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Evaluating co-generative student-community relationships for enhancing graduate attributes

Introduction

An evaluation of co-generative student-community engagement for enhancing graduate attributes may be considered in the context of three inter-related themes: calls for higher education institutions to engage with their communities, the kinds of attributes university graduates should possess, and the pedagogies informing student and community engagement. This paper presents literature, primarily from the UK, US and Australia, around these three themes. It concludes by arguing that in order to ensure higher education's relevance to civic, social, economic and moral problems of society student-community engagement is a necessary aspect of the fabric of a modern university

Calls for University-Community engagement

Calls for universities to engage with their communities challenge them 'to be of and not just in the community;' (Watson 2003.p16). From their examination of research literature Garver et al (2009) propose three reasons that motivate higher education to promote student-community engagement: firstly the desire to combat perceptions of universities as disconnected ivory towers, secondly a wish for graduates to become well rounded citizens and not solely employable, and thirdly the value of providing opportunities for students 'to broaden their learning through real world location 'in which to apply skills they have learned in the classroom' (Garver et al, 2009; p.2).

In urging universities in the US to be more engaged Boyer (1996) said,

'The academy must become a more vigorous partner in the search for answers to our most pressing social, civic, economic and moral problems, and must reaffirm its historic commitment to what I call the scholarship of engagement.' (p.11).

Furthermore 'Campuses would be viewed by both students and professors not as isolated islands, but as staging grounds for action' (Boyer 1996).

Boyer's call was grounded in a founding principle of the US 1862 Morrill Act requiring Land Grant Institutions to serve their communities (see Titlebaum et al 2004). Fresh impetus for engagement was given when the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities published its third report 'Returning to our Roots The Engaged Institution'. It concluded,

'it is time to go beyond outreach and service to.....'engagement'. By engagement, we refer to institutions that have redesigned their teaching, research, and extension and service functions to become even more sympathetically and productively involved in their communities, however community may be defined..... Embedded in the engagement ideal is a commitment to sharing and reciprocity.....We believe an engaged university can enrich the student experience and help change the campus culture.' (Kellogg Commission 1999)

In the UK a call for engagement came from the Dearing Report (1997) view that 'the extent of local and regional involvement of institutions is currently patchy, but that it needs to turn to active and systematic engagement.' (National Committee of Inquiry in Higher Education, 1997 para 12.7). It went on to note

'The student body can (also) make a significant contribution to the local community. There are over 100 Student Community Action groups across the country, often organized by student unions, providing volunteers who work with existing organisations in the voluntary sector, as well as providing invaluable experience for students.' (para 12.31)

MacFarlane (2007) suggests that the calls for higher education students to be more 'active' citizens have, in part, come about as a result from the introduction of citizenship into the English schools curriculum.(In 1998 the Crick Report was published which resulted in citizenship education being introduced within the national curriculum in England.)

In 2001 the President of Universities UK observed:

'the university sector has shifted from being an elite system to being something much wider, something much more important to many more people. And as universities

take on a more central position, and their responsibilities grow, they don't just act to improve the way their students think, but to raise aspirations by engaging in their communities to try to combat social exclusion, and to build and extend the cultural life and capacity of their towns.' (Floud,2001).

The following year HEFCE introduced the Higher Education Active Community Fund to stimulate and support student and staff volunteering as part of a government's wider Active Community Initiative. In a further development, in 2007, the UK higher education funding councils, Research Councils (UK) and the Wellcome Trust combined to launch the Beacons for Public Engagement, a nine million pound initiative to establish centres to 'lead efforts to foster a change of culture in universities assisting staff and students to engage with the public' (HEFCE, 2007; p. 2).

More recently Younger (2009) reminded his UK audience that universities' duty to engage with communities is rooted in their original foundations to serve public needs and how as charities they are expected to deliver public benefit. In December 2009 the Higher Education Funding Council for England published a consultation document, Regulating Higher Education Institutions as Charities stating, 'registered charities are required by law to describe in their trustees' annual report how they have delivered their charitable purposes for the public benefit.' (responses were invited by March 2010).

Such calls from the US and UK need to be placed within a wider international context. An example, is the 2005 Tufts Talloires Conference attended by university leaders from 23 countries which represented, 'the first international gathering of heads of universities devoted to strengthening the civic roles and social responsibilities of higher education' (Talloires).It generated the Talloires Declaration on the Civic Roles and Social Responsibilities of Higher Education and the establishment of the Talloires Network. The Declaration included the commitment to, 'Foster partnerships between universities and communities' (Talloires Declaration 2005) and the Network committed itself to building a global movement of engaged universities to promote, 'respect for mutual learning between institutions of higher education and communities and the application of standards of excellence to community engagement work.'

Research on policy implementation illustrates the difficulties in moving from policy rhetoric to change in practice. Commenting on responses to a questionnaire for an Association of Commonwealth Universities benchmarking exercise on universities' civic engagement (from a range of universities in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Southern Africa, the UK, and the West Indies) Watson (2003) writes: 'On balance, universities found it easier to record

aspirations and broad strategic goals than targets and their effective monitoring'.(2003 p74).
He observes,

'In most cases the evidence of 'outreach' trumped evidence of 'outside-in' influence. The balance between the university declaring what services it offers (and acting to make those available) on the one hand, and the community directly influencing the programme of work of the university (including by establishing priorities which the latter might not prefer) was at least superficially uneven.' (Watson 2003 p76).

Here Watson elevates university-community engagement as a reciprocal partnership, with communities influencing universities as much as universities influencing communities, over a relationship where students and academics 'go out' to communities. There is a need then to explore the definitions of this engagement in a little more detail.

According to Holland and Ramaley (2008 p.33) 'The hallmark of engagement is the development of partnerships that ensure a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge between the university and the community' .The Committee on Institutional Cooperation (2005) identifies three distinguishing features of engagement:

Firstly it is 'scholarly' involving 'both the *act of engaging* (bringing universities and communities together) and the *product of engagement* (the spread of discipline-generated, evidence-based practices in communities)'.
Secondly it '*cuts across the mission* of teaching, research, and service. It is not a separate activity, but a particular approach to campus-community collaboration'; and
thirdly it is '*reciprocal and mutually beneficial*. There is mutual planning, implementation, and assessment among engagement partners.' (CIC 2005 p.5)

The Wingspread Statement Declaration on the Civic Responsibilities of Research Universities says,

'Engaged teaching and research make sense in a world where systemic problems, conflicting demands and radical advances in communication technologies require new ways of discovering, integrating and applying knowledge. And, most important, university engagement is grounded in a growing body of scholarly research that demonstrates its effective impact on teaching, learning and community-based problem solving' (Wingspread Statement, 2004 p3).

This suggests that universities and their communities have much to offer each other and that the links will develop new forms of partnership.

Barker (2004 p.124) points out that in the US the scholarship of engagement 'has been the subject of an increasing number of literature reviews, case studies, and reports'. In 2002 the American Association of State Colleges and Universities Task Force on Public Engagement chaired by James C Votruba produced a guide for leading public engagement based on surveys and case studies. As well as identifying benefits to communities, higher education staff and institutions, it highlights those which enhance the student learning experience. These relate to strengthening links between theory and practice, ensuring the curriculum is up-to-date and responsive, enlivening critical thinking and problem solving, developing strong personal employability skills such as leadership, understanding ethical issues, citizenship and community dynamics, and preparing students 'for a lifetime of informed and participatory citizenship' (Votruba et al p.13). Whilst this review concludes that the university can gain benefits from community engagement through knowledge co-generation it is clear that definitions in each university may vary

'it takes a particular form: and is context-dependent – arising for institutions from their individual histories and locations, and from their view about their strategic positioning.' (Maddison and Laing 2007 pp 10-11)

Graduate attributes

Broad debates about the social role of universities are being rehearsed in the context of higher education systems that are becoming increasingly marketised in terms of competition and choice (Newman et al 2004) and labour market policy (Leitch, 2008). Students are seen as both 'consumer' and 'product'. In his foreword to the UK government paper *Higher Ambitions* Mandelson (2009 p.4) says that, 'by requiring course content and outcomes to become more transparent, students and employers will be enabled to make informed choices that increase competition between institutions'. Furthermore, 'Fee payers, business customers and donors will expect to see a causal relationship between what they pay and outcomes attained' (Mandelson, 2009; p.105).

Anderson and Green (2006), three years before *Higher Ambitions*, point out that

'human capital theory has become a major driver in educational policy, stressing the causal links between education and national prosperity and international competitiveness. Fears have been expressed that students have been recast and reduced to the status of a potential worker rather than a multi-dimensional citizen and that higher education itself has been commodified and reduced to its exchange value on the labour market. (Morley, 2001:30)'. Anderson and Green (2006).

MacFarlane says of the UK specialised single honours degree:

'Little space is left for electives or opportunities to develop community-based learning schemes. The introduction of the two-year Foundation 'degree' in the UK, with its emphasis on work-based learning, challenges this narrowness of focus. It provides opportunities for lecturers to integrate elements of public and community service ... However, the emphasis of foundation degrees on 'job readiness' (Morgan et al, 2004) indicates that the challenge for academics will principally lie in developing partnerships with further education and business organizations rather than community groups.' (2007 p.163)

In discussing the student as consumer Streeting & Wise (2009) refer to an 'alternative approach' proposed by McCulloch (2009) in which students are 'co-producers', rather than 'consumers'.

'In such a model, students are viewed as essential partners in the production of the knowledge and skills that form the intended learning outcomes of their programmes. They are therefore given responsibility for some of the work involved, and are not passive recipients of a service.' (Streeting and Wise 2009 p.2).

In the context of student-community engagement defining the student as co-generator connotes a more actively engaged collaborative descriptor of the students' role than that of either consumer or product. A development of this discussion is the way in which graduates are shaped and changed by their learning. In other words graduates emerge from higher learning with particular attributes that are now part of their identity, more than just equipped with skills they have acquired along the way. Community experience during higher learning may provide a context in which attributes can be developed and enhanced.

In 1995 the English Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) stimulated discussions about 'what attributes are expected of graduates across all degree programmes (or clusters of them) and how these attributes might be defined and their possession assessed.' (HEQC 1995). In comparing features of gradueness devised by UK universities with those developed in the US, HEQC noted, 'lists of attributes expected of graduates in the UK often tend to give less weight to overall personal development and *social purpose*.' (our emphasis) HEQC suggested this may be a reflection of 'differences in history and social function between higher education in the UK and USA, the fact that US HE has been a 'mass system' for at least a generation, or some combination of both.'

Discussions of 'graduate attributes' became increasingly focused on 'employability' with numerous studies seeking to ascertain the graduate attributes demanded by employers. According to Prospects (2010) in the UK, analysis of surveys of graduate employers at a national level suggest that employers look for graduate skill in four broad areas:

- self-reliance skills;
- people skills;
- general employment skills;
- specialist skills.

Research indicates, however, that notions of graduate attributes are contested and diverse, Barrie's (2003) research on graduate attributes suggests that globally

'statements of 'graduate qualities' vary between institutions and across higher education systems..... The particular institutions' values and beliefs as well as the political and social climate in which they exist, colour these descriptions of graduate attributes..... certainly existing graduate attributes statements reflect a bewildering array of understandings as to the core characteristics of a university graduate.' (p3).

He notes that in Australia government requires publically funded universities to have a statement on graduate attributes and surmises that a key impetus has been increasing demands for more employable graduates.

Box 1 Characteristics of Graduate Attributes

Barrie (2009) identifies four characteristics of graduate attributes:

- They are the important things that students should learn;
- As learning outcomes they are the hallmarks of an university education;
- They shape the way graduates will contribute to society – through the roles they play as citizens and workers
- They are the qualities that prepare graduates as agents of social good in an unknown future (adapted from.

Barrie (2009) identifies a 'national gap' between the rhetoric of graduate attributes and the reality of the student learning experiences (see Box 1). Contributing to this gap is a limited conceptualisation of graduate attributes reducing them to generic skills, and a weak implementation environment which focuses on course blocks plus skills plus other learning content. This resonates with Stoeker & Tryon's (2009) assertion that rather than promoting

employability, undergraduate study should be more about the creation of graduates who can make valued contribution to society across a broad range of spheres, of which employment may be only one, albeit significant, part. This requires both students and courses to be more clearly grounded in authentic application of learning.

Whilst there may be challenges to implementing such learning opportunities is perhaps salutary to note that *academic staff, by choice or necessity, are becoming increasingly outward looking*. For example, in the UK the research councils have introduced requirements for impact statements, and course validations increasingly require stakeholder input and employer 'engagement'. (Leitch, 2006; McEwen et al, 2010).

Pedagogies of student-community engagement

Student learning through community engagement is rooted in problem based, reflective, 'deep learning' pedagogies of empowerment, transformation, critical thinking and social participation (Dewey (1938); Freire (1970); Kolb (1984); Marton and Säljö (1976); Wenger (1999); Mezirow (2000))

Discussions of pedagogy are inextricably bound up with conceptions of knowledge. Gibbons et al's (1994) proposition of 'mode two' knowledge seems to capture the knowledge generated through student community engagement. Unlike 'mode 1' knowledge production depicted as academic, researcher-led and discipline-based, 'mode 2' knowledge is problem focussed, interdisciplinary and addresses 'real world' problems. Whilst Gibbons et al suggest 'mode 2' knowledge developed in the twentieth century, Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (2001) argue that, 'The so-called Mode 2 is not new, it is the original format of science before its academic institutionalisation in the 19th century.' In terms of community engagement this observation is useful as a reminder of the early forms and purposes of knowledge production before its institutionalisation in higher education. Writing of social science production Hale et al (2008) make a similar observation that, 'before the twentieth century most social scientists worked outside universities'(p xvi), but even in the twentieth century, well-known social scientists 'like Margaret Mead or C. Wright Mills might write for broader publics, but for academic elites this would seem increasingly *déclassé*, a matter of 'popularisation.'" (pxvii).

Greenwood (2008) discusses the form of knowledge generation *phronesis*, which seems very pertinent to student community engagement. Phronesis differs from *episteme* (disciplinary knowledge) and *tekhnê* (technical knowledge), 'Phronesis can be understood as the design of problem-solving actions through collaborative knowledge construction with the

legitimate stakeholders in the problem' (p. 327). Greenwood views *phronesis* as being generated in a collaborative context where local knowledge from the community stakeholders is combined with the knowledge of the professional researcher to define the problem. This implies the creation of collaborative spaces for co-learning and reflection to integrate a range of knowledge through action and analysis and to link the general and the particular. It is the collaborative design of both the goals, and the actions aimed at achieving them. *Phronesis* is neither anti-episteme nor anti- *tekhnê*, 'however in *phronesis*-based projects, knowledge gained through episteme and *tekhnê* is joined with knowledge and experiences of the stakeholders in a more solidary and dialogical mix' (p. 327). This framework links with earlier ideas in the work of Paolo Freire (1970) wherein he blurs the distinction between teacher and learner. In contrast to what he calls the banking approach to learning, Freire emphasises the emancipatory power of co-learning through dialogue.

'dialogue is the encounter in which the united reflection and action of the dialoguers are addressed to the world which is to be transformed and humanized, this dialogue cannot be reduced to the act of one person's 'depositing' ideas in another; nor can it become a simple exchange of ideas to be 'consumed' by the discussants..... Because dialogue is an encounter among women and men who name the world, it must not be a situation where some name on behalf of others. It is an act of creation' (Freire, 1970; Chapter 3)

Freire asserts a form of education that is empowering for the learner-tutor and for the tutor-learner. This learning is liberating and useful. It seems to link closely to the forms of learning suggested by models of community engagement, but the challenge for the academy is letting go of the power over the teaching. Furthermore it opens up debates around issues of quality and assessment. There is an emerging literature on the power of reflective learning, of the importance of students gaining experience of learning in unfamiliar and difficult situations, which makes their learning more robust and prepares them for future challenges. For example, Moon (2005) argues that reflective learning is relatively complicated and, because it is based on experience, unstructured. 'It challenges learners and when they are challenged, they gain greater abilities in dealing with difficult material of learning.' (p.2). Moon's work on reflective learning provides an excellent tool for dealing with the fuzzy, messy real-world experiences students may encounter if engaged in communities. It may afford opportunities for students to bring learning from outside *into* their courses.

A well established form of student engagement with communities is volunteering, as mentioned in the Dearing report. The Higher Education Active Community Fund, referred to

above suggests that as well as building a more cohesive society, volunteering 'enable(s) students to develop employment skills' (HEFCE 2004; no page).

Conceptually service learning differs from volunteering in that it is integrated – to varying degrees – into the student's curriculum. Annette (2002) describes it as

'an important form of learning in higher education in the United States and the United Kingdom, and increasingly in universities internationally. Service learning is defined as an experiential learning program where students learn through engaging in service in partnership with a local community. It involves reflective learning activities which enable a student to develop key skills and capabilities, and a greater sense of civic awareness and active citizenship. The experience should be of sufficient length to enable students to benefit fully from it, and they must be challenged to be reflective and to link their learning to their college curriculum. (Annette 2002 p. 83)

Eyler and Giles (1999) caution that because of the tendency for academics to be concerned primarily with student development,

'there has been criticism and concern that both community needs and community participation in decision-making get short shrift in service learning (Sigmon, 1996). Using the community as a laboratory rather than working with the community on jointly useful projects may stunt the development of partnerships that offer continuous benefits to both parties' (p. 179).

The dangers of exploitatively 'using' communities as opportunities for student learning have been recognised by increasing numbers of universities and communities who are working together to develop opportunities that benefit both students and communities. Here we present an illustrative example from Western Carolina University (undated) which offers three approaches to undergraduate research through service learning, these are: problem-based service learning, community-based research, and participatory action research.

'The first approach engages students to seek solutions to real, community-based problems. In this case, students are usually in teams their work is about relating to the community as consultants working for a client. They work with the community on a particular community problem or need.

'Community-based research (CBR) is not just about the generation of knowledge, but also to develop knowledge that can contribute to a constructive difference in the community. CBR emphasizes multiple methods of knowledge generation and disseminating the knowledge produced.

'Participatory action research is about both understanding and altering the problems generated by a social system. In this learning approach, the community identifies the research needs and students contribute their skills to the community focusing on the issues or concerns they have identified. Academics provide support and supervision to students who gather and interpret the data, and then report the results.' (Western Carolina, undated)

As well as benefits to the community and faculty staff, these approaches are designed to bring benefits to students, such as: enhanced research skills, increased disciplinary knowledge, improved knowledge and skills for active citizenship, opportunities for collaborative work with faculty and community partners.

In a recent book on service learning in the US, Stoeker and Tryon (2009) argue for the power and centrality of service learning:

'The hallmark of an evolved view of higher learning is the willingness to look at issues from different angles with an open mind and change course where appropriate to ensure the sustainability of the practice' (p.5).

Their book argues that service learning provides the opportunity for this and is one of the few publications to evaluate specifically the community benefits of service learning.

Because of service learning's roots in volunteering and the relational power imbalance inherent in the concept of 'service', there has been a growing focus on student-community research-based engagement, 'The scholarship of engagement is a form of research-based learning that enables students to develop a civic responsibility dimension to their studies ... activities can range from students interviewing community activists/residents ... through to working substantially with a community project.' (Warwick University 2009). Millican (2008) argues that student-community engagement projects should provide students with the opportunity to 'develop their skills, to apply theory to practice, to reflect on their learning and their abilities and to make a real contribution to their community partner' (p.2).

Whilst all models of student community engagement are grounded in experiential learning (Boud et al, 1985) Annette emphasises that

'the challenge for students is to learn how to reflect upon experience and not simply to describe experiences ... It will be useful to note that the student's level of emotional intelligence will influence the levels of learning outcomes that the student will be able to achieve.' (Annette, 2000 p 85).

However, there are concerns about the quality of the experience from the student perspective. Paul suggests a model that can learn from a related branch of experiential learning, undergraduate research:

"How can the best of the undergraduate research and service-learning movements be united so that their respective strengths compensate for their weaknesses? Community-based research answers this challenge by engaging undergraduate students in a collaborative partnership to work on real research that will make a difference for local communities. Students are socialized as *public scholars*, learning actively about the research process and about how empirical inquiry can be applied to real social issues" (Paul, 2006).

At an international level the January 2010 launch of the *International Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes* (AHELO) may prove to be significant. This is a new study being initiated to measure student learning globally. It will focus on producing three separate measures: one designed to measure general skills, and two in disciplines, economics and engineering (OECD, 2010). One possible avenue of enquiry is suggested by the work of Steinke & Fitch (2007). Their paper evaluating service learning argues that the challenge of incorporating assessment of the complex and multiple skills demanded of 21st century higher learning could be resolved by the 'authentic' nature of the assessments needed for service learning. An increase in such forms of assessment may, they argue, lead to assessments that better capture the learning demanded beyond academia. 'This possibility specifically addresses current critiques about the quality of higher education and its lack of relevance to real world demands' (Steinke & Fitch 2007; p6). Anderson & Green (2006) have pointed out that integrating aspects of community engagement into higher education learning programmes may address the issue that societies and employers are demanding more 'real-world' skills from graduates including knowledge transfer.

It is important to evaluate the 'bigger picture' or context of student community engagement, that is how institutions and communities work effectively together. For her evaluation of the initiative Community-University Partnerships in Practice (CUPP) Roker (2007) identified from the literature a summary of 'consistent themes' related to success factors (Roker 2007 pp184-185)

- A shared vision about the aims of university-community collaborations in general and individual projects in particular.
- Mutual benefit and learning
- Good personal relationships and 'openness' to new ideas and ways of doing things

- Individual and organisational flexibility
- Senior staff commitment
- Commitment and enthusiasm from universities and communities
- Organisational infrastructure and support.

Of course, the debate over the relevance and use of higher education is not a new debate. For example, the relevance of the classical education offered by Oxford and Cambridge was being challenged in the second half of the 19th century by critics who favoured a higher education that prepared graduates for an industrialising Britain (Anderson & Green, 2006). This debate extends into contemporary concerns. Anderson & Green (2006) argue that at the end of the last century and into the 21st century the main concerns have been the links between education, and national prosperity and international competitiveness. This is articulated most clearly in the Leitch Review in the UK and surrounding debates. However, there have also been concerns that students 'have been recast and reduced to the status of a potential worker rather than a multi-dimensional citizen and that higher education ... has been commodified and reduced to its exchange value on the labour market (Anderson & Green, 2006; see also Morley, 2001). The debate about skills has focused around the assessment made by employers of the 'skills gap' and the demand from governments for graduates with higher skills that will provide a multiplier effect on the economy. This has been made more complex by on the one hand perceptions of deflation in the value of a degree in the UK as more and more people graduate. While on the other hand the widening participation discourse focuses largely on 'new' students – mature students or students from families with no direct higher education experience – who are conceptualised as instrumental, seeking qualifications that will make them more employable. In this discourse students are regarded as studying solely for a degree to equip them for the job market rather than for the acquisition of knowledge. It is not entirely clear from this discourse whether this is how students in this situation perceive themselves.

In this discussion of pedagogy we have focused on the learners within the universities, but it is clear that there is more work to be done to understand the learning of community participants engaged in knowledge co-generation. Such work would usefully build on such initiatives as the Community-University Partnerships in Practice at the University of Brighton. As the contributors to recent volume on this initiative observe,

... 'Even within the US literature, beyond the work of Lerner and colleagues there is a dearth of material that addresses the practicalities of community-university

partnership processes that draws directly on the perspectives of both the university and community partners.’ (Maddison & Laing, 2007; p. 4)

Conclusions

This paper has reviewed literature related to calls for universities to engage with their communities, attributes which students engaged in co-generative community relations might develop, and pedagogies which inform such engagement. In evaluating this literature we draw number of conclusions:

1. Empowering pedagogies of experiential reflective learning and teaching in higher education can be advanced through community engagement.
2. As well as employability skills co-generative learning activities enable students to develop a range of qualities and capabilities which will equip them to contribute as citizens in uncertain futures.
3. More effective monitoring, evaluating and recording of engagement activities and their impacts is required.
4. There is a need to build up the data available to give a clearer picture of the extent and the types of community engagement and their impacts on both the university and the community
5. Further work needs to be undertaken in developing quality indicators of student-community activity and impact, for all participants
6. The growing literature on assessment of students’ work needs to be developed to encompass the range of student engagement activity, in particular assessing ‘unforeseen’ learning outcomes – which might be the most valuable to both the student and the community
7. Consideration needs to be given to ensuring that community engagement activities are accessible to diverse student populations and communities, for example in relation to disabled students and community members
8. Appropriate mechanisms need to be established to ensure that activities in which students engage are generated and equally owned by the community
9. Dialogue on the variety of forms of community engagement is needed. This is not to attempt regularise, as it is important to allow for flexibility. It is however, important to recognise the variety of ways in which universities engage with their communities.

For example the Institute for Volunteer Research (2009) identifies 13 types of volunteering. Add to this the range of other community engagement forms and this makes up a rich and complex set of links.

10. Our final and overall conclusion is that the developing agenda for the role of higher education in 21st century society demands universities to look Janus-like in different directions. Universities need to look both to the past and to the future - to retrieve the traditional civic role of universities and to look forward to creating new approaches to the modern contribution of universities (Etzkowitz and Leydes, 2001). This agenda includes the university being '*of*' the community - and developing its graduates as citizens, because

'Every interaction is potentially a learning experience ... students need to experience diversity in their learning. They need to learn across disciplines and contexts from a range of people with a range of perspectives. This fundamentally challenges the way universities are currently organised – not to mention who teaches and what is taught. However it does foreground a role for learning that draws on the rich diversity of experiences of work and life in general.' (Barrie, 2008).

Research clearly indicates that learning and teaching which is engaged within communities provides a range of opportunities of building graduate attributes in areas of citizenship, employability, resilience, problem-solving and self-motivation. However, an important strand to these arguments suggests that there is the tension between a marketised approach to higher education (Mandelson, 2009) and an approach that sees students collaborating as engaged learners for life and active, productive citizens. Approaches that emphasise collaborative community engagement appear to give students learning contexts that empower them as co-generators of knowledge. The literature highlights the benefits across the institution of community engagement activities.

Although a reading of university mission statements suggests they are increasingly responding to calls to engage with communities, the rhetoric is easy. The challenge is in finding and sharing effective means to operationalise community engagement processes in ways that are equitable and genuine.

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