better-than-standard working conditions’;

(vii) ‘Do it with joy’ (Yunus 2010: 2-3).

Yunus points out that these principles represent ‘a complete break from the for-profit attitude’ (2010: 16), without, of course, shunning the tools of the for-profit sector, and he also points out that it is relational networks that have allowed social business to exist (2010: 65-6). If universities can incorporate these principles and the spirit behind them into their core practices and their engagement with the wider community, then they will be fulfilling a vital part of their mission.

This article has shown that a complete break from the for-profit attitude can be combined with a willingness to use the tools of the for-profit sector, and that this combination can be practised in a number of ways. It can be practised by emulating the cooperative sector, which means a more equitable distribution of salaries and a less conflictual approach to industrial relations. It can be practised through social procurement, using ‘social enterprise only’ tendering or a social return on investment (SROI) model. It can be practised through the production and dissemination of knowledge, which is at the core of the university mission, and it can contribute to this core activity because healthy universities can only exist within healthy local economies and thriving local communities, which are the very raison d’être of the social enterprise sector.

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End Notes
1. I am indebted to Jo Barraket for this observation.

Nusakambangan

every day

my body sheds its tired cells.

much of the dust on my tiles

is me, the dead me.

if I didn’t dust for seven years,

I wonder would I see myself?

of course,

such detritus is a biological imperative,

the price of a body replenishing.

you don’t discuss it in polite company,

but even as politicians shake hands for the cameras,

smile and nod their knowing nods it is happening,

the body shedding the spent the redundant

in order to maintain some sort of equilibrium.

this is the body I live in,

the newly-manifest and the freshly-dying,

the laws of entropy and hope,

all in a perpetual spiral,

the way ideas flash and flicker

in the small hours

in the coffin dark,

when some loud noise from the compound

has set the dogs all barking.

Justin Lowe,
Blue Mountains, NSW
Professionalising the Early Childhood Education and Care Sector: Broadening the university mission

GERARDINE NEYLON

In 2008 a United Nations Children’s Fund report identified that Australian policy reform should include universal access to quality pre-school services, implement an agreed early childhood curriculum and increase training levels for early childhood educators. Australia’s response included the provision of universal free preschool, the development of a National Quality Standard and universities were mandated to include theory and practice in infant and toddler care in Initial Teacher Education Preparation (ITEP). Working together now, universities and early year’s services are bringing about social and cultural change in education and care practices. This paper argues that while policy reform has addressed provision and quality standards, professionalisation of the early years sector is neglected in terms of status, pay and job security. Early years educators are therefore more likely to seek work in traditional school settings rather than in pre-school, consequently pedagogical improvements cannot be comprehensive and embedded in pre-school practice.

Introduction

In Australia both teaching and early childhood education are regarded as worthy careers. However, they are worlds apart in terms of training, status and compensation. Teachers are employed in schools in what is a traditional and relatively uniform, coherent system of services for which there is well established federal funding and public support. The early childhood education workforce, by contrast, operates within an unwieldy, cumbersome mix of services, spread across the for-profit and not-for-profit sector, with a variety of disparities in financing levels and management.

In 2012, the former Labor government instigated a new quality authority, the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), to oversee the roll out of a National Quality Standard, including a curriculum framework called Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF) (DEEWR 2009). A national quality rating and assessment process was also introduced. ACECQA was tasked to work with universities to broaden university Initial Teacher Education Programmes (ITEP) to include training infant and childcare and to oversee the increase of supply of a graduate-led early year’s workforce. This paper fundamentally asks if broadening university involvement in the early year’s sector as a part of a suite of policy reforms can contribute to professionalising the sector.

Prior to the commencement of the work of ACECQA, the childcare education sector was described as being a confusing mix of provision, with little consistency in terminology used to describe and identify staff qualifications, activities or responsibilities and with misunderstanding about qualified teacher grades (Australian Council for Educational Research, ACER 2006).

The childcare crisis was identified when an examination of issues relating to national Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) teaching degree completion and enrolment numbers against the projected pre-school population, suggested a future undersupply of degree-qualified early educators in Australia. It also identified a range of staffing concerns regarding professional learning in the field of childcare (ACER 2006: 40). The government’s introduction of ACECQA to improve quality measures in the ECEC sector was based on strong international evidence that investment in early years pays dividends in later years. The investment was also a response to poor results awarded to Australia concerning provision of quality in pre-school care by the OECD. Australia was placed 24th of 25 when the OECD measured quality standards in a league table of economically advanced countries (UNICEF 2008). The Australian Government at that time began a process of investing in ECEC aimed at developing the store of human capital from the start of the child’s development, rather than just from the start of primary school. Three key policy changes in ECEC, which directly involve the university sector, are relevant:
1. Assessment of Quality in childcare services.

2. Increased qualifications for those working in the ECEC sector.

3. The implementation of Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (DEEWR 2009) in University ITEP.

To ensure these three initiatives were met, ACECQA engaged with the university sector to oversee that the EYLF is evident in ITEP. This paper considers various dimensions and perspectives around how the university and ACECQA are now civically engaged in the introduction of the policy changes in childcare. Each policy change is explored separately and the conclusion offers critical commentary on the collaborative process.

1. Assessment of Quality in Childcare Services

In 2008, the Australian government made a commitment through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), that by 2013:

all children in the year before formal schooling will have access to high quality early childhood education programs delivered by degree qualified early childhood teachers, for 15 hours per week, 40 weeks of the year, in public, private and community-based preschools and child care (Dowling and O'Malley 2009:1).

A key component of high quality early childhood education programmes has been directly linked to increased qualifications of the workforce, and policy that now insists on the presence of a graduate educator in each ECEC setting. Since 1st January 2014, long day care and pre-school services must have access to an early childhood teacher for at least twenty per cent of the time that the service provides education and care. Now the role of the early childhood educator is to lead the implementation of the National Quality Standard (NQS) and as quality area seven sets out 'to ensure that the School functions as a learning community' (COAG, Quality Area Seven, NQS, 2009: 32).

A turn to human service organisations

The changing role in Australian early year’s provision is discussed by Ebbeck and Waniganayak in their book Early Childhood Professionals: Leading Today and Tomorrow (2010). They contend that childcare services are moving toward becoming human resource services organisations. They attribute this change to the fact that childcare services are unique because of whom they serve, the goals they aim to meet, and the way they are managed and administered. ECEC professionals are now working in a new era and the job is emerging as a new profession in its own right. Ebbeck and Waniganayak (2010) suggest it is time to go beyond the inferiority complex hitherto associated with employment in the sector. Now, collaborative practice among universities and the newly formed ACECQA aims to introduce cultural and pedagogical change in ITEP, childcare centres, and infant care settings. However, while the childcare sector broadly welcomes the quality improvements, the lack of funding to professionalise the sector along with lack of consultation with the sector has been identified by Cheeseman (2007: 251) who notes ‘the absences of early childhood pedagogical voices in key national policy initiatives’.

The Education and Care Regulatory Unit (ECRU)

Childcare centres, like universities, are on a learning curve juggling new policy reforms and continuing to work with existing policies. The childcare centres are for the first time going through the process of assessment and rating by the Education and Care Regulatory Unit (ECRU). The rating process is governed by stringent assessment. The regulatory unit has commenced assessments across all states and as visits progress, every childcare service in the country will be assessed to make sure it meets the new standard to ensure the educational programme and best practice are in place in line with the NQS.

There are five rating levels within the national quality rating and assessment process:

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There are five rating levels within the national quality rating and assessment process:

I. Significant Improvement Required
II. Working Towards National Quality Standard
III. Meeting National Quality Standard
IV. Exceeding National Quality Standard
V. Excellent rating

The excellent rating is the highest rating an education and care service can achieve. The purpose of the excellent rating is to ensure that services are able to engage and involve families and the community in the profession's discussion about quality and what is important in education and care. The childcare centres wishing to achieve an excellent rating must be able to show they can establish professional partnerships with several research organisations (such as universities). If ACECQA deems services as being run by educators, who are champions of quality improvement and have achieved excellence in the delivery of education and care, they award the top excellent rating. From the university perspective, ITEP must now go beyond traditional teacher preparation and must now develop leadership skills in pre-service educators to achieve excellence.

University and childcare collaboration

While it is acknowledged that a precedent for university/childcare curriculum collaboration exists in the
Scandinavian early year’s curriculum model, the economic and social circumstances in which the model exists are very different to the neo-liberal market-driven climate currently found in Australia (Mahon et al. 2012). The Scandinavian early childhood model has been promoted by the Stockholm Institute and involved parents, politicians and universities in a childcare network that expanded throughout the city and into other areas in Sweden (Dahlberg and Moss 2005).

While Sweden meets (and goes beyond) the target of one percent of GDP recommended by UNICEF to achieve quality early childhood services, Australia invests just ‘0.4% of GDP on pre-primary education’ (OECD 2014: 319), comparing poorly with the OECD average investment of 0.7 per cent. Swedish early educators are employed more along the formal lines of the Australian primary school teacher. In the Australian case, a key difference in provision is that childcare is offered in commercial, for-profit as well as not-for-profit settings which is a new employment paradigm for both the university ITEP graduates who hitherto have found employment in the school system.

Moving the employment of those who work in childcare closer to the profession of teachers through pedagogical training is both an educational and cultural shift for the sector, universities and society. This is happening at a time when the early year’s sector is experiencing a major period of transition: introducing the EYLF, undergoing regulatory assessment, engaging with the introduction of graduates into the workforce and an expectation to take a leadership role in societal change. The new status inherent in the role of the early years educator is in contrast with how the OECD described their status as ‘low status, low rates of pay and high staff turnover, however work conditions for teachers are much better’ (OECD 2006: 102).

The traditional university ITEP in formal primary school is well established (Gardiner et al. 2011). Now universities must work on ITEP including student placement in childcare settings and curriculum development that promotes skills to meet the human need of individual communities. From the universities’ perspectives, changing ITEP to implement the EYLF is now seen as fulfilling a civic engagement contributing to a socio-cultural shift, which is inherent in the EYLF implementation (the philosophy of the EYLF is outlined in the third part of this paper). In the two intervening years since its inception, ACECQA has addressed many of the childcare issues. It successfully launched the National Quality Standard, registration for childcare service providers, and training of the inspectorate across all states. Yet the issue of professionalising the pay and status of early educators in the childcare sector has remained at discussion stage in the policy making process of the Australian productivity commission.

2. Increased Qualifications For Those Working in the ECEC Sector Without Increased Pay

A combination of increased demand for childcare places and increased turnover of childcare staff is brewing a ‘perfect storm’ for quality in childcare provision. The Australian Productivity Commission has been presented with substantial evidence of widespread staff shortages in the early learning sector, particularly in long day care. Family Day Care Australia reported that the early childhood education and care sector is critically short of appropriately qualified staff (United Voice PCI Submission 2013). The following year, research by the Productivity Commission found the turnover rate in the childcare industry was 15.7 percent, and was highest among qualified early-childhood educators. It has been estimated that early educators are leaving the sector at a rate of 180 a week because they cannot afford to stay (Australian Government Productivity Commission Draft Report 2014).

Increased demand for childcare places

In Australia, ‘enrolment rates of 4 year olds in early childhood education programmes increased by 20 percentage points or more, between 2005 and 2012’ (OECD 2014: 319). Increased demand for pre-school stems not only from the commitment to universal access, but also from the increase in the four-year-old population. In this context, it was vital to increase the supply of qualified ECEC educators into childcare settings to keep up with demand in order to provide universal graduate-led pre-school education. However, no incentive to encourage recruitment and retention in the sector has been forthcoming.

With so many young children attending early education programmes, it is vital that programmes are of high quality as there is a direct link between quality in early childhood provision and the implementation of an agreed pedagogical approach (Moss 2008; OECD 2009). ITEP in universities needed not only to be increased, but also fine-tuned more toward the pedagogy within Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. The implementation of the EYLF across a wide range of services for children from birth to eight years in a coherent way presents a challenge to cross the traditional ‘care’ and ‘education’ divide. ITEP has up to now used the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) published by the Ministerial Council for Education (2011) and is governed by the Teacher Registration Board (TRB). The inclusion of ACECQA’s EYLF challenges the universities to introduce a new and contemporary pedagogical theory. This inclusion has to be grafted on to an existing, very crowded curriculum.

Implementing complex contemporary early education theory

An additional problem is that the EYLF is simply a framework; and as such, it does not set out adequate
guidance on pedagogical theory and implementation. At graduate level it is important that students are prepared in pedagogical theory, policy and practice. It is acknowledged that ACECQA added several videos to their website, showing examples of pedagogical practice using the approach to education and care in the EYLF. The videos are of value in showing ideas for incorporating learning through purposeful play into practice. However, they fall short in providing a comprehensive professional development tool.

**Initial teacher education preparation in the EYLF**

It is well established in the literature that pedagogical leadership and responsibilities expected of the early childhood professional take time to build (Brownlee 2001: 188; Brownlee and Berthelsen 2005: 8). With that in mind, systems of reflective practice must be included in ITEP to develop leadership skills as the newly visioned role of the childcare educator as set out in the relational and social justice concepts found in EYLF.

The curriculum reform set out in the EYLF moves from the traditional teacher-led curriculum towards an emergent curriculum. The implementation of an emergent curriculum involves educators taking children's interests and the cultural identity of each child and family into consideration when planning the curriculum. It is a complex process, and yet it is central to the EYLF philosophy. Using the emergent curriculum approach, the day to day classroom activities are still framed by the teacher, and also are child initiated, allowing the voice and interests of the child to be included. This concept, when applied in ECEC curricula assessment, tasks the educator to find ways to document how they have accommodated the child's interests and views into the day to day classroom experience. This approach relates to Article 12 of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child UNHCR (1989).

In the past, students attending ITEP were asked to present lesson plans based on their own ideas. Now to accommodate emergent curriculum planning, assignments ask that the students when on placement listen to the children's interests and plan their lessons with those interests in mind. Now students are instructed to discuss in a collegial fashion with their practicum co-ordinator possible curriculum ideas influenced by the voice of the child. Delivery of this contemporary pedagogical approach requires the educator to be skilled and highly competent.

**3. EYLF**

The EYLF is informed by both national and international contemporary approaches to enhance young children's wellbeing. For example the aforementioned Article 12 of UNHCR (1989) acknowledges children's rights to voice, space, audience and influence. This legally binding document means that respecting children's views is not just a model of good pedagogical practice, but a legally binding obligation where countries have signed the convention.

The EYLF acknowledges existing pedagogies and goes beyond traditional approaches. It sets out five interconnected outcomes to promote a nurturing Relational Pedagogy (RP) alongside, and at ease with the rights based pedagogy:

1. Children have a strong sense of identity.
2. Children are connected with and contribute to their world.
3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
4. Children are confident, involved learners.
5. Children are effective communicators.

**Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (2009)**

The EYLF approach is more likely than traditional pedagogies to regard children as 'active contributors who can be creative partners with adults using democratic practices in the classroom' (Dahlberg and Moss 2005: 103). The approach values children for their individuality and is based on a strong belief that no two children are identical. The educational emphasis is placed not so much on the individual child but also on each child in relation to other children, teachers and parents. The EYLF approach is sensitive to the international context of early education, social justice and the cultural identity and belonging of each child. A belief that knowledge and learning are always social and 'always embody ethics and values and politics' (MacNaughton 2003:49) is central to the implementation of the EYLF. Therefore, the educator must be sensitive to watch for whose knowledge is being included and excluded in teaching and learning situations. Thus implementing the EYLF encourages ECEC settings to become sites where children experience democracy, justice and acceptance.

This worthy EYLF philosophy is to be applied by early educators for all children from birth to eight years of age across pre-school and school. As universities now prepare the early year’s workforce a new research dimension for the university has emerged, to explore how those very principles of fairness, justice, belonging, respect and a sense of being valued, are being applied. This can add to the growing body of interest in the field of ECEC reforms, which have drawn criticism from those who consider that by not challenging the ‘for-profit provision’ or ‘market friendly’ approach, the state has contributed to the spread of neoliberal policies (Mahon et al. 2012: 423).
Conclusion

It has been argued that the principles of civic action and social justice are located within current international pedagogical paradigms, set out in the principles of the EYLF. In writing about re-politicising early childhood, Moss (2008: 9) for example, sees that ECEC services implementing rights based pedagogical programmes can be understood as ‘sites of everyday democracy’. He sees such services as forums or meeting places in civic society that are places for the nourishing and practising of democracy, by children and adults alike, while others see this as the childcare sector being tasked with providing a ‘quick fix’ to complex social issues (European Commission 2011). As the debate about the role of childcare expands, the university is now becoming a key player in the discussion.

From the universities’ perspective the criteria for their civic engagement in the recent Australian childcare policy reform came as top down policy implementation. For example, it can be argued that in practice ACECQA has the power to reject a university’s ITEP course if the content does not meet the new National Quality Standard. The relationship is therefore one of power. That said, the ACECQA/University experience can be seen as a new, albeit forced, collaboration that heralds a new era of heightened engagement. Research and collaboration within the sector is emerging. For example, the School of Education at The University of Notre Dame (O’Connor et al. 2014) explored the experiences of ITEP students who attended placements in both school and childcare settings. The findings suggest that the personal experiences of early childhood educators in childcare placements during ITEP impacted greatly their attitude towards working in the childcare sector (O’Connor et al. 2004: 9). The study found that the students expressed reluctance to work in the childcare sector over the primary school sector. This stemmed from their experience of the practicalities of working in childcare. The issues of pay, conditions and professional status all impacted heavily their decision-making process.

Higher education institutes offering undergraduate and post-graduate teacher preparation have now been placed as central protagonists to bring about cultural change in the early years sector. The involvement of professional researchers across a variety of early childhood specialisms has the potential to bring gravitas and can contribute to ongoing professional development for teaching, learning and practice in the early year’s sector. Additionally, this involvement could also encourage the conduct of research that brings the voice of the key stakeholders, in particular the early year’s educator, to the debate.

The possibility of an increase in tertiary applicants to study ECEC has been further negatively impacted by recently suggested government cutbacks to universities, which will invariably result in increased fees for students. This increase will influence a student’s decision about course selection as the low wages associated with working in the childcare sector would make paying back university fees difficult.

Despite policy changes and significant advances in pedagogy in recent years, Australia’s ECEC has yet to benefit from a holistic overhaul that acknowledges the professional role of the early year’s educator. To improve recruitment and retention of early year’s educators, government funding will need to be directed into services as salaries as opposed to subsidies to market-led provision. A policy that promotes increased ECEC capacity should be accompanied by a balancing policy that brings pay-rates in line with the teaching profession.

It is within a university’s capacity to help address the childcare crisis through the preparation of ECEC graduates, and to conduct research and engage in supporting social change. The issue of employment policy, in particular pay rates, for ECEC graduates is firmly in the realm of government. Under the current circumstances, potential ECEC students cannot be guaranteed work conditions equal to teachers. As recent research tells us, the new graduate workforce is not likely to opt for working in the early year’s sector. Thus the conditions for the perfect storm are brewing. This leads to a conclusion that broadening ITEP to include childcare without professionalising the childcare sector is unlikely to succeed.

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End Notes
1. One acre is 0.4 hectares.

Newspeak in Wonderland

It matters, the things that happen on-water: fishing, waiting, birthing, starving, praying for land... “Most assuredly on-water matters matter,” said Generally anguished Angus, the mad hatter, plucking a small jade fish from his mouth. “You must not speak of it Alice, to speak of it invites trouble. Now fry this fish in batter, present it to the public on a platter.”

To be a Russian General Angus forever aspired, their hats much bigger, but it never transpired.

“Now....what wasn’t I saying ah yes, water matters, take the Murray-Darling..... ssssh my darling, enough said you get my drift, if only they’d all drift north and away over the water, I say hold your tongue, enough chatter, and never, ever bite the feeding hand.


JOHN BRINNAND, YANDINA, QLD
Regional Food Systems as Engines for Sustainable Economies: How do universities engage?

PATRICIA INMAN

How can universities engage in helping regions develop sustainable economies? In this paper a sustainable economy is defined with an example focusing on the development of a regional food system in the Midwestern state of Illinois. While the state is home to some of the richest soil in the world and abundant fresh water sources, the flat topography has made industrial agriculture the norm. A monoculture primarily of food for stock feed and ethanol production has resulted in environmental degradation, inequitable labour practices and food insecurity. Universities can engage in helping communities generate sustainable economies based on healthy food systems by helping identify barriers to smaller acreage production, processing and distribution. More importantly, universities can help develop a regional narrative that recalls a history of local food production as well as identifying regional resources to be used in innovative local agriculture initiatives of the future building an economy of scale.

The need for increased food security and sustainable economic development can be addressed through the ramping up of an agrarian enterprise, the seeds of which often already exist in regions. Regions are geographic areas centred on an urban hub but supported by equally important rural and suburban resources. Food insecurity in both rural and urban areas, the growing use of toxic pesticides in agriculture and the increasing distance food travels diminishing freshness and increasing environmental vulnerability are alarming realities. Failing local economies add to the community trauma. How do universities help address the complexities of the food system while providing the essentials of food and economic security for regions that have lost their memory of healthy agriculture? This discussion focuses on issues in developing a healthy regional food system, the ways such enterprise can support a sustainable economy and suggests institutions of higher education can engage regions in this endeavour. While technology and policy are obvious connections, this discussion suggests the humanities and the arts can serve as both the muse and the medium in retrieving their agricultural narrative. Examples are provided from the Midwestern state of Illinois.

Small scale organic local food production and regional economic development are rarely viewed as offering a common agenda. Industrial agricultural production more frequently comes to mind. The engagement of higher education institutions discussed leverages and maximises existing assets of a region’s food system to promote a thriving sustainable economy. In this discussion a sustainable economy is based on five key assumptions:

- Healthy food should be the right for everyone and not the privilege of a few.
- Environmental health must ground all entrepreneurial initiatives.
- Educational initiatives provide the means for cultural growth.
- Increasing meaningful employment within communities supports dignity for individuals and families.
- Indigenous knowledge is an integral part of the culture and history of a local community.

The challenge in development is to integrate this with appropriate technology and leadership. This requires universities to develop curricula in the context of relationship to people and planet. An example of such a challenge is discussed in the development of a regional food system.

The Complexity of Food Systems – An Example from America’s Heartland

While the state of Illinois has some of the richest soil in the world and has access to fresh water from both its numerous rivers and access to one of the largest fresh water lakes in the world, it produces only four percent of its food. Why has a geography so rich in agricultural resources ended up as one so challenged in providing healthy food for its communities?
The flat topography of the state encourages industrial low-labour agriculture simplified by monoculture so the land can be prepared and the crops harvested by large machines. Planting single varieties of crops across vast acreage has allowed farmers to plant corn and soybeans in uniform rows and spray uniform chemicals and fertilisers using large-scale machinery that cuts labour costs. These crops are most frequently used for animal feed or, more recently, the production of ethanol fuel. Federal farm bills have increasingly provided subsidies for such production. Originally intended to prevent family farm foreclosures, these subsidies today reward large agribusinesses for expanded production that employs the use of chemicals and mono-crop production.

Lack of food security is the most obvious issue but a more inclusive vision of our regional food systems considers impacts beyond access to fresh food. Issues related to social justice, environmental sustainability as well as economic resiliency come to mind. Anna Lappe, an advocate of sustainable farming practices, lists some of the true costs of industrial agriculture as soil loss; the result of soil pollution, compaction and erosion when cover crops are not used; public health issues, water pollution and farmer and farm worker health. US cropland is losing its topsoil faster than nature can build it (Pimental and Kounang 1998: 418). Even more importantly, our water sources are being polluted. One study completed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found that agricultural activity was the source of pollution for forty-eight percent of streams and rivers and forty-one percent of lakes in our country (EPA 2002).

Industrialised farming uses enormous amounts of fuel thus increasing dependence on petroleum products. These include chemical pesticides and herbicides as well as fuel for industrial machinery. The chemicals filtering into water supplies have resulted in a water system threatened with massive pollution. 'Water that runs off fields treated with chemical fertilisers and manure is loaded with nitrogen and phosphorus, two potent pollutants that inevitably end up in rivers and lakes and set off a cascade of harmful consequences, contaminating the drinking water used by millions of Americans' (Bruzelius et al. 2010: 1). Additionally, since masses of one kind of food are produced in one place, products must be shipped around the world further depleting oil reserves and increasing pollution of the environment. The weight of such massive machinery results in compacted soil that is 'dead' with little evidence of the organic matter and life forms necessary to support regeneration of rich soil commonly referred to as 'black gold'.

As importantly, the low-wage jobs created in industrialised agriculture systems are unskilled and often dangerous. Mechanisation, pesticides, synthetic fertilisers, and the availability of cheap migrant labour have allowed fewer farmers to manage larger farms (Tudge 2007: 126). As farm size and absentee ownership increase, social conditions in the local community deteriorate (Strange 1988: 87).

Finally, industrial farming is often conducted by international corporations whose dollars move out of state and nation. This is a significant economic issue. Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) states that of the $48 billion Illinois residents spend on food every year, $46 billion is leaving the state (CMAP 2014). They go on to state that if Illinois produced just twenty percent more local food in the fertile soils of Northeastern Illinois, it would see $2.5 billion in increased economic activity. According to economist Ken Meter's 2010 study of the Sangamon region of central Illinois:

Farmers gain $3 million each year producing food commodities, spending $636 million buying inputs from external suppliers, for a total outflow of $633 million from the regional farm economy. Meanwhile, consumers spend more than $1 billion buying food from outside. Thus, total loss to the region is $1.6 billion of potential wealth each year. This loss amounts to more than the value of all commodities currently raised in the region (Meter 2010: 3).

Is There an Alternative Model of Farming?

It's time for a sustainable model of farming that supports local economic development while respecting the earth and her communities. Smaller farms are creating this new business model as food production goes local. The 1990 US Farm Bill determines funding streams for farmers in the US. It defines sustainable agriculture as:

a way of farming that satisfies human food and fibre needs; enhances environmental quality and natural resources; makes the most efficient use of nonrenewable resources; sustains the economic viability of farm operations; and enhances the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole.

Local food systems differ from the larger global model of industrial agriculture in that it ties all elements of the food system (production, processing, distribution and waste disposal) to a defined geographic region. Each element of the local food system makes an important contribution to its community, including business development and expansion, the development of new business relationships, and providing fresh wholesome food to consumers (Cooperband and Hultine 2008).

The good news is that the large-scale farms once thought necessary for 'feeding the world' are not.
Research conducted by universities provides much of the research on this topic (Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center 2011). New studies show that smaller parcels of land are needed for producing food than was previously thought. Post-industrial cities and peri-urban areas such as Cleveland, Ohio can generate up to one hundred percent of their current needs for fresh produce and other food items. In their report 'Cleveland, Other Cities Could Produce Most of Their Food', Ohio State University’s research showed that not only would this local production make each city more food secure but the impact of retaining millions of dollars in the local economy would create new jobs and spur additional health, social and environmental benefits. A particularly powerful scenario was prepared by the Leopold Center of Iowa State University. One of the key assumptions in the study was that farmers in a region can grow enough of twenty-eight kinds of fruit and vegetables to meet demand, based on population, during a typical growing season (about four months of the year) and longer for crops that could be stored, such as onions or garlic (Swenson 2010). The land required for this production was equal to the cropland in a single Iowa county.

**What Are the Benefits of Small Scale Production?**

There are numerous possible benefits to small scale agriculture. These include:

- Increased environmental health with ability to grow diverse specialty crops without large machinery.
- Increased community access to fresh foods.
- Increased food security for all through community and peri-urban gardens.
- Keeping dollars local.
- Increased opportunities in farming open to women and minorities due to more affordable land requirements.
- Community resiliency through innovative “green” business development.
- Increased income for farmers through direct sales.

Recent studies indicate sustainable agriculture is not only better for the planet and its communities but also provides increased economic opportunities to farmers. In 2004, the Laboratory for Community and Economic Development at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign began studying local food systems in Central Illinois to assess their potential as a strategy for community and economic development. The survey of direct-market farmers indicated that thirty-six percent also grew commodity crops. Two-thirds of those surveyed used more than half of their total acreage for their commodity products, yet only fifty percent or less of their total gross farm sales were from the commodity crops. According to a report developed by the University of Illinois, Chicago farm sales were higher on smaller acreages of locally grown food products. At 100 acres, Angelic Organics of Caledonia, Illinois is considerably below the Illinois average in acreage. However, its annual income of $250,000 allows it to employ 18 people, which is meaningful for this small rural community (Mayerfield 2004: 8).

Local food marketing options include roadside stands and community supported agriculture initiatives where consumers share risks associated with food production. The one market most commonly associated with local food systems in the US is the farmers’ market. A recent study provides data on the economic impact of nine diverse US farmers markets (McCarthy and Moon 2012). Markets generate significant economic benefits for vendors, host neighbourhoods, and the surrounding region. The study also highlights the capacity of farmers markets to incubate small businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, and help move businesses from the informal to the formal economic sector. The markets studied included three each from Baltimore, Cleveland and Los Angeles. The key findings of this report indicate an annual economic impact on vendors ($52,000-$40,594,000 per market), an annual economic impact on nearby businesses ($19,900-$15,765,700 per market) and an annual economic impact on the community ($72,000-$56,360,000) per market.

Fortunately, data from the US Department of Agriculture indicates the following trends (US Department of Agriculture 2009). Small farms are increasing. In 2007, about eighty-five percent of farms were less than five hundred acres; fifty-four percent were less than one hundred acres, and the vast majority (86.5 percent) were owned by a family or sole proprietorship. Between 1997 and 2007, the average size of farms decreased (from 431 to 418 acres) and the percentage of farmers who are sole owners, as opposed to corporations or partnerships, increased (from 62.5 percent to 69 percent). The Chicago metropolitan region reflects several of these national trends in local food production. While farmland is decreasing, the 2007 census conducted by the US Department of Agriculture indicates the number of small farms increased by twenty-three percent from 2002 to 2007. Additionally, the census indicates production of specialty crops produced to feed local populations has increased while the production of commodity crops such as corn and soybeans has decreased.

**What Are the Challenges of Sustainable Farming Practices?**

Despite environmental and social benefits the new model of local food production comes with its own set of challenges. Specific challenges include:
Studies (CGS) at Northern Illinois University dedicates of land more affordable so it can be transferred between development rights. This process would keep the price programmes that would allow owners to sell their could put other initiatives in place, such as conservation such a plan, a county, municipality, or metropolitan area suggests communities create food plans. By creating farmland. The American Planning Association (2007) communities in the US have no provisions for preserving regionally. This has been a struggle with public and private development interests which see more value in a highly populated subdivision or commercial development rather than food production. A study done by Northern Illinois University identified the areas of the country where high quality farmland is at greatest risk of being consumed by urban sprawl. The northern Illinois region ranked third in the country (Arvidson 2012). The Geography Department within Northern Illinois University was particularly valuable in identifying these new options for cultivation.

Viable agriculture programmes in urban or peri-urban settings are often challenged in light of an apparent lack of measurable fiscal benefit. The American Planning Association is providing education for regional planners to correct this misconception. The Arvidson article mentioned above, ‘Farming at the Fringe’, discusses the fact that ex-urban areas are embracing family farms (Arvidson 2012). The author makes the point that most suburban communities in the US have no provisions for preserving farmland. The American Planning Association (2007) suggests communities create food plans. By creating such a plan, a county, municipality, or metropolitan area could put other initiatives in place, such as conservation programmes that would allow owners to sell their development rights. This process would keep the price of land more affordable so it can be transferred between farmers and businesses. The Centre for Governmental Studies (CGS) at Northern Illinois University dedicates itself to building civic capacity. This unique centre of engagement is composed of researchers in non-tenured positions who address regional issues and make policy recommendations for policy-making bodies. Joint appointments from the humanities and social sciences allow interdisciplinary research to place data analysis in a social context. Building regional food systems has been a focus that also involves the collaboration of engaged tenured scholars. Most recently the CGS conducted research in the development of healthy food systems for the Cook County Department of Public Health. Cook County includes the land surrounding the city of Chicago and the study required collaboration between government officials as well as public and private entities (Cook County Department of Public Health 2013). Other universities are then able to identify such a centre that provides a ‘front’ door for engagement relating to building regional food systems.

A completely new set of skills and equipment is needed for cultivating smaller parcels of land, particularly if food production is organic. Local food production is labour intensive requiring different mechanical support. Diverse crops require greater knowledge of cultivation requirements. Organic production requires knowledge of ecosystems. Land grant institutions of higher education originally set up to support farmers focus on large-scale industrial farming, provide scant training for this new generation of farmers. Entrepreneurial skills for small business starts are particularly important and are often offered by alternative community education sources such as Angelic Organics, the Land Institute, Growing Home and the Prairie Crossing Farm business Development Centre. A collaboration of community colleges in Illinois known as the Illinois Green Economy Network (IGEN) combines the power of Illinois community colleges with the power of the business sector to engage in the green economy. This collaboration of 17 colleges provides classroom instruction and online training for career pathways related to local food production. The certificate programmes for local foods and organic agriculture include both rural and urban production and can be specific to seasonal fruit/vegetable and sustainable livestock production, and value-added food/farm processing.

What Are the Opportunities of Small Scale Farming?

The average size of an Illinois farm is 368 acres (US Department of Agriculture 2007). The cost of land ownership alone provides barriers to many. This data also indicates large farms are typically owned and managed by older white men. Small farms are found to be more diverse. Men and women, young and old, rich and poor, European Americans, African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans and Latino Americans have small farms with all bringing different approaches,
skills and crops to American agriculture. This is partially the result of the fact that smaller parcels of land make farming more affordable for lower-income populations. Additionally, agriculture is part of the indigenous culture of many of these groups, making a farming lifestyle one that celebrates their skills while providing greater inclusion in communities.

The research regarding women ‘ecopreneurs’ is particularly rich. While the total number of farms has been declining, the number owned and operated by women is on the rise — up nearly thirty percent, according to the 2007 Census of Agriculture released by the Department of Agriculture. Additionally, the Center for Women's Business Research (2009) tells us, businesses owned by women continue to grow at two times the rate of all companies. As the number of women-owned businesses and farms climbs, opportunities abound for women of all backgrounds, ages and interests giving them the opportunity to craft a livelihood in sustainable and organic agriculture that supports the planet and its communities while it transforms the food system.

This growth of women farmers comes after decades of discrimination and lack of representation within the agriculture community. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is currently settling claims from women farmers for past-denied farm loans due to gender discrimination. The process offers a voluntary alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or female farmer and rancher who can prove that USDA denied his or her application for loan or loan servicing assistance for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000. Women also qualify as ‘socially disadvantaged’ (SDA) within some Farm Bill and USDA programmes. Accessing information about special loans, or finding resources that are specific to women farmers, was an issue until the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) launched its Rural Women’s Project in 2008 (see MOSES n.d.). The MOSES Rural Women’s Project supports women farmers and food-based ecopreneurs with resources, networking and collaborative opportunities to champion food system change. The Project aims to increase the voice and impact of women in the organic and sustainable farming and food community.

An essential part of new farmer education has to do with innovative ways of financing this new business model of farming. While parcels of land are more affordable, land prices near urban areas can still be quite daunting. Additional expenses incurred for seeds, equipment, irrigation and structure construction add to expenses. One of the most common forms of farmer financial support has been developed in the form of community-supported agriculture (CSA). In community-supported agriculture, the customers of a local farm pay the farmer in advance for a consistent supply of food over a period of time. Seasonal offerings vary according to what the farmer has planted and how the crops have fared over the season. The customers share in the vagaries of nature. When the farmer loses a crop due to storm damage, the farm customers have less food for that season. Some CSAs aggregate a variety of food from other small farms and might include meat, egg, mushrooms or other crops not produced by the farmer who contracts these offerings from others. Restaurants in the Chicago area have also bought into this model and often pay to have certain crops produced that they know will be consumed in their business.

The organisation Family Farmed (see Family Farmed n.d.) offers education in the form of research and conference opportunities in ramping up local food production, particularly in the area of innovative finance options. GAP audits would support existing efforts to train growers about best practices in post-harvest handling. This is one area institutions of higher education could support and expand.

**How Can Local Government Support Local Food Systems?**

Universities are not the only institutions with opportunities to support regional food systems. Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is an agency that integrates land use planning with transportation for the counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will in Illinois. CMAP developed and now guides the implementation of metropolitan Chicago’s first comprehensive regional plan in more than a hundred years. The research done by CMAP identified twelve of the most urgent issues facing the Chicago metropolitan region in the next three decades. The Go TO 2014 Regional Plan (CMAP 2014) identified food security as one of the issues to be addressed through the development of local food systems. One of the most frequently cited obstacles to participation in urban and peri-urban agriculture activities in this region was confusion about land use as it relates to local food production. Most agricultural ordinances fall under ordinances created to regulate large-scale farms more often found in rural settings.

In large-scale agriculture, zoning was fairly easy and ordinances related to this zoning were easy to coordinate. With the more integrated model of land use in small-scale agriculture, lines become blurred. This is particularly true in the state of Illinois. Illinois is home to the greatest number of government districts in the nation. Further complicating food issues are the agencies needing to collaborate in production, processing and distribution of local food.
The use of non-traditional land also offers alternative space often free of municipal regulation. Park infrastructure provides additional opportunities for local food production. Author Temra Costa describes a particularly encouraging practice in which a number of nationally registered parks have started to encourage food production onsite (Costa 2010: 210). These lands, sometimes called ‘agriculture parks’, are protected from development through their ‘park zoning’ and classification and provide an opportunity to grow food with governmental infrastructure being sometimes called ‘agriculture parks’. At an agricultural park, nature trails, food production, and agricultural learning address economic, health-related, educational, and recreational needs while creating multifunctional places that link urban residents and farmers for their mutual benefit. Historic Wagner Farm in Glenview, Illinois provides such a venue. Wagner Farm is a homestead that has been preserved in the midst of suburban development. It serves as a historic reminder of our agricultural past but also serves numerous other services. Education for families and future farmers takes place in the meeting rooms that have been developed. Wagner Farm serves as the site for the Glenview Farmers Market and hosted a recent forum for the Illinois Farmers Market Association, a non-profit organisation formed to grow local farmers’ markets (see IFMA n.d.).

CMAP has identified ways local government can support the development of local food systems. These include:

- Provide access to land, facilities, and infrastructure to give local food systems a chance to become established. This can include entering into farming leases for food production on public land; supporting the development of facilities for storage, processing and packing through financing or donating county resources; and supporting business incubation centres or clusters for mutually beneficial activity.

- Adopt or modify policies and standards to encourage local food uses and operations and to reduce the cost and uncertainty of projects. This can include expedited permitting, supportive zoning, land use, and public health regulations, and financing tools such as guarantees, revolving loans, and tax rebates.

- Encourage the market, innovation, business, and entrepreneurs by adopting local food procurement targets; supporting workforce development efforts; linking hunger assistance programs to local food producers; and including local food systems in economic or development plans.

- Support a forum (such as a food policy council) to discuss and address local food system issues. Such a forum or council can serve to coordinate policy initiatives, research, education, programs, and events; support governments and business; and connect stakeholders, buyers, and sellers.

While the recommendations were made for local government support, these suggestions could just as easily be addressed and supported by other public/private enterprises. These are also prime areas of engagement for our community colleges and universities. This is particularly true for research on which to base regional plans and the development of forums for collaborative action. Support in developing business plans is another area ripe for higher education.

The unique challenges presented in Illinois such as the numerous regulatory codes and large inequalities in food access require an organised and coordinated response to local food production issues. A food policy council consisting of all stakeholders in the food system (producers, processors, distributors, consumers and policy makers) can provide the coordination necessary to address these complex issues. This combined perspective would allow for more informed policy decisions to be made within a larger regional context. The opportunities presented for developing sustainable local food systems are limited only by such a coordinated plan. Broadening the discussion of agriculture to include that of healthier communities, healthier planet and healthier local economies provides a valuable focus for regions. However, regions must position themselves to take advantage of such enterprise. Thoughtful land allocation for production, education for the new generation of farmers and coordination of local policy can set the table for a feast of opportunities.

Finally, looking at the full cycle of production calls for looking at waste management. Food scraps account for more than one third of the waste brought to Illinois landfills. Having universities compost wastes and recycle them in community university gardens provides a boon to both students and the environment.

Writing a Regional Narrative: Getting Back to Our Roots

So where else do universities fit in this picture? Obviously, being a consumer of local food can be the first step. That is often easier said than done. Procurement policies often demand food contracts go to the lowest bidder. Clean food is not always the cheapest. The cost of industrial agriculture is not always considered in the bottom line of university food budgets. The large amounts of food required to feed institutions requires a somewhat standardised ordering system. Several universities in the United States are addressing that through the aggregation of local farmers with the support of technology.
More importantly, universities can be key in helping a region understand its past, present and future. Coordinating all the moving pieces involved in the development of regional food systems requires the table to be set for collaboration. A common vision is needed to revamp food production, processing and distribution systems. Writing a regional narrative honouring the existing assets to be used in serving a sustainable economy can help. Agriculture is often a part of a region’s rich history and culture. Universities can provide the venue for finding those stories and telling them. Northern Illinois University is planning a documentary building such a regional narrative. Dr Laura Vasquez, a faculty member of the Communications Department, is working with students on a film relating the history of agriculture within the region, including new local food initiatives incorporating community and university gardens. This art sets the table for collaboration in sustainable local food production.

Conclusion

Our current industrial economy does not provide places for all. An economy supported by a slower growing agricultural base not only provides food security but also business opportunities with minimal investment. This is an economy of scale — slower growth but more equitable in nature. Engagement with institutions of higher education as well as corporate and governmental bodies can grow such enterprise. Focusing research of sustainable food systems, providing centres for engaged scholarship and using the arts to set the table for collaborative action, are but a few suggestions in this discussion. The development of policy supporting regional food systems requires communities and their regions to know their ‘place’ to leverage resources and honour culture. The humanities, arts and social sciences help universities put educational initiatives in a social context providing sustainable and ‘convivial’ tools such as those needed in local food production. Convivial tools are those building civic capacity supporting relationship and collaboration (Illich 1973). Placing technology and data in a context of the social sciences and the arts provides a foundation for the development of such tools.

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The Somnambulist

The somnambulist keeps stars in the pockets of his robe, throws his shadow at the moon, harvests cuts and bruises, a life kept secret: a double agent who doesn’t know he is a double agent. He steps into and out of fragments of dreams, wakes to sleep and wake again, searching always for something nebulous as a forgotten memory, something beyond the periphery, out of reach. Some mornings he wakes next to a stranger, in a stranger’s bed, where even the mirror seems to lie, to show a stranger’s face. Slipping into a fog of encrypted days he wonders if he will ever meet himself again.

DAVID ADES,
PITTSBURGH, USA

Flowers Grow

Built like a brick shithouse on Capital Hill arms akimbo muscles pulsing fingers pointing necks throbbing belching vile things; sexism racism bigotry mendacity warmongering hypocrisy and hideous scorn spreads across valleys swirls through towns in an unmelodious swill of rhetoric as malodorous as the oozing effluent attracting flies to dark holes beneath wooden seats in country outhouses across this land.

Yet, oceans still wave to the moon rains come, then the sun and everywhere, flowers grow.

LINDY WARRELL,
ALDINGA BEACH, SA
Transnational Teaching and Research in Australia in the ‘Asian Century’: A narrative-based case study

SUKHNANI KHORANA

This article uses the narrative case study approach to document the shifts in research and teaching in the contemporary Australian higher education environment. The release of the Federal Government's 'Australia in the Asian Century' White Paper in 2012 is considered here as the formal starting point for a shift towards a more transnational paradigm in terms of research content and approaches, as well as course curricula. However, both appear to continue to be marked by ethnocentrism and instrumentalism in the mainstream. Some strides are being made towards amplifying previously marginalised voices and enhancing cross-national and intercultural links at home and abroad by associations such as the Asian Australian Studies Research Network. Institution-based projects such as the ‘Transnational Teaching Teams’ project at the University of Wollongong documented here are attempting to bridge the gap in terms of creating an internationalised curriculum and linking the same to student progression and learning outcomes.

Introduction

This essay begins on a cold July morning at the University of Western Sydney, where Ken Henry, the economist and public servant is about to deliver a precursor to the soon-to-be-official unveiling of the ‘Australia in the Asian Century’ white paper (see Australian Government 2012). The occasion is the Day Three plenary panel of the 19th biennial conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia (ASAA 2012). Everyone in the room is eagerly awaiting the news that their previously overlooked area of research or teaching will be front and centre on the federal government’s agenda. However, the eager anticipation is accompanied by a degree of caution regarding the funding of any such agenda, and the recycling of old platitudes about Asian engagement that barely ever come to fruition. The wariness goes down a notch as Henry reveals a tripartite model of fraternising with Asia that gives equal weighting to government, trade, and people-to-people ties (ASAA 2012).

Then, as if on cue, we are reminded of the existence of a parallel Australia. According to Ien Ang, the abolition of the White Australia policy in the 1960s was ‘a matter of strategic government decision-making’, not necessarily of national popular conviction (2001: 119). Similarly, it has been suggested of the Asian century White Paper that it was an elite-centred response to burgeoning Asian economies such as China and India, and not a sentiment reflected in the wider Australian body politic. This is especially evident when engagement with Asia is divorced from a wholehearted embrace of the Asian diaspora in Australia (see Khorana 2013).

At the ASAA plenary, the disjuncture between policy and popular consciousness is brought to light when a linguist in the audience raises her hand and informs the panel about her dilemma with regards to teaching Asian languages on the ground. She chastises the Asian origin students in her classrooms for making it harder for those from Anglo backgrounds to enter and begin to learn. In other words, what could be regarded as a peer learning opportunity by some pedagogists is turned by this particular scholar/teacher into a potentially divisive situation. Hearing this, I and a fellow academic friend are caught between institutional cringe and cross-cultural disappointment. We have tried many a technique in our own Humanities classrooms to both introduce ‘Asian’ content in an accessible manner, and also to get domestic and international students talking to one another so that they see their similarities and not just their differences. Still, moments like the one described above at national and international conferences are not rare, and remind us that we have a long way to go to really unpack and repack the transnational paradigm in the contemporary Australian higher education setting. This transnationalising of universities, especially in the humanities and social sciences, is not merely confined to the ‘communing engagement’ function, but pervades all areas of teaching and research.

I am reminded of yet another moment of transnational awkwardness for the Australian humanities academic that occurred only a couple of weeks before the one at the ASAA in western Sydney. This time, I was seated with two feminist academic friends at the opening keynote
of the Crossroads in Cultural Studies conference being delivered by Sara Ahmed (ACS 2012). The venue for this was incidentally the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, arguably a symbol of transnationalism if the latter were to take on an architectural form. Ahmed herself is the Australian-bred scholar who has crossed over successfully into the cultural studies mainstream, and has published extensively on race, gender, queer theory and their intersections. Her talk was titled ‘The Willfulness Archive’, and explored the figure of the willful subject in literature, fables, educational treatises and moral philosophy. She began with a Grimm story on the willful child, and this was later published as a paper (see Ahmed 2012), and became part of a larger book project called Willful Subjects (Ahmed 2014). The willfulness of transnationalism is a crucial trope in my own research and teaching story, but I want to elaborate on the moment of awkwardness first to highlight what underpins this willfulness.

As willful arms arose to acknowledge Ahmed’s powerful talk, and the applause began to die down, a hand went up in the audience and we heard some words from a female academic who declared that she was based at an Australian university. I do not recall if she had a question for Ahmed, but distinctly remember her remarks about the seriousness of Indigenous issues in Australia being taken over by the ‘multicultural agenda’, and the subsequent cringe and disappointment shared among my friends and I. We wondered if some of our peers had glossed over postcolonial theory, bypassed strategic essentialism, and binned intersectionality for being irrelevant to their interests. We worried that transnationalism in the entrepreneurial Australian university had become shorthand for selling our programme offerings to lucrative international students, or winning strategic grants that targeted a regional and sometimes parochial approach to understanding the ‘Asian century’.

Research and Reflection

After completing a doctoral project on diasporic cinema, with a focus on the ‘elements’ film trilogy of Indian-Canadian director Deepa Mehta, I was prepared to be a scholar of the in-betweeness of migrant identity, creative practice and cultural production. Instead, I found myself employed as a postdoctoral research fellow on an eminent project that examined post-broadcast television trends across the globe. India was an obvious missing piece in the picture at the time of my appointment, and so I took on the challenge of trying to comprehend its television revolution, albeit through the very specific prism of its English-language television news networks. Although I was hesitant about being located within a regional studies framework, such as Indian media studies or South Asian studies, this situated research experience was pivotal in helping me undermine the very basis of a regional focus. This is because in addition to the uniqueness of the Indian media environment, such as its growing print media and reliance on television ratings, I also discovered how deeply entwined it was with transnational patterns of media ownership, rise of entertainment formats in news programming, and particular constructions of the imagined national audience.

What I did not anticipate, however, was how the above work would affect my own scholarly classification. I was surprised to be introduced in certain contexts as an ‘Indian’ film and television academic. Then there were the requests to review articles and manuscripts on Bollywood and/or Indian regional politics and media content. Perhaps I should have felt fortunate to be getting some recognition as an early career researcher, but I was wary that my diasporic brand was being relegated to the background in favour of a more saleable academic identity. When taking on a new teaching and research role after a two-year postdoctoral fellowship, I was similarly advised to design new research projects with a South Asian focus that could tie in with the government’s then newly-announced Asian century engagement. What I did instead, with conceptual assistance from colleagues, and funding from the Australia India Institute (based at the University of Melbourne), and the Australia India Council (part of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) was to organise the first ever conference of the Indian diaspora in Australia in Melbourne in September 2013.

The idea for the above event, titled ‘Gondwanalandings: Voices of the Emerging Indian Diaspora in Australia’ came about as a result of my doctoral research on Indian-Canadian diasporas and film culture, and the finding that there was an absence of comparable research and organised networks in the Australian context. With the support of esteemed colleagues who work in the field of South Asian Studies and/or diasporic cultures in Australia, I wrote to Professor Amitabh Mattoo, the director of the Australia India Institute, to organise a symposium that brought together scholarly, creative and community perspectives. The programme consisted of three plenary sessions with leading South Asian and diasporic studies scholars – namely, Professor Brij Lal, Associate Professor Devleena Ghosh, Professor Purnendra Jain, Associate Professor Kama McLean, and Dr Mridula Nath Chakraborty. The panels were on themes ranging from gender in the diaspora, Indian-Australian literature and publishing, media, language and cultural production, as well as perspectives from prominent creative practitioners. As the chair of the conference organising committee, I found it challenging to be inclusive in a community as diverse as Indians in Australia, and manage visionary goals with budgetary constraints and external funding partners. The community support, however, had been overwhelming, and emphasised the need to include...
those of non-Indian origin within a paradigm of intercultural communication that included intersection with settler, Indigenous and other migrant narratives. While this may not have fitted in with the instrumentalist goals of parts of the Asian century White Paper, it was essential for understanding both Asia and Australia as located in a transnational context, and to un-marginalise Asian Australian identities (see Khoo and Lo 2008; Ang 2001).

The above critical work is continuing with my role as a convening committee member for the fifth Asian Australian Identities (AAI5) conference to be held in Melbourne in 2015, as well as co-convening of the voluntary association that is the Asian Australian Film Forum and Network (AAFFN). AAI5 is organised by the Asian Australian Studies Research Network (AASRN), which, according to Khoo and Lo was founded in 2006, and is the main body for the promotion and development of Asian Australian Studies (2008: 427). The biggest impact of the emergence of this research node has been on amplifying previously marginalised voices in the Australian academy. As Khoo and Lo put it:

What used to be variously categorised as “area” studies, ‘minor’ history or community-based history and multicultural social research have gravitated towards Asian Australian Studies as it gains increasing profile and, by doing so, this has the effect of centralising what were previously considered marginal or minority concerns (2008: 428).

This has also enabled transnational connections with comparable fields such as Asian American and Asian Canadian Studies. At the same time, the specificity of place, the materialities of everyday life and the cultural politics of particular nations and regions are crucial in grounding the transnational, and this is duly recognised by Asian Australian scholars, creative practitioners and community workers.

The new challenges for this group consist of not merely continuing to give a voice to their concerns regarding diversity and representation, but also doing so with a greater focus on cross-ethnic interaction in the wake of recent Australia-specific political developments (such as the now-dropped proposed changes to the Racial Discrimination Act, the proposal to process asylum seekers in Cambodia, and the anti-terror laws leading to renewed Islamophobia — see, for instance, Griffiths 2014; Murdoch and Whyte 2014; McQuire 2014).

In light of the above, my current research project has taken the diasporic film focus of my doctorate into more transnational yet situated terrain by looking at refugee-themed screen media. I attempt to do this through the application of the notion of ‘ethical witnessing’ (Wessels 2011), a concept with specific local and global resonances (Butler 2013). The sentiment that underpins both my recent research output and ongoing community engagement endeavours is the afore mentioned willfulness of transnationalism. According to Ahmed, “Willfulness involves persistence in the face of having been brought down, where simply to “keep going” or to “keep coming up” is to be stubborn and obstinate. Mere persistence can be an act of disobedience’ (2012).

Perhaps Australia’s attempted engagement with Asia, and Australian universities’ all-round commitment to this goal, has room for such disobedience in that opening up to the ‘other’, without assimilation or alienation, can really only occur through an undoing of ethnocentrism. This is as crucial for the Anglo-Australian majority community as it is for those recognised as ‘ethnic minorities’ in this nation (see Khorana 2013). Asian Australian researchers probably now face additional pressures to engage with the ‘home’ region, and not just critique the discourses and practices of diversity in the new home. Perhaps these concerns can be managed, and perhaps teaching about ‘Asia’ in a slowly globalising humanities curriculum is a place to begin.

Teaching Practice and Transnationalism

In my new role as a lecturer in media and communications at the University of Wollongong (UOW), I participated in a participatory action learning (PAL) project that contributed to my understanding and practice of transnationalism in teaching contexts. The focus of the projects was the transnational programme team of the Bachelor of Communication and Media Studies (BCMS) degree. As it stands, the programme is offered at the University’s Wollongong (Australia), and INTI (Malaysia) campuses. While the course material and assessment structure is prepared by the UOW Australia subject coordinator, they are required to be in contact with the INTI coordinator, and undertake ongoing quality assurance exercises throughout the semester for the delivery of the subject at INTI. Therefore, the transnational project team consisted of the program convenor from UOW Australia, three subject coordinators (including myself) from UOW Australia, five UOW sessional tutors, the Dean of the program at INTI Subang in Malaysia, a subject coordinator from INTI, a project team member from INTI, and two project team members from UOW. The Wollongong team members video-conferenced with their Malaysian counterparts six times between August 2013 and December 2013, followed up by a wrap-up meeting in March 2014. In between the videoconferences, the project team members developed scholarly guides and gathered existing resources such as student data.
The overall objective of the above programme was to internationalise the curriculum and embed inclusive pedagogies throughout the BCMS degree programme. The course administrative aspects of this objective included goals such as developing internationalised course-level learning outcomes, collecting relevant data on student progression and assessments, and curriculum renewal focused on the core subjects offered at all three levels. In terms of pedagogic outcomes, the project focused on creating a shared Moodle (an open-source software used for blended learning) space for BCMS staff, students and alumni, building an online glossary, and creating video clips to assist students with blogging tasks. At the wrap-up meeting, I expressed interest in taking the internationalisation agenda further by co-developing the curriculum with the course coordinators based at the INTI campus so as to ensure greater incorporation of literature and approaches from the Asia Pacific region. While offshore teaching programs in this region are another instrumentalist reality of the contemporary entrepreneurial Australian higher education environment, I and other members of the project team were interested in turning this into both a learning opportunity and an equitable collaboration.

One of the first workshops for the project introduced the concepts of internationalisation of the curriculum and inclusive pedagogies, and discussed Bettie Leask’s five-stage model for the internationalisation of the curriculum (2009). This led me to consider whether those BCMS subjects that were not offered on the INTI campus were also internationalised in terms of their content and assessment design, and whether there was room for improvement. One such course is a Level Two unit titled ‘Digital Dissent’, and I was keen to undertake the above internationalisation exercise for this unit because I had developed it for the first time with a wide range of transnational case studies in 2013, and had run it again in the first semester of 2014. Towards the end of the latter session, I asked the class cohort, consisting of about 25 students to undertake a survey that had been adapted from Leask’s original to better fit the learning outcomes of this course.

The overwhelming majority of the surveyed students responded positively to the question that the course content itself was internationalised and encouraged them to learn more about the media and politics of non-Anglophone nations. However, the responses to the query about the course facilitating working in cross-cultural teams and groups were mixed. This may have been because the cohort was largely made up of domestic students from Anglo-Saxon backgrounds. Also noteworthy were the responses to the question, ‘to what extent do assessment tasks require students to recognise intercultural issues relevant to their discipline and/or professional practice?’ Again, the ratings varied, with one student commenting, ‘Assignments encouraged discussion of intercultural ideas, but ultimately left students to decide whether they chose to engage with them or focus on Australian examples’. Based on this feedback and the PAL project, I will be making minor changes to the assessment criteria for this and other courses that include transnational content and research approaches, but do not necessarily require students to demonstrate intercultural engagement in their assignments.

Therefore, in terms of both teaching and research practice, I and other Australia-based humanities colleagues are attempting to articulate and manifest a certain brand of transnationalism that is geared towards transcending ethnocentrism and instrumentalism. In taking the task of transnationalisation beyond the civic ‘community engagement’ function and applying it both to teaching and research, the goal is to both reframe ‘engagement’ and broaden teaching and research. The current higher education and broader political environment make this task simultaneously harder and more pressing, however. Perhaps we can take our cue in this regard from Asia-based institutions that are already engaged in comparative research projects as well as inter-Asia cultural studies, oftentimes without any governmental backing.

References


Leask, B. 2009 ‘Using formal and informal curricula to
Valley Man

School holidays squeal above the waterside park
there is some tide
a narrative of sorts
as another friend dies.

He drank, heartily without qualification.
Knew there was a price
& took his taxes seriously.
What art is there in old men? He
farmed his hobby pages
laughing at our tinny wars down in the city.

A coal in the liver
his days woodened in winter sunshine
as yet more children careen across timetables.
By a condolence of rivers
fish shrug onto the rapture of capture.

Les Wicks,
Mortdale, NSW

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comprehensive study of diasporic film theory and
practice, and she is the editor of a Routledge anthology
on ‘crossover cinema’ (2013).

Escape

Resentment brews
like ginger tea
 Burning my throat
Scouring inside

I slip away
to my wild space

Slick rocks
softened by moss
Black bugs burr the edges
of slow eddies

My tinnitus
is water falling

Fingers of light
pierce the canopy
hiding more than revealing
Deepening shadows

Moisture clings
expanding in the gloom
Every leaf a reservoir
ready to gift the soil below

A sigh gathers
Breath escapes

Thoughts intrude
of the long way back
It only takes a moment
in my mind.

Laura Brinson,
Fitzroy North, VIC
Reconsidering Humanities Programmes in Australian Universities – Embedding a New Approach to Strengthen the Employability of Humanities Graduates by Empowering Them as ‘Global Citizens’

David Dowling, Samantha Rose and Éidín O’Shea

Following the global financial crisis, the relevance of humanities programmes in contemporary Australian universities has come into question. Furthermore, the role of humanities graduates and their contribution to the workforce, and to society more broadly, has also been scrutinised. This paper recommends the adoption of a new approach to better identify, define and embed key graduate attributes within humanities programmes and argues that the major benefits accrue when this task is undertaken nationally by a discipline. The goal of this paper is to draw attention to the critical role humanities graduates play in contemporary society as ‘global citizens’ and proposes an alternative approach to enhancing the employability of humanities graduates so that their role in tackling global challenges can be more widely recognised.

Introduction

The recent literature and public debates are comprehensive in outlining how higher education internationally and within Australia is undergoing significant change. This has been particularly evident in the aftermath of the global financial crisis (GFC) where governments have directed attention to universities and their potential to support recovery (O’Shea 2014; Barber et al. 2013; Dodgson and Staggs 2012). Australia is not immune to these pressures (Davis 2013; Hill, 2012). The first budget of the Liberal government saw the introduction of a proposed higher education deregulation agenda that may result in institutions having to significantly increase fees (Harding 2014). The suggested changes have received the support of the majority of Australian universities with one notable exception. In a recent speech Canberra University Vice-Chancellor Professor Stephen Parker argued that the changes are ‘unfair to students’ and will see universities ‘sleep walking towards privatisation’ (Parker 2014).

There is now an increasing demand from Australian governments, employer organisations and accrediting bodies for more clearly defined ‘programme outcomes’ or ‘exit standards’ for tertiary education programmes in both the higher education and vocational education and training (VET) sectors. This is the focus of this paper, which responds to the question: How will the humanities need to be reconsidered by academics, industry, the university and the public in general? Some of the key initiatives that have the potential to lead this change to outcomes-driven curriculum design are discussed in the following sections.

Universities As Agents For Public Good and Fostering Global Citizens

Recent studies have focused on mapping this changing role of universities and their contribution to economic development and national innovation systems (Holmwood 2014). Internationally, funding streams are now starting to support this focus. In the European Union the launch of Horizon 2020 a funding instrument (2014-2020), with an €80 billion budget, aims to deepen the relationship between science and society. In a keynote address at a launch of the funding stream, Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn stressed how ‘more essential’ the contribution of humanities and social sciences will be to the overall success and impact of Horizon 2020 (Geoghegan-Quinn 2013). In the United States (US), Cornell University recently announced a $150 million ten year strategy focused on supporting students to be active and to become:

Global citizens who practice respect and empathy; seek collaboration, cooperation and creativity; embrace differences and diversity in all aspects of their personal, professional and civic lives; and are
dedicated to working together to help solve some of the world’s most intractable problems (Cornell Chronicle 2014).

Within this shift there is a recognition that universities must support their graduates to foster collaborative applied and generic skills. In Australia, the federal government’s focus appears to be on forging stronger links between university researchers and industries to drive economic growth and innovation by establishing five growth centres. These centres will provide the infrastructure needed to drive growth and job creation in five key sectors of the Australian economy: food and agribusiness; mining equipment, technology and services; oil, gas and energy resources; medical technologies and pharmaceuticals; and advanced manufacturing sectors (Inside Publishers 2014).

What then is the role of humanities in responding to this, and the other ‘grand’ challenges, and how, in particular, can we support students in Australia to see the value of the role humanities will play in responding to the challenges, particularly when humanities graduate employment rates are so low in these fields? The aim of this paper is to draw on the primary author’s learning over a fifteen year journey negotiating this ever increasingly complex maze, and to provide some tools for consulting stakeholders and developing ‘authentic’ graduate outcomes that are relevant to the graduate, academic and employer. As this is a collaborative paper between an engineer and humanities academics, a number of figures have been included to illustrate the text and to aid the readers’ understanding.

What Are Employability Skills?

York (2006: 8) defined employability skills as being:

... those skills, understandings and personal attributes that make an individual more likely to secure employment and be successful in their chosen occupation to the benefit of themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.

A review of the relevant literature shows that many other terms are also used to describe these non-discipline generic skills that employers expect graduates to have acquired. For example, core skills, essential skills, generic skills, generic professional skills, generic graduate attributes, non-technical skills, soft skills, and transferable skills (Gilbert et al. 2004; Johnston and McGregor 2004; Oliver 2010).

One of the key drivers for the focus on employability skills was the publication of The Employability Skills Framework, which was developed by the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Business Council of Australia, and published by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) in Employability Skills for the Future (DEST 2002). The project identified the key generic employability skills that graduates should have, in addition to the job-specific or relevant technical skills. The Employability Skills Framework included both personal attributes and key skills that contribute to overall employability. The Framework was reviewed and re-endorsed in 2007 and then in 2013 it was replaced by the Core Skills Developmental Framework in 2013 (Commonwealth of Australia 2013).

In the higher education sector, employability skills are normally incorporated in a set of graduate attributes defined by a university. Barrie (2004: 262) suggests that:

... generic graduate attributes in Australia have come to be accepted as being the skills, knowledge and abilities of university graduates, beyond disciplinary content knowledge, which are applicable to a range of contexts.

Graduate Capabilities

To avoid problems with the multiple meanings of the commonly used words ‘attribute’, ‘competency’, and ‘employability’, some practitioners have adopted the term ‘capability’ (Oliver 2012; Stephenson and Yorke 1998). Stephenson and Yorke define a capability as:

An integration of knowledge, skills, personal qualities and understanding used appropriately and effectively – not just in familiar and highly focused specialist contexts, but in response to new and changing circumstances (Stephenson and Yorke 1998: 2).

They suggest that one way of understanding capability is through a personal autonomy lens. This is achieved by describing a continuum between ‘dependent capability’ and ‘independent capability’. The continuum is illustrated in Figure 1, where one axis represents the continuum between familiar problems and unfamiliar problems, while the other axis represents the continuum between familiar contexts and unfamiliar contexts. The capability continuum stretches from solving simple problems in well-known contexts (quadrant A in Figure 1) through to solving unknown and unbounded problems in unfamiliar contexts (quadrant Z).

Stephenson and Yorke (1998) describe the capabilities in quadrant A as dependent capabilities as they involve the solution of familiar problems in familiar contexts. In the Australian context, the capabilities in quadrant A
may be called ‘competencies’, particularly in the VET sector. They describe the capabilities in quadrant Z as independent capabilities, as they involve the solution of unfamiliar problems situated in unfamiliar contexts. Effective performance in quadrant Z is ‘... likely to draw on all components of capability – specialist knowledge and skills, values and personal qualities, such as intuition, judgement and courage’ (Stephenson and Yorke 1998: 6).

Figure 1: Dependent and independent capabilities (adapted from Stephenson and Yorke 1998: 67).

Stephenson and Yorke’s original diagram was adapted to show that in addition to the capabilities represented by quadrants A and Z, there are capabilities that fall into quadrants M and N (Dowling 2010).

The level of dependency is important when defining capabilities. For example, the majority of the graduate capabilities for the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) (AQFC 2013) levels one to six qualifications would fall into quadrant A, with others falling into quadrants M and N. This contrasts with the graduate capabilities for AQF levels seven to ten qualifications, which would include the capabilities required to perform in quadrant Z as well as the capabilities to perform relevant tasks in the other three quadrants.

The Issue Facing Humanities Graduates

The Employability of Bachelor of Arts Graduates Report (Harvey and Shahjahan 2013) pointed to the current issues facing humanities graduates in the workforce. As Figure 2 indicates, since the GFC in 2009, the percentage of humanities graduates (and more significantly visual and performing arts graduates) in full time employment has steadily declined and is considerably lower than the rates achieved by graduates from other disciplines.

The GFC has also impacted on universities nationally and, for some universities, has prompted a reconsideration and restructure of undergraduate liberal arts programmes (the University of Melbourne and University of Western Australia are cases in point). The findings and recommendations of the Employability of Bachelor of Arts Graduates Report (Harvey and Shahjahan 2013) are therefore timely. The Report states ‘the liberal arts faculties (in some instances) are under significant pressure to justify their existence or to restructure, while in other instances are considered the backbone of undergraduate degrees for both philosophical and economic reasons’ (Harvey and Shahjahan 2013: 17).

In addition to the discrepancy between how universities view and value liberal arts programmes, the Report (Harvey and Shahjahan 2013) also highlighted a misalignment between how humanities graduate attributes are viewed and valued by academics, graduates and employers. This misalignment is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Ranked importance of humanities graduate attributes by stakeholder (adapted from Harvey and Shahjahan. 2013: 5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Group</th>
<th>Rank 1</th>
<th>Rank 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>Critical thinking/analytical skills and problem-solving skills</td>
<td>Communications skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>Critical thinking/analytical skills and problem-solving skills</td>
<td>Communications skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers</td>
<td>Communications skills</td>
<td>Problem-solving skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In defining what is meant by ‘critical thinking’, ‘analytical skills’ and ‘problem-solving’, the stakeholders expressed different understandings, further contributing to this
misalignment in perceptions. The Report (Harvey and Shahjahan 2013) also listed the challenges that the three stakeholder groups believed would face humanities graduates (also referred to as liberal arts or arts graduates), namely:

- Arts graduates are perceived poorly in the community. This then leads to a misperception of the value of their skills in and contribution to a competitive job market.

- The breadth and diversity of the Bachelor of Arts is seen as its weakness (but also its strength).

- Inability of humanities graduates to ‘sell themselves’ to potential employers (the lack of confidence by graduates to identify the skills they have developed and how to articulate these in the job-seeking process).

- Lack of specific career direction within the Bachelor of Arts program (and advice).

- Lack of ‘practical’ work experience within the Bachelor of Arts program.

- Misunderstanding or lack of understanding by employers of humanities graduate attributes compared to other degrees (e.g. engineering).

- Lack of practical focus within the Arts undergraduate program (Harvey and Shahjahan 2013: 5).

In many instances an underlying issue relating to defining and embedding graduate employability skills in Bachelor of Arts programmes results from the perception of academics. The report observed mixed responses from academics when asked whether they saw ‘employability as a goal in their teaching’ and, in particular, in terms of whether ‘employability’ should be seen as a ‘goal of the university as a whole’ (Harvey and Shahjahan 2013: 105). Of the 40 academics interviewed from the five case studies identified in the report, the following provides a breakdown of responses:

- 27.5% viewed employability as not a primary or main goal in their teaching;
- 22.5% viewed it as a goal;
- 17.5% understood employability to be an indirect goal;
- 12.5% did not see employability as a goal;
- 5% viewed it as an outcome;
- 5% selected ‘Unknown’; and
- 10% selected ‘Other’ and added a comment, for example:

- Employability is a joint responsibility of students and the institution.
- Employability ought to be different for Bas.
- A goal depending on student demographics and teaching vs. coordinator role.
- Employability is a goal in some areas and it is not right looking at employability across all areas.

(Harvey and Shahjahan 2013: 106)

Respondents distinguished between the role of the university and its Bachelor of Arts programmes as means of developing generic, transferrable skills enabling graduates to be ‘employable’ in the workforce as opposed to developing specific, vocational skills; in other words, generalist foci versus technical foci (Harvey and Shahjahan 2013). The report noted:

The majority of academics want to see ‘employability’ as an outcome of their teaching rather than a goal within the BA curriculum. These academics tend to object to focusing on the development of students’ job skills but believe their role is to educate students so they become good citizens, which will in turn make them employable (Harvey and Shahjahan 2013: 105).

Finally, the report calls for better articulation of clearly defined graduate attributes and a clearer demonstration of how these can be embedded within Bachelor of Arts programmes. While there are a number of ways this may be achieved, this paper proposes that the Defining Your Discipline (DYD) approach would be beneficial if applied in the humanities disciplines.

**Higher Education Stakeholders**

The examples described in the previous sections demonstrate the increasing pressure higher education providers are facing from external organisations to more clearly define what the graduates from their programmes should know and be able to do, in both the generic (employability) and discipline-specific domains. This is not an easy task for individual institutions, schools or departments because of tight timelines, competing priorities and limited resources.

When the requirements of universities, schools and academics (teachers and researchers) are added to this list, developing a set of programme outcomes becomes a complex task. The complexity of this task is illustrated in Figure 3, which shows the key stakeholders in the higher education process. The straight line arrows from each stakeholder illustrate how each stakeholder influences the development of the programme graduate outcomes and, consequently, the curriculum and pedagogy.
Two examples from Figure 3 are used to illustrate the complexity of this process. Firstly, since January 2012, higher education providers have been required to demonstrate to the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA 2012) that they meet the legislated Higher Education Threshold Standards, including graduate outcomes, and provide the evidence that graduates can achieve them.

Secondly, some government agencies and industry organisations, particularly accrediting bodies, have defined a set of graduate attributes for their discipline. These then become the benchmark for programmes in these disciplines, as universities seeking accreditation for a programme would be expected to demonstrate how their students acquire and are able to validate achievement of those attributes. The aim of each programme design group is to negotiate an efficient and effective way through this programme outcomes maze and develop a set of programme outcomes that satisfies all of the stakeholders.

Some practitioners and employers may contribute to the curriculum design process through their involvement as sessional staff or as members of industry advisory committees (see Figure 2). They are also able to provide recommendations about both the knowledge and skills graduates require as well as requirements relating to professional practice. Of this group, the practitioners who employ or supervise graduates are able to provide an important perspective on graduate outcomes. However, as can be seen in Figure 3, the vast majority of employers and practitioners are unlikely to be consulted about the development of graduate outcomes or curriculum.

In the next section a case study is used to illustrate how one humanities discipline has consulted with its stakeholders to support the development of a national set of graduate outcomes.

The Archaeology Case Study: Skills Sets and Gaps

A recent study of the archaeology profession in Australia flags the need for a strengthening of graduate attributes within curriculum development. The study is based on findings from two surveys, the first conducted in 2005 and the second in 2010. The surveys focused on ‘access and participation, archaeological workplaces, qualifications and skills gaps’ (Ulm et al. 2013: 34) in the profession. Table 2 lists the Archaeological and non-Archaeological Skills identified from the survey data. It also shows the ten most valuable skills, ranked by the participants.
It is important to note that not all of the skills would be included in university curricula as some skills would normally be acquired through training rather than education programmes. For example, four-wheel driving is one of the non-Archaeology specific skills in Table 2. This is the application of a quadrant A (see Figure 1) capability (Driving) in new contexts, quadrant N (four-wheel drive vehicles, and driving in difficult terrain and remote areas).

The study highlighted some important findings: ‘Over the last decade, government and private sector employers in Australia have been increasingly vocal about a perceived lack or diminution of graduates’ practical archaeological knowledge and skills’ (Ulm et al. 2013: 39). A survey of 399 participants in 2010 found:

- 86% agreed that more emphasis should be placed on developing practical consulting skills;
- 91.5% agreed that more emphasis should be placed on developing broad critical thinking skills; and
- 99.5% agreed, or strongly agreed that practical field-based archaeological experience should be an important part of undergraduate degrees.

The survey revealed that ‘interpersonal communication ranked as the most valuable skill, followed closely by report writing and computer literacy’ (Ulm 2013: 39). Similar to the 2013 Report (Harvey and Shahjahan 2013), the survey also found that ‘only two of the ten most valued skills are considered to be archaeology specific skills’ (Ulm 2013: 39). Furthermore, a significant finding was the lack of correlation between the identified most valuable skills against the identified skills gaps. For example, while interpersonal communication was considered the top most valuable skill, out of the 42 identified skills gaps, it was listed as last. The authors concluded that this meant there was ‘no perceived skill gap in the area’ (Ulm 2013: 40).

Findings like these can inform further curriculum development to strengthen graduate attributes. Pertinent to the thesis of this paper, the authors observed:

The contrast between the broad generic nature of most valued skills … and the mainly archaeology specific practical skill gaps support findings that both technical and broad conceptual skills are vital to meeting current demands of the workplace as part of broader curriculum (Ulm 2013: 41).

Applying the DYD model more broadly to humanities programmes will assist in identifying these skills gaps.

**A National Approach**

A nationally agreed set of Graduate Capabilities for a programme would be a valuable resource for discipline leaders tasked with developing programme curricular. The DYD Stakeholder Consultation Process (Dowling and Hadgraft 2013a) was designed to be used by a discipline to engage with its stakeholders (academics, employers, graduates and practitioners), preferably nationally, to define a Graduate Capability Framework for a programme in their field (and at the relevant AQF level). As shown in Figure 4, the DYD process enables a discipline to intentionally engage with stakeholders, particularly those not normally included in curriculum review processes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Archaeology Specific Skills</th>
<th>Archaeology Specific Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General business</td>
<td>Field survey techniques*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal communication*</td>
<td>Excavation techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership*</td>
<td>Stone artefact identification and analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human resource management</td>
<td>Faunal analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational health/safety</td>
<td>Residue and use-wear analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales/marketing</td>
<td>Archaeological theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy/public relations</td>
<td>Rock art recording and analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report writing*</td>
<td>Ceramic analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library/archival research*</td>
<td>Human skeletal identification and analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer literacy*</td>
<td>Knowledge of legislation*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographical Information Systems (GIS)</td>
<td>Significance assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical analysis</td>
<td>Heritage management planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-cultural communication</td>
<td>Conservation of artefacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of intellectual property issues</td>
<td>Policy development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photography</td>
<td>Understanding of research ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking*</td>
<td>Drawing/illustration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management*</td>
<td>Sediment analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project management*</td>
<td>Floral analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation/mediation</td>
<td>Cataloguing of artefacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four-wheel driving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching/training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Consultation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The ten most valuable skills
When the DYD process is used, the resulting Graduate Capability Framework defines the Graduate Capabilities for an educational programme by clusters of tasks that together define what a graduate from the programme should be able to do in their first two or three years after graduation, including supervised tasks. For example, the Graduate Capability Framework for Environmental Engineering degree programmes (Dowling and Hadgraft 2013b) includes capabilities in three categories (see Table 3):

- **Technical Capabilities**: the knowledge and skills of a typical environmental engineering graduate;
- **Process Capabilities**: The processes that environmental engineering practitioners use to apply their knowledge and skills; and
- **Generic Capabilities**: the capabilities that graduates from most engineering disciplines would be expected to have. Many of these would also be classed by universities as graduate attributes.

### Table 3: Environmental Engineering: Technical, Generic and Process capabilities (Dowling & Hadgraft, 2013b: 7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical Capabilities</th>
<th>Process Capabilities</th>
<th>Generic Capabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water resources &amp; supply</td>
<td>Investigation</td>
<td>Project management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stormwater management &amp; reuse</td>
<td>Modelling &amp; analysis</td>
<td>Ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water &amp; wastewater treatment</td>
<td>Integrated design &amp; implementation</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources &amp; waste management</td>
<td>Assessment of impact, risk &amp; sustainability</td>
<td>Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soils and geology</td>
<td>Environmental planning &amp; management</td>
<td>Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air &amp; noise</td>
<td>Audit, compliance and review</td>
<td>Self-management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy systems &amp; management</td>
<td></td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To illustrate the fine-grained outcomes that result from the application of the DYD approach an extract showing some of the indicative tasks undertaken by a graduate conducting an investigation (a Process Capability) is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Indicative tasks undertaken by environmental engineering graduates (Source: Dowling and Hadgraft 2013b: 11).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process Phases</th>
<th>Indicative Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Defines the scope of the investigation and identifies systems</td>
<td>a. Reaches agreement with client on the goals, objectives, constraints, deliverables and acceptance criteria for the investigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Identifies, defines and reaches agreement with the client on the system boundaries particularly space, time and cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Identifies the likely stakeholders and their areas of interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. Documents the preliminary scope of the investigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Plans the investigation</td>
<td>a. Selects appropriate investigation methods after considering current, new and emerging methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Identifies data and information needs, and any knowledge gaps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Identifies sources of appropriate knowledge and information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. Identifies relevant regulatory frameworks, codes and standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e. Identifies data to be gathered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f. Develops sampling strategies, methods, locations and sizes and any specialist input required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>g. Etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Graduate Capabilities are interconnected: for example, as a graduate undertakes each step in a process, such as a step in an investigation process, they use specific generic capabilities to apply the relevant knowledge and skills sets to complete that step. The challenge is to apply the DYD process and map the graduate capabilities for a programme in a discipline in the humanities space.

To illustrate the likely outcome of applying the DYD process in a humanities discipline, the Archaeology Skill Sets previously discussed (see Table 2) have been re-arranged into sets of Technical and Generic Capabilities, as well as a suggested set of Process Capabilities. (see Table 5).

Using a Graduate Capability Framework To Inform Curriculum Development

A cyclical process may be used for the review, design, delivery and evaluation of the curriculum for a programme (see Figure 5). The implementation of the process may be aligned with a programme accreditation cycle, for example, a five year cycle.

The four phases of the cycle are:

- Phase 1: a set of Graduate Capabilities is defined for a program, or an existing set is reviewed.
- Phase 2: the Graduate Capabilities are used to inform the development of the curriculum for a new program or to review the existing curriculum program.
- Phase 3: students acquire the Graduate Capabilities
through their engagement with learning and teaching activities.

- Phase 4: student capabilities are assessed and the stakeholders evaluate the program.

(Dowling and Hadgraft 2014)

Figure 5: A graduate capability driven curriculum design and delivery process (Source: Adapted from Dowling 2013: 8).

The DYD Stakeholder Consultation process may be used to inform Phase 1 of the cycle, i.e. the definition or review of the Graduate Capabilities for a programme.

Curriculum Development

As stated previously, the main purpose of developing a Graduate Capability Framework is to inform curriculum design, the selection of pedagogies, the planning of learning experiences and the development of assessment schemes. The inclusion of Process Capabilities in the framework reinforces the importance of practice-based perspectives in the curriculum design process and in the selection of pedagogies. For example, practice-based pedagogies such as problem-based learning (PBL) and project-based learning are commonly used in some disciplines to support student learning (for example in medicine and engineering). The lack of practice-based perspectives in many of the current Bachelor of Arts programmes is highlighted in the Employability of Bachelor of Arts Graduates Report (Harvey and Shahjahan 2013) as an aspect that needs to be addressed. The DYD approach, when applied to the humanities discipline should mean that student learning is constructed on a practice framework rather than the traditional knowledge framework, thereby enabling humanities graduates to be better equipped to gain employment and to face the ‘grand challenges’ of the twenty-first century. Specifically, if students learn about, and are able to apply, the processes commonly used by practitioners in their discipline then they will be better placed to make a successful transition into the world of work.

Conclusion

Higher education is at a crossroads in Australia. The first Liberal budget message to higher education was clear: universities must fend for themselves. From 2015 to 2018, over $1.1 billion will be withdrawn from higher education as the federal government decreases its contribution to undergraduate places (Bexley 2014). Universities have been preparing for this new deregulated market with some, such as the University of Western Australia, deciding that the cost of a generic three year degree will be approximately $48,000 (Walker 2014). It is within this context that this paper has addressed the need to define industry authenticated graduate outcomes for each discipline to ensure that future programmes meet the challenges of achieving and sustaining higher employability rates for humanities students.

It is worth repeating here, that developing or reviewing programme curriculum is a complex task in the contemporary programme outcomes-based educational environment. The work reported in this paper highlights the need to carefully plan the curriculum design and review process to ensure that an efficient and effective path is followed through the programme outcomes maze.

The DYD Stakeholder Consultation Process is a simple but elegant tool that can be used to translate a discipline’s Threshold Learning Outcomes into a set of detailed graduate capabilities. It enables a discipline to engage nationally with all of the relevant stakeholders to develop an authentic Graduate Capability Framework for each of the programmes within the discipline (Freeman 2013). For the process to be meaningful and sustainable, the complexities involved in embedding graduate capabilities within the humanities disciplines needs to be reflected and captured, not only in policy, but in practice, and within university funding processes. Such changes have the potential to generate positive socio-economic benefits for the nation, while enabling Australia’s higher education institutions to remain relevant to the public. By applying the DYD approach to better understand and embed graduate attributes into humanities programmes, it is envisioned that humanities graduates will be more empowered to play their role as global citizens in tackling the challenges that face society in Australia, and across the world.

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Acknowledgements
The authors wish to thank the reviewers for their comments which helped to improve the original manuscript.

To Tend

to tend the gods as given, as found
new habits of homage are required

in word untamed, in sight unframed
paths to follow are so chosen,
by you, for you, willing, blind

go to the makers
not to the mockers
take the trouble to tell them apart

dust of the world you’re sleeping off
lonely under feats of self
but work outlasts if you stay with the tune
survives you and the all-that-wearied

mockers, thieves and smug ignorners
in the end they scale away

so

get the toxins out of your system
protect yourself

light in the eyes may be derided
spring in the step, its menace is met

but you, brave maker
face the dark without, within

for you the tale untold doffs cap
the wheels take on their fated spin

if you’ll remember one injunction

go to the makers
never the mockers

 tend to the habits of homage
you’ve found

(This is a rework of a poem which originally appeared in Social Alternatives 20 years ago)

My Flat
(For Jennifer Allen)

i don’t go crazy
these days yet a dog barks a lot
sometimes at night & it’s new
but birds can often be heard also

the big doors close
quite easily though the window’s a little stiff
all flooring is now almost free of waterlogging
& the walls nearly gone of upmarket pet-marks

natural southern light abounds
in winter while transport & shopping is close
the neighbours keep their distance
& the garbage goes where it should

if you want to
you can nearly touch my ceilings
on odd occasions fallen crumbs may be left
the ants express interest also the rats

MATT HETHERINGTON,
BRISBANE, QLD

Kit KeLEN,
MarkWEll, nSW And MacO

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MATT HETHERINGTON,
BRISBANE, QLD

Kit KeLEN,
MarkWEll, nSW And MacO
Practically, the unique purpose of the university is to foster a culture of critical questioning, sharing it with our next generation of students, and nurturing a critical impulse in the broader society. If we do nothing else, we ought to be a model of critical culture – holding ourselves to the highest and most exacting standards, constantly dialoguing, constantly challenging, and defending the current and assumed state of knowledge. While showing intellectual leadership publicly, we absolutely value academic methods of questioning and engaging in the logic of change and willingly submit to the scrutiny of our peers, but never submit to illegitimate external pressure or personal economic impact. We value participation in the broader society, disseminating new knowledge, taking inspiration from what happens outside our campuses, asserting the values of the academy, balancing the inherent tension between academic objectivity and engaging in topics that are inherently value laden. Although conservative in our governance and methods, we are by definition progressive in spirit. We strive to discover truth and meaning, while never being completely satisfied with revealed truth. Well, this is what we might aspire to in any event. It is to serve these purposes that the rights and responsibilities of academic freedom have evolved, and it may be through the lack of exercise that they can be diminished.

Let's move on with a simple question. Given the critical and conversational nature of the university as described above, what does it mean for a university to have a civic role? Starting something, anything, everything, with a question is a uniquely academic trait. It is a quality that excites other academics, raises a cautious smile from seasoned university administrators, and tends to baffle and frustrate many others outside of the university fellowship. It also points to the unique nature and purpose of the university. Although there are others in all types of organisations who ask questions, there perhaps are no others who love questions so much as those who inhabit universities.

Questions and conversation are important parts of university life, serving not only as principal sources of inspiration and the fundamental tools of intellectual trade, but also as the university’s unique and defining quality. As such, the purposes of the questions and the ensuing conversation are tied to the fundamental purpose of the university and are frequently implied in university missions. The questions of highest quality lead to conversations that are at times enjoyable and even playful, sometimes uncomfortable and confronting, but when posed in the university they are always purposeful. And those within the academic community who are most able to pose purposeful questions and lead the evolving conversation, engage colleagues, students, and the broader public, while using the methods of discovery refined within the disciplines with fidelity, and are those who fulfill the fundamental university purpose most ably. Arguments judged as well-reasoned and compelling by peers are rewarded, while arguments that captivate the imaginations of the public transcend the university.

And of course good questions often lead to more questions, which is well illustrated in this issue of Social Alternatives. If we are going to ask about the university’s civic role, we really do need to eventually ask ourselves about the nature of the university. What is it and what are its purposes? These two questions are so closely related that it is nearly impossible to meaningfully tease out one from the other. I will start poking at what the university is by referring to a story about Ernst Kantorowicz, a scholar of some note, who in the early 1950s was at the centre of a loyalty oath controversy at the University of California where he served as a full professor.1 Through Kantorowicz’s story we start framing what the university is and can see how the university is perhaps something different from many other organisations and how that might shape the way we respond to our questions about its purpose and civic roles.

While serving the University of California, Dr. Kantorowicz was asked and subsequently refused to sign a loyalty oath. He had at least two general reasons for refusing to sign. First, but not foremost, oaths according to Kantorowicz, have an insidious way of restraining inquiry and speech. Second, although Kantorowicz acknowledged that the State of California had the authority to demand oath signing of its employees, including those at the University of California, it did not have the authority to ask it of the professoriate. To this second point Kantorowicz (1950) asserts that:

There are three professions which are entitled to wear a gown: the judge, the priest, the scholar. This garment stands for its bearer’s maturity of
mind, his independence of judgment, and his direct responsibility to his conscience and to his God. It signifies the inner sovereignty of those three interrelated professions: they should be the very last to allow themselves to act under duress and yield to pressure. It is a shameful and undignified action, it is an affront and a violation of both human sovereignty and professional dignity that the Regents of this University have dared to bully the bearer of this gown into a situation in which – under the pressure of a bewildering economic coercion – he is compelled to give up either his tenure or, together with his freedom of judgment, his human dignity and his responsible sovereignty as a scholar.

... Why is it so absurd to visualize the Supreme Court justices picketing their court, bishops picketing their churches, and professors picketing their university?

The answer is very simple: because the judges are the Court, the ministers together with the faithful are the Church, and the professors together with the students are the University. Unlike ushers, sextons, and beadles, the judges, ministers, and professors are not Court employees, Church employees, and University employees. They are those institutions themselves, and therefore they have certain prerogative rights to and within their institutions which ushers, sextons, and beadles or janitors do not have.

The point here is that in the university, its professors and students are fundamentally different from employees working for, and contributing to, the university-corporate: they are the thing itself. They stand outside of the employer-employee relationship, and ultimately it is the thing that must regulate itself. At least at some level, this is to help ensure the existence of conditions necessary for objectivity to pursue the truth and address controversial topics. This is a very convenient way of framing what the university is in accordance with its purpose, and what the university is as a corporate entity. The former has always been central. It captures the roles of the professoriate and students, and defines the idea of the university. The university-corporate has become increasingly important in the contemporary university, and is defined by the growing ranks of administrators, tradespeople, labourers, professionals, and academic managers – of which I am one – who are now required to run the university corporation. To provide some clarity, I will refer to the professoriate and the students as the university, while referring to what remains as the university-corporate in a manner not unlike the body-corporate. The term professoriate, in its common use, describes both an individual and a collective. As a collective, it refers to a group of professors, frequently serving the same university, college, or school, but it also describes a collective identity extending beyond organisational structures. It turns on age old notions of collegiality that respect both the individual scholar’s autonomy as a free thinker, and protects the integrity of the profession and idea of community. As such it underpins the notion of a self-regulating, critical, and reflective community of scholars committed to the growth of knowledge that enjoy both the privileges and responsibilities of academic freedom – once again, a concept that means little without the notion of a professoriate.

The university-corporate is intended to serve the university and its purposes. So, within the context of the university’s purpose, the university is an organisation designed to support the purpose of the professoriate and students. And the purpose of the university is to learn, advance our understandings of truth through critical questioning and discovery, and in so doing, grow our knowledge and improve our practice. When referring to the entity more generally, the university is the combination of the professoriate, students, and the university-corporate.

The purpose of the academic conversation according to many international benchmark universities is to discover and disseminate knowledge in the pursuit of truth, while the purpose of the university-corporate is to provide the conditions under which such a purpose can be pursued and in which excellence can be achieved. In our non-academic lives, truths and truth claims tend to be relatively casual and are stated with ease. We expect marketers to stretch the truth while trying to convince us it is in our best interest to consume, and we expect mass media corporations to simplify the truth to appeal to the least common denominator, and we expect politicians, special interest groups, corporations, and government organisations to massage, spin, and selectively reveal truths to promote their own objectives. We interpret these truths, when we can, with a filter that accounts for the agenda we believe is being promoted or the hidden agenda that must be assumed.

In our academic life, on the other hand, we expect that truth claims have no alternative or hidden agenda. Although, it would be naive to assert that this is always the case it is something meaningful and valuable to strive toward, something that generates excitement when the norms are egregiously broken, and something that virtually no other organisational type can claim as their principal purpose.

This purpose that is unique to the university has influenced the creation of distinctive structures and practices that have evolved to support the university’s special role as
trusted pursuer, discoverer, challenger, preserver, and distributor of truth. We have created rules of exploration designed to ensure that unwanted external and personal influence do not influence our truth claims. To this end we strive to ensure objectivity, methodological rigor, and transparency. Our structures are based on the values of meritocracy, in which ideas and truth claims are judged by peer review, through patient, methodical, and layered processes ensuring validity.

We assert that we can be trusted to make truth claims because we are objective, but not necessarily value-neutral in our purpose, and where our objectivity might be questioned, we are obliged to make that clear. We are bound by professional standards to make our assumptions and our purposes transparent like few other professional communities. This has resulted in the development of commonly assumed practices of academic governance, the institution of tenure, and the rights and responsibilities of academic freedom.

Taken together, our serious purpose and principle-based structures and norms make us different from other types of organisations, leaving us with an other-worldly aspect, ample opportunity for misunderstanding in the general public, vulnerable to uninformed criticism, and with an unfortunate tendency to become self-absorbed and insular. At the end of our day though, we provide something singular to civil society. We create a unique culture designed to engender trust in the service of progress, based on reason that works through the patient and conservative processes in which universities contribute to the common store of knowledge. And when practised with fidelity, those values and structures confer the professor with a special status in society – one that Kantorowicz has already alluded to.

I have come the long way around to the first point that I wanted to make. Universities are fundamentally different from other types of organisations, and these differences are critical to our leading question. What does it mean for a university to have a civic role? Because we are different from other types of organisations, our roles will likely be different from other organisations. Broadly speaking, we can express our civic role through our academic programming and outreach activities, which can be interpreted as public intellectualism. All of our academic programming can articulate our civic role through formal instruction and the informal curriculum, both of which have an expressive intellectual quality.

As previously suggested, the university's civic role by definition ought to be somewhat radical. I am using the term to indicate a line of questioning intended to challenge the fundamental nature of civic life, and the assumptions and arrangements of public life. That is, I am suggesting that we need to be active and we need to express values. Although the civic role may be intensely value-laden, it must also meet the standards that we hold for ourselves and our peers as university scholars. This needs to be reflected in our teaching and learning as part of the university's public intellectual role.

So, what type of teaching do we want to provide in service of our civic role? Stanley Aronowitz in The Knowledge Factory indicated that there are three types of ends for university teaching – occupational, assimilative, and transformative. And according to Aronowitz (2000: 1; 143), the curricular intent at many universities is shifting from critical to conformist suggesting that:

It is becoming harder to find a place where learning, as opposed to 'education' and 'training', is the main goal. Training prepares the student in knowledges that constitute an occupation or a particular set of skills. For the most part, graduate schools train students to enter a profession. Education prepares the student to take her place in society in a manner consistent with its values and beliefs. Whatever content the school delivers, the point is to help the student adapt to the prevailing order, not assimilate its values in terms of her own priorities and interests. Education is successful when the student identifies with social and cultural authorities.

There is thus not much evidence of real learning taking place at most postsecondary institutions, if by that we mean the process by which a student is motivated to participate in, even challenge, established intellectual authority.

Obviously, the civic role of universities will include provision of information about current civic structures and norms, but must also embrace pedagogy that is designed for engaging and initiating change through critical and effective engagement. That is, we should be concerning ourselves with higher education for learning. As such the university should be uniquely suited to provide rigorous and critical learning that includes a set of values, and also rigor and authenticity. We should see evidence of this through the exercise of academic freedom, expression from the professoriate, and the enculturation of such values and behaviours in learners. While it might be all right for others in other types of organisations to ignore facts as they emerge or ignore methodological rigor, this ought not to be so for the university. This brings me to a central point.

There are no other types of organisations available to participate in the civic dialogue that are dedicated
to growing knowledge, pursuing truth, and advancing learning that are bound to take inquiry where it leads based on disciplinary standards – an organisation that values getting it right more than getting it done quickly, one that is patient, and sometimes impractical, but always reflective and sceptical.

What happens when we remove ourselves from our civic role? Will anybody notice? Will anybody else take our place? Bart Giamatti, former president of Yale University along with many others, has clearly stated that when we become silent and withdraw from society, others will fill the vacuum that we have left, and those from outside the university will redefine the university for us and communicate it with self-assumed authority in the eye of the public. So who will fill the vacuum left when the university is not present and fulfilling its civic role, when academics fall silent, and the only questions students are disposed to ask are about their compensation packages upon leaving the university? Will it be Halliburton, the National Rifle Association, News Corporation, a political party, an organised church, or any number of other organisations with a vested interest in civic expression that fills our role? Does the nature of the dialogue and public life more generally suffer from our absence?

Removing ourselves from the dialogue is one way to reduce our civic role, but perhaps more likely and less noticeably is removing or compromising the university while maintaining an active and present university-corporate. What happens when the university adopts a self-identity that is much more like a business or a government agency than a community of scholars? And this is what we need to understand and resist. By abandoning our identity as a university, allowing the university-corporate to change the character of the university beyond meaningful recognition, we threaten to remove an important part of the civic ecosystem, one that is active, but intellectually rigorous – one whose voice is ‘academic’ and is of the university, with the university-corporate serving that voice. We must trust the university and its culture to represent itself.

As public funding for higher education has contracted for both teaching and research in many developed countries there is no question that the university has changed significantly. The trend we refer to as the corporatisation of the university has transposed the relationship between the university and the university-corporate. This is reflected in growing reliance on adjunct faculty, for whom academic freedom does not apply; increased emphasis on occupational training and a reduction in general or liberal learning; the empowerment of the student as customer; and the assumption that a university education is principally a private good, creating a transactional relationship between students, teachers, and the university-corporate that does not support either learning or a discourse necessary for the university to raise to its critical and reflective civic role.

The principal opportunity that the university has to reclaim its ability to fill its civic role is simply to be itself. More accurately, at many post-secondary institutions it needs to reassert itself. The university can do so through its curriculum, pedagogy, and the shared understanding between the professoriate and learners of what it means to be university educated, critical, and engaged in public life as part of a university community of scholars: in short, what it means to exercise a civic role as a public intellectual.

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Author
Ken Udas currently serves as the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Academic Services and CIO of the University of Southern Queensland, a role he began in 2013. From 2009-2012, Udas served as the CEO of UMass Online. Prior to this, Udas spent three years as the Executive Director of Penn State World Campus. Udas has also held positions as the Director of the SUNY Learning Network and as the Director of the eLearning Group at the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand. He actively promotes open culture and practice through a range of professional activities.

End Notes
1. For more information about the Loyalty Oath scandals at the University of California, see ‘The Loyalty Oath Controversy, University of California 1949-1951’ http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/uchistory/archives_exhibits/loyaltyoath/index.html
'If you want an Indonesian boat, try Adi. That's him,' the fisherman at the wharf-side market said, pointing to a scruffy figure near the water. 'Hey. Don't say I told you.'

The man was leaning against a walkway that led down to a pontoon where several more fishermen were selling salmon, oysters and snapper. The ground near his feet was red with fish blood. The boat moored nearby was also red. It looked small but sturdy.

'Are you Adi?' asked Oliver.

The man said nothing; he merely looked at Oliver impassively, weighing him up.

'I need some help,' began Oliver again.

The man stared, grunted and spat red spittle. But he didn't walk away.

'I'm looking for someone to help an asylum seeker,' Oliver whispered. He wasn't good at this secretive stuff, but what could he do? He thought bitterly of the words, 'For those who come across the seas/We've boundless plains to share'. What was this 'sharing' supposed to be based on? Money? Skin colour? Or just the fact that people are people? Was Australia really 'cosmopolitan'? Multicultural? He repeated more firmly, 'I'm looking for someone to help an asylum seeker.'

'Huh?' asked the man.

'From Indonesia,' said Oliver.

The man stared into the distance and shrugged his shoulders.

'So you'll help me?' asked Oliver.

Again a grunt.

'How much will it cost?' Oliver persisted.

The man's face flickered with a brief expression of interest, then reverted to sullenness.

'Seven thousand,' he replied, holding up seven fingers to make sure the dumb-ass Australian understood. 'Dollar,' he added for clarity.

Oliver shook his head. 'That's too much.'

The man shrugged again and turned back to face the little boat by the jetty.

'When are you leaving?' asked Oliver.

'Today. Maybe eight, nine.'

'I'll be here with the money,' said Oliver.

The man looked at him briefly, then turned away. It was not a good start, but the situation was desperate.

Oliver was back later with a friend. They arrived at six, just as the light was fading. The market stall owners had packed up and gone, and seagulls fought over a pile of fish guts by the dock.

'I saw the boat before,' said Oliver. 'It's a bit small, but it looked ok. But do you really think it's safe?'

'There's no choice,' said his friend. 'The plane's impossible. The boat's the only way to travel between Indonesia and Australia without being traced.'

'I don't know,' said Oliver. 'Maybe it's still worth trusting the legal system? Surely they have to listen to all sides and make a fair decision?'

'You think so?' asked his friend. 'Sometimes it just comes down to whose argument seems most convincing, or how the judge feels, or a whole heap of other things. There are always people in prison who shouldn't be there. It happens in every country.'

Oliver sighed. 'Well. You've lived in Indonesia. You know what it's like.'

'People are people,' shrugged his friend.

They walked along in the shadows until they reached the quay. There was nobody around the market area, but at the end of the car park, at the very last pontoon, they could see a boat-shaped shadow in the water and a man slumped by the walkway. He had smuggled many people out of Indonesia and brought them to Australia, and if these two fuckwits wanted to pay him to bring one more, that was fine by him. And the bulging rucksack Oliver's friend carried looked like
it had money in it—bundles of money.

Oliver looked around. No one about. He walked over to the man.

‘We’re here.’

The man shrugged.

‘And we’ve got the money.’

The man stared, and moved his lips just enough to say ‘money’, shifting the betel in his red-stained mouth. He held out his hand. Money. He was the last link in a long chain, and hadn’t seen real money for months. He had a family back home. A daughter. He needed cash.

‘Where’s the boat?’ asked Oliver. The little red boat he had seen earlier was gone. The man pointed to a rusty tug tied to the pontoon.

‘Is that it?’ asked Oliver, horrified.

The man nodded. Oliver turned to his friend.

‘I’m really sorry,’ he said. ‘It’s not the one I saw before.’

‘It’s ok,’ said Oliver’s friend. ‘I’ll do. Beggars can’t be choosers…even Indonesian beggars.’

‘But do you think it’s safe?’ asked Oliver.

‘Dunno. But anything’s better than nothing.’

The man watched them dispassionately for a moment, but as no money appeared he untied the rope from the pontoon and jumped into the tug. Then he started in surprise as Oliver’s friend jumped down beside him, shuffled off his rucksack and settled onto a bench.

‘What you want?’ asked the man harshly.

‘Oh,’ said the friend. ‘Didn’t Oliver say? I need to get to Indonesia.’

The man stared in astonishment, incredulity finally replacing his surliness.

‘Indonesia by boat,’ said Oliver’s friend. ‘My mother’s from Jakarta. I’m going there to seek asylum.’


Concern about societal inequality has gained mainstream recognition. A book by a French economist (Capital in the Twenty-First Century by Thomas Piketty) outlining widening inequality has become a world-wide bestseller. In a recent speech to the G20 finance ministers, media mogul Rupert Murdoch highlighted the growing gap between rich and poor as a key issue.

Having inequality firmly accepted as real means one less struggle for those of us whose work addresses the persistent relationship between poverty and educational underachievement. The next struggle, however, remains: to explain this relationship. After all, proposed actions depend on the explanation to which one adheres. The central, and vitally important, contribution John Smyth and Terry Wrigley make in their book Living on the Edge is to systematically analyse and de-bunk common explanations that blame individuals and families for their bad results in schools, and simplistic educational solutions that serve to further denigrate and marginalise young people living in poverty.

The likely audiences for this book are educators and educational administrators who want to better understand their work, and who share the authors’ commitment to striving for a more socially just world. The book also would make an excellent resource for pre-service teacher education courses in educational sociology. The most powerful contribution, however, relies on the messages in this book reaching business people and politicians.

One of the strengths of the book is the care and detail with which arguments are built, thereby silencing possible criticism of bias due to the (frankly stated) adherence by the authors to critical sociological traditions. As an example, Bernstein’s work on language deficits is shown to be based on flawed research methods and ‘extremely limited’ evidence (p.102). Inherited intelligence, low aspirations, streaming and tracking, pedagogies of poverty and policies that pit schools competitively against each other are similarly tackled.

Another strength is the attention paid to the emotional experience of ‘living on the edge’. In particular, drawing on participant quotes from a wide range of studies, Chapter 2 confronts the reader with poor (young) people’s feelings of de-moralisation, shame and guilt. These highlight that ‘living in poverty is immensely stressful’ (p. 42) and ‘stigma can be particularly damaging to young people’ (p.52). Going further, the authors argue that ‘traditional patterns of schooling reinforce these experiences of shame and futility’ (p.196).
In the final chapter, as well as woven through earlier chapters, Smyth and Wrigley provide examples of ‘alternatives’ to replace the explanations and actions that they critique. These provide much-needed inspiration for how to ‘do schooling differently’ (p.195), drawing on the extensive research track record of both authors. Their suggestions as principles for renewal include an ethos that enacts democratic forms of practice, being community-minded, and meaningful collaborations. The focus and contribution of this book, however, is critique. For those interested in exploring solutions in more depth, Living on the Edge is best read alongside other books by the same authors, such as Critically Engaged Learning: Connecting to young lives (Smyth et al. 2008) and Another School is Possible (Wrigley 2006).

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Kitty te Riele, Victoria University

BOOK REVIEW


Every so often a self-published book, written in the knowledge that it fills an important gap, bursts triumphantly onto the publishing scene. What it lacks in conformity to the methods of scholarly analysis, it makes up for in authenticity and emotional impact. Upriver is such a book.

Alice Hungerford and her sister Nicky were involved ‘from beginning to end’ in what Bob Brown, then the director of the Tasmanian Wilderness Society and later a senator for the Australian Greens 1996–2012, describes in the Foreword as ‘the most successful, peaceful direct-action in Australian environmental history’. This was the saving of the wild Franklin River in southwest Tasmania from exploitation by the Tasmanian Hydro-Electric Commission in the form of a dam. The Hungerford sisters were two of thousands of blockaders in a campaign that gained momentum in the early 1980s and ended when the High Court of Australia ruled against the dam on 1 July 1983. Thirty years on, the activists – many of whom have remained the closest of friends – gathered to revisit the sites of their struggles and celebrate the significance of their victory to this World Heritage wilderness. Alice was ready with Upriver, a compilation of the anecdotes of that special group of activists who camped upriver as its guardians while the Tasmanian Wilderness Society waged the campaign from their offices in Hobart, the state’s capital, and others kept them supplied from the port town of Strahan.

Her method is communal. Hungerford travelled all over Australia to conduct interviews and collect photographs, and narrates the campaign through the 64 upriver folk who ‘organised the logistics […] ran the camps, drove the boats, guided folk along the tracks to get arrested, and, after the blockade ended, how we maintained an ongoing presence to monitor destruction throughout the summer and into the cold heart of winter [before the High Court decision in July 1983]’. The result is an extended radio documentary in textual form; a pastiche of voices and viewpoints; a grand assemblage of witnesses and forest advocates with Hungerford providing additional linking narrative. Although at times she misjudges the amount of explanation and context necessary for readers who lack prior knowledge of the campaign, she skilfully splices the words of the participants to drive her overarching narrative forward in a compelling way, documenting the action as the stakes rose and the drama intensified.

Hungerford begins with dedicating Upriver ‘to every activist who has made a stand in defence of Mother Earth’ and states that ‘this is a non-profit production with any funds raised donated to saving the Tarkine [another area of pristine beauty] in western Tasmania’. Her book is therefore an extension of her youthful activism as well as a work of oral history. It is beautifully designed and strongly visual with more than a hundred photographs. There are even reproductions of Clifton Pugh’s etchings. He was one of the many ‘famous faces’ from Australia and many other parts of the world who came, stayed and supported the campaign.

Upriver is not an analysis or even a case study of the events that unfolded between pro and anti-dam forces but a grassroots compendium of activism which expects to be taken on its own terms. It is unashamedly one-sided. What the conservative forces did as they became more desperate and dangerous in their desire to defeat the environmentalists is remembered only by the protesters – no interviews were sought or recorded, for example, with the Electricity Commission workers who vandalised an ancient tree with their goodbye message of defeat: Fuck the Electricity Commission workers who vandalised an ancient tree with their goodbye message of defeat: Fuck you Green Cunts. Understandably enough, Hungerford was not keen to meet such men again – in Tasmania especially, time does not abolish memory and the tensions between ‘saving the forests’ and ‘building the economy’ continue to be contested.

Instead, Upriver provides an abundance of material for others to analyse. Such topics include: the ethics of economic development; the role of government and legislation in the management of a nation’s natural resources; Australia’s record of protecting its World
Heritage areas; and the characteristics of a successful campaign including the spontaneous creation of a culture of protest in songs, banners and other artwork.

Hungerford acknowledges the Aboriginal people who lived and hunted in the Franklin River valley and their descendants – the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community – and *Upriver* ensures that the Aboriginal community’s involvement in the campaign will be better known. She highlights the power of spiritual connection with the land in all protesters.

She reveals how Non-Violent Action (NVA), the philosophy and campaign strategy that the Tasmanian Wilderness Society (TWS) adopted, worked in practice. TWS insisted: all activists who head into the rainforest to stop the Hydro-Electric Commission bulldozers must first train in non-violent methods of protest. In this, it was influenced by the veterans of the Nightcap Action Group, a group that successfully fought to ban logging the rainforests in northern New South Wales between 1979 and 1982 and who travelled over two thousand kilometres to Tasmania in solidarity. For an impressive account of this forest battle, see *Terania Creek: Rainforest wars* by Nigel Turvey, (2006) reviewed by Dr Peter Oliver in *Social Alternatives* (2007).

In *Upriver*’s chronicle of this Tasmanian theatre of activism, there is heroism and humour in equal measure. In appalling conditions, loss of life was just a breath away but exuberance won the day and *Upriver* is filled with superb Australian storytelling.

My favourite humorous anecdotes involve two sets of celebrity visitors who found themselves in Tasmania during the campaign. The American folksinger John Denver hired a helicopter and flew over the upriver camp, serenading the protesters with a megaphone version of ‘Rocky Mountains High’. Newly-weds Prince Charles and Princess Di found their royal motorcade preceded through the cleared streets of Launceston in the state’s northeast by a car of protesters chanting ‘no dams, no dams, no dams’.

*Upriver* is available from Alice Hungerford’s website: www.upriverfranklinblockade.wordpress.com

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Lesley Synge

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**Inside the Square**

lots of men lunge at the little protester  
male or female we can’t tell  
some are cops but some are civilians with  
hard faces and flint eyes  
and their boots go in  
to the roar of the chopper  
to the surge of the crowd  
as the red and blue police lights cut through the haze  
what we are protesting about is forgotten  
corruption or climate or war  
because now there are echoes of jail bolts clanging shut  
they are in the sky and my friend screams they are  
rifle shots, we whirl about,  
they come from there, or from there?,  
the chopper has gone,  
then we see blood spray over the thugs and their boots,  
and one of them is down too, it is now like, it is a war zone  
an imperceptible barrier has been shined over into sheer panic,  
mirrors that were reflecting robocops lie pink and smashed by bootheels and bullets,  
the chatter and dust tornados and dead children of machine-gun fire from both sides of politics,  
yet apart from clubs and boots and two-by-fours with placards  
no one is armed at all

Robert David Verdon  
Canberra, ACT
ART IS NATURE – Debra Livingston

Black and white or monochromatic images are the classic photographic medium, effective on form, texture, lines and more importantly tonality and contrast. Black and white photography is considered by many to be the purest form of this art, as it showcases what photography was like before the invention of Kodachrome in 1936. Black and White photography creates depth, expression and emotion. Friedman (2008) advocates that the lack of colour in photographs helps images stand out with a unique ability to communicate a feeling, rather than turning to vibrant hues for an appealing visual presentation. Black and White photography is not simply a result of old technology of a bygone era. We can learn much about black and white photography from past famous photographers such as Henri Cartier-Bresson, Dorothea Lange, Ansell Adams and so many others who paved the way before us. In particular, Karl Blossfeldt an early 19C German photographer, sculptor and amateur botanist celebrated by the Surrealists and early Modernists for his pioneering close-up images of plants and flora. The philosopher Walter Benjamin declared that Karl Blossfeldt’s: ‘photographed plants look like works of art imitating nature; we can recognise formal elements of ornamental and decorative arts in them’ (Elo 2007).

According to Freidman, black and white photography ‘depends only on its ability to communicate rather than on its appealing visual presentation’ (Freidman 2008). More importantly, the viewer pays closer attention to the detail of the image, the composition, the lighting, perspective and the context. Maintaining authenticity when processing black and white in the digital platform requires an extensive knowledge of film and paper types to express the same unique characteristics. These works photographed in nature, present a high key technique where a backdrop (white card) is used behind the moss and lichen growing on trees, particularly seen in rainforest areas, to provide a strong contrast of differentiation between the background and foreground. Apparently, the moss or lichen itself does not actually affect the health of the tree as they are non-parasitic organisms, and in this instance, create beautiful patterns and textures showing us that art is nature.

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