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Real World Learning Through Civic Engagement: Principles, Pedagogies and Practices

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Introducing Real World Learning Through Civic Engagement

In times of unprecedented change and uncertainty, real world learning through civic engagement enables students to thrive as empowered critical thinkers and actors developing skills, confidence and capabilities for life, employment and citizenship. Real world learning through civic engagement builds university capacity to collaborate equitably with communities to strengthen and enhance social capital and address emerging societal and environmental challenges, locally and globally. This chapter presents developments in curriculum-based civic engagement and considers drivers, pedagogies, principles and examples of practice as

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indicated in the concept map (Fig. 4.1). The chapter concludes with proposals to implement this transformational mode of learning.

The “definitional anarchy of civic engagement” (Sandmann, 2008, p. 91) succinctly captures the multiple diverse practices whereby universities establish real world learning opportunities with communities. Collectively such practices can be viewed through the lens of the scholarship of engagement, “connecting the rich resources of the university to our most pressing social, civic, and ethical problems ... Campuses would be viewed by both students and professors not as isolated islands, but as staging grounds for action” (Boyer, 1996, p. 20).

More than twenty years after Boyer’s call to action, the nature of the ‘problem contexts’ to community-based learning (CBL) has shifted away from a safer core of issues towards dealing with more challenging local problems, where student engagement involves risk taking but also strong potential for Fink’s ‘significant learning’. For example, the ‘integration’ element of Fink’s taxonomy of significant learning refers to connecting “ideas, people and realms of life” (2003, p. 30). “The act of making new connections gives learners a new form of *power* especially intellectual power” (ibid., p. 31).

Fig. 4.1 Real world learning (RWL) through civic engagement concept map

Greater attention is now being addressed to critical parameters in community-based learning, such as how local problems are identified, the role of and benefits to students and communities, and pithy ethical issues that relate to such matters as equity, diversity and relative affluence. In the shift to this new paradigm of real world civic engagement, there is plentiful opportunity to gain insights and develop principles across a wide range of learning and experiences.

Missions, Manifestos and Declarations

Civic engagement is hardly a recent concept for universities. As Watson and others have observed, most university foundations expressed commitment to an element of service to their communities in their stated purpose and mission (Watson, Hollister, Stroud, & Babcock, 2011). This was certainly the case in the USA where service learning was rooted in the foundations of the Land Grant Colleges in the mid-nineteenth century. In differing forms, civic engagement through the curriculum has continued to thrive in the USA with over 360 “campuses with the elective [Carnegie] Community Engagement Classification” in 2018 (Brown, n.d.). In the UK, by contrast, for several decades, founders’ commitments gathered dust in many a university archive whilst institutions focused on research, teaching and income-generating activities. This neglect is explained by Goddard and Kempton,

In the UK 19th century institutions that were the predecessors of the so-called ‘red brick’ universities evolved to meet the needs of a rapidly evolving industrial society ... These institutions depended to a large degree on local public support. During the 20th century these local links weakened with increasing central government support and influence over local government [and] the nationalisation of higher education ... As a consequence many civic institutions turned their backs on their host cities. However in the 21st century some of these are seeking to reinvent themselves as civic institutions... (Goddard & Kempton, n.d.)

By 2018, over eighty UK institutions had signed up to the UK National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) Manifesto for Public Engagement, representing approximately half of all UK higher education institutions, and by the following year more than fifty universities had “reaffirmed their commitment to their local communities by pledging to put the economy and quality of life in their home towns and cities *at the top of their list of priorities*” (our emphasis) (Brabner, 2019).

Internationally, the past twenty years have witnessed a burgeoning of universities committing to civic engagement. In 1999, the Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI) was established. Its mission is “to strengthen the role of higher education in society contributing to the renewal of the visions and policies of higher education across the world under a vision of public service, relevance and social responsibility” (GUNI, 2013, p. 2). In 2019, it comprised 227 members across 80 countries. The Tufts Talloires Network was founded in 2005, comprising heads of universities from twenty-three countries who signed the Talloires Declaration on the civic roles and social responsibilities of higher education:

We are dedicated to strengthening the civic role and social responsibility of our institutions ... Through learning, values and commitment of faculty, staff and students, our institutions create social capital, preparing students to contribute positively to local, national and global communities. (Talloires Network, 2005)

Ten years later, over 300 university leaders from 70 countries had signed the Declaration. In 2018, Talloires’ partner national and regional networks included AsiaEngage; CLAYSS: The Latin American Centre for Service Learning; Engagement Australia; and SAHECEF: South African Higher Education Community Engaged Forum.

Drivers for Change: Austerity to Posterity

Beginning with a focus on the UK, we present key drivers and imperatives for developing university civic engagement. A policy of government public austerity measures in the UK over the past decade led to funding for universities being significantly reduced. Austerity prompted calls for all publicly funded institutions, including universities, to account for themselves in terms of their societal value. Furthermore, with many being sizeable charities enjoying certain tax advantages, universities are required to be transparent in demonstrating social responsibility.

A related economic policy was the introduction of, and a hefty increase in, student fees. This, together with the annual National Student Survey rankings, promoted cultures of ‘customer focus’ or ‘value for money’. One response has been for universities to fast-track graduate employability measures, with civic engagement activity shown to add value to the development of students’ employability skills and capabilities (Mason O’Connor, Lynch, & Owen, 2011). Providing learning opportunities beyond lectures and seminars was spurred on by the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) in 2017 which assesses how institutions “ensure excellent outcomes for their students in terms of graduate-level employment or further study”, as well as what they are doing “*in addition*” (our emphasis) to meeting national quality standards and awards (Office for Students, 2019).

According to an NCCPE report in 2015, whilst most universities had developed an engagement strategy, it had not been fully implemented. There was “much more evidence of more traditional ‘inspirational’ engagement, rather than two-way exchange” (Hill, 2015, p. 6). Festivals of ideas would be an example where experts from the university enthuse and enthrall audiences with presentations and demonstrations. Over the ensuing five years, universities have developed a wider range of engagement activities, from comedy clubs to supporting vulnerable community members with technical solutions. However, this growth in ‘public engagement’ activity is not matched by growth in strategic civic engagement through the curriculum, which remains an activity largely promoted by enthusiasts. A similar point was made in Lord Kerslake’s

foreword to the 2019 UPP Foundation *Civic University Independent Commission Report*; whilst there was “much enthusiasm for the civic role and many excellent individual initiatives ... we found few examples of a systematic and strategic approach to the civic role based on an analysis of the needs of the place” (Kerslake, 2019, p. 5).

The international imperative for sustainable development has been another key driver for higher education, with some HEIs explicitly aligning themselves in ‘whole-institution approaches’ (see UNESCO, 2018, p. 45). Furthermore the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2014, 2018) emphasises the importance of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) or Learning for Sustainability (LfS), and the delivery of seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that aspire “to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all” by 2030. ESD proposes important links between local and global citizenship and the need for active citizenship, with implications for citizenship education at all educational levels. UNESCO (2018, p. 82) specifically advocates service learning as one approach “to facilitate learning about global justice and reduction of poverty” (SDG1 ‘No poverty’) by planning and implementing “local service-learning and/or engagement opportunities for empowering poor people, reducing their vulnerability to different hazards and increasing their resilience...”.

These goals apply domestically as well as internationally in relation to the roles of active citizens (see UK HM Government’s 2018 *Civil Society Strategy: Building a future that works for everyone*) although the role of higher education in building social responsibility is not discussed. However, the GuildHE/NUS (2016) report *Active Citizenship: The role of higher education* and its Charter for Active Citizenship cite the UNESCO, 2009 World Conference on Higher Education (2016, p. 7):

Higher education institutions, through their core functions (research, teaching and service to the community) carried out in the context of institutional autonomy and academic freedom, should increase their interdisciplinary focus and promote critical thinking and active citizenship. This would contribute to sustainable development, peace, well-being and the realization of human rights, including gender equity.

Pedagogies of Empowerment and Transformation

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, in Mason O’Connor, Lynch, & Owen, 2011, p. 106).

These pedagogies of real world learning fly in the face of students as ‘customers’, not only in their propensity for transformation, but in their potential to unsettle and disturb, challenging taken-for-granted beliefs about the ‘real world’. The experience can be “troublesome”, being conceptually difficult or “alien” (Perkins, 1999). Students may even experience “the ambivalence, anger and frustration that can accompany genuine learning” (Delucchi & Smith, 1997, p. 337). Customers certainly don’t want to be troubled.

The proposition of knowledge being constructed can be traced to Dewey in the early twentieth century for whom learning necessitated acquiring and reflecting on experience; knowledge is not ‘out there’ to be consumed.

The academic subjects often sort, categorize, and present lists of facts and answers in text books, but this is not how facts originally emerged. [Dewey] reminds us, instead, facts emerged from real world people trying to solve real problems. (Fallace, 2016, p. 186)

Similarly, Freire’s radical pedagogy of real world learning contests the idea of the teacher depositing or ‘banking’ knowledge in the learner, “the more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their interaction in the world as transformers of that world” (Freire, 2005, p. 73). By advocating instead ‘problem-posing education’, Freire opens the way for transformational knowledge to be created. Here real world learning where students engage with others in the civic sphere to address practical problems resonates with Meyer and Land’s (2005) work on

threshold concepts in its potential to be 'transformative', 'irreversible' and 'integrated'.

Drawing on, amongst others, the work of Dewey and Freire, Mezirow (1978, 1991, 2000, 2003) developed the concept of transformative learning, defined as "learning that transforms problematic frames of reference—sets of fixed assumptions and expectations (habits of mind, meaning perspectives, mindsets)—to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change" (Mezirow, 2003, p. 58).

Transformative learning emphasises the role of student, teacher as facilitator and the setting for learning as being out of an individual's comfort zone and, particularly, the importance of expansion of the consciousness, change in basic world view and empowerment (McEwen, Strachan, & Lynch, 2011).

These pedagogies of real world learning connect with Gibbons' concept of Mode 2 knowledge which is

produced in a context of application involving a much broader range of perspectives [than Mode 1]. Mode 2 is transdisciplinary not only drawing on disciplinary contributions but can set up new frameworks beyond them; it is characterised by heterogeneity of skills, by a preference for flatter hierarchies and organisational structures which are transient. It is more socially accountable and reflexive than Mode 1. (Gibbons, 2000, p. 159)

Interdisciplinarity is a key pedagogic feature of real world learning through civic engagement. Here again one is reminded of Dewey who "believed that the unity of experience artificially severed by academic subjects needed to be restored" (Fallace, 2016, p. 186); it is pertinent to note that the 2014 UK Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise commented that "wider impacts and benefits often stem from multidisciplinary work" (UKRI, n.d.).

There is now much greater attention to wider critical national and international agendas that connect local and global, including the need for climate resilience, imperatives of learning for sustainability (UNESCO, 2018) and 'glocal' citizenship and within this, the role of citizens in such issues as place-making and local governance. This has given a new lens

with which to view university civic engagement involving a ‘move’ from the traditional disciplines involved in service learning (e.g. education and health) to a much wider set of disciplines that span the gamut of science (STEM), social science and arts and humanities (e.g. see El-Gabry, 2018; Kramer & Fask, 2017). In his introduction to the 2017 report on the social responsibility of universities, Peter Wells, head of higher education for UNESCO, wrote:

The role of higher education institutions in developing the critical thinking needed in young minds and researchers to find solutions to the problems facing our world can no longer be taken in isolation, but must be approached in ways that cross institutional and disciplinary boundaries. (Wells, 2017, p. 29)

Education for Sustainable Development (UNESCO, 2018) draws on pedagogies that are participatory, learner-centred, action-orientated and transformative. UNESCO cites such collaborative real world learning practices, with service-learning projects on sustainability being one learning context, in which learners take collaborative action. This links to the emergent concept of transgressive learning promoted by Lotz-Sisitka, Wals, Kronlid, and McGarry (2015)—that is, learning “to overcome the status quo and prepare the learner for disruptive thinking and the co-creation of new knowledge” (UNESCO, 2018, p. 49).

Alongside, there is increasing interest in citizenship education or pedagogies for active citizenship, and relationships between learning and action. There is longer-standing attention to citizenship education within student learning and achievement in secondary education compared with higher education (see Crick Report—Advisory Group on Citizenship, 1998; Weinberg & Flinders, 2018). Wasner (2016) explicitly identifies ‘critical service learning’ as a participatory pedagogical approach to global citizenship and international mindedness, while Wood, Taylor, Atkins, and Johnston (2018) emphasise the importance of learning through affective and cognitive domains for deeper democratic engagement. Although there is less *explicitly* on imperatives for active citizen participation through higher education, the Guild HE/National Union of Students (2016) report *Active Citizenship: The role of higher education* highlights

service learning as one means to deliver citizen education, with emphasis on research *with* the community.

What's in a Name? Modes of Real World Learning Through Civic Engagement

In our review of approaches to university-community engagement through the curriculum, we presented a range of modes (Mason O'Connor, McEwen, Owen, Lynch, & Hill, 2011). It would be tempting to try to develop this work by constructing a continuum of practices with the emphasis on student learning at one end (e.g. service learning) and community learning the other (e.g. community-based engaged research). However, this would be disingenuous. Take for example practices named service learning. With its origins in 'volunteering', a criticism levelled at service learning is its inherent power imbalance, and whilst studies show benefit to student learning, the benefit to communities is under-researched (Blouin & Perry, 2009). Stoecker (2016) argues that too frequently service learning prioritises students' learning interests over those of the community. However, this is contested by Asghar and Rowe's (2017) work on service learning within health care: "reciprocal relationships which challenge established ideas and practices, together with engaging students in critical informed analysis are key components in ensuring service learning is socially just" (2017, p. 117).

Furthermore, Mitchell (2008) proposes that service learning is not unidimensional. She distinguishes between two forms of service learning: 'traditional service learning' and 'critical service learning' differentiated in relation to their ability to either perpetuate or change the status quo. Critical service learning also focuses on social justice with the ultimate aim being to "deconstruct systems of power so the need for service and the inequalities that create and sustain them are dismantled" (Mitchell, 2008, p. 50).

These pedagogies link to wider moves to 'radical' civic engagement in some institutions with critics of service learning arguing that the modes of engagement practice which we refer to later represent significantly

more than mere changed nomenclature; rather, they represent a paradigm shift, focusing on action for change and co-production of knowledge, moving the focus from service towards equitable collaborative partnership between students, faculty and communities.

Boland portrays a defining feature of community-based learning as being:

its explicit focus where the design and enactment of the curriculum are underpinned with a rationale which invokes—to varying extents—concepts such as active citizenship, democracy, social justice, community and civic engagement, while simultaneously advancing the goal of student learning. (Boland, 2014, p. 181)

Community-based research (CBR) expresses the growing prominence in undergraduate education to forge links between research and teaching. Engaging undergraduates as researchers enables them to “grow in confidence as they approach the demanding complexities of knowing and acting in the modern world” (Fung, 2016, p. 37). Furthermore, CBR can enable students to engage in “varying and multiple modes of generating knowledge” (Tandon, Hall, Lepore, & Singh, 2016, p. 14). “Thinking, knowing, feeling about a particular subject (manifested in the forms of arts, music, theatre, roles plays, photovoices etc.) needs to be promoted as equally effective methods as cognitive methods” (ibid.).

Community-based participatory research (CBPR) “begins with a research topic of importance to the community and has the aim of combining knowledge with action and achieving social change” (O’Mahoney, Burns, & McDonell, n.d.). Community-based *engaged* research “is conducted by, for and/or with the participation of the community members: an emergent paradigm of really useful research for the Twenty-first Century” (Hall, Lall, & Heng Chan, n.d.).

From their experience and research in the USA, Brabant and Braid (2009, p. 61) concluded, “there is no definition of civic engagement that fits all institutions, although there may be similar forces driving universities and colleges to assume a greater role in maintaining the economic, social and political health of their respective communities.”

In our previous review we concluded that “this lack of definition can be considered a strength rather than a limitation, engendering local debate as to what these terms might mean in different contexts” (Mason O'Connor, McEwen, et al., 2011, p. 4).

Acting on Principles: Civic Engagement Through the Curriculum

Given there is no specific optimal mode or method of university civic engagement for universities and communities to adopt, we propose a set of key principles to serve as a lens to inform these debates; these principles are based on our exploration of literature and reflections on practice. In so doing we share the view about community-engaged research being characterised not by method or approach but by the principles which guide it. The principles we have identified are partnership, reciprocity, mutual benefit, equity (social justice), empowerment, ensuring community voice, valuing diversity, sustainability, challenge and interdisciplinarity. These are presented as axes on the spidergram in Fig. 4.2. This format was chosen, first, to emphasise that there is not a hierarchy of principles and, second, for its potential as a tool for self-evaluation and quality improvement, such as profiling development of a civic engagement project over time. It can be used to highlight which principles are being practised most powerfully, as well as those requiring further development. (Dotted line gives an example.)

These principles link to those for ESD (e.g. interdisciplinarity and empowerment) and citizenship education (e.g. valuing diversity and equity). Examples of the principles playing out in practice feature in a number of international initiatives (Table 4.1).

The four case studies (Table 4.2) presented in Chap. 5 illustrate different approaches, scales and institutional contexts to civic engagement, specific to meeting their particular objectives. As we consider below, they vividly exemplify principles of real world learning through civic engagement being put into practice.

Each of the case studies demonstrates principles of establishing effective *partnerships* for *sustainability*. In Solent University's Community

Fig. 4.2 Ten principles of real world learning through civic engagement

Innovation Programme, ‘Healthy Living Project’, a three-way partnership, is created, nurtured and developed between students, health practitioner and women from diverse ethnic minorities. The International Practicum Pilot, ‘Limerick Inside Out’, highlights, “The deliberate shift in focus from ‘depth’ to ‘breadth’ of community engaged learning ... supplemented by the establishment of a strategic partnership with the Limerick City and County Council” (Gleeson, Mey and Warren-Perkinson).

Principles of *challenge* and *valuing diversity* are evident across the case studies with the ‘Solent Football Leadership Programme’ enabling students to “engage with a diverse range of projects and participants incorporating areas, such as working with the homeless community, women and girls, mental health and well-being, disability, youth and many more. To work with such a range of participants across a broad spectrum of projects offers students a variety of challenges and problems which are ‘real world’ and, as such, require real solutions” (Bourne).

Table 4.1 Real world learning through civic engagement—principles into practice

Principles	Detail	Discipline	Examples
1. Partnership	Partnerships of reciprocal exchange?	General review	Hammersley (2012)
2. Reciprocity	Reciprocity and critical reflection as the key to social justice in service learning	Health care	Asghar and Rowe (2017)
3. Mutual benefit	"Letting the village be the teacher"	Study abroad; global education	Collins (2019)
4. Equity (social justice)	"Toy design project for children in Egyptian squatter community" Creative collaborations through inclusive theatre	Engineering	El-Gabry (2018) Kramer and Fask (2017)
5. Empowerment	Improving student learning outcomes through community-based research: the poverty workshop	Sociology	Mayer, Blume, Black, and Stevens (2018)
6. Ensuring community voice	Noting absence of partner perspectives	General review	Hammersley (2012); Collins, 2019)
7. Valuing diversity	Education for citizenship: community engagement between the Global South and the Global North	Geography	Miller (2013)
8. Sustainability	Insights into the sustainability of a challenging pedagogy	Engineering, psychology, art and multidisciplinary	Boland (2014)
9. Challenge	Productive tensions—engaging geography students in participatory action research with communities	Geography	Pain, Finn, Bouveng, and Ngobe (2013)
10. Interdisciplinarity	Mapping communities "Bringing it all back home": an interdisciplinary model for CBL	Geographers collaborating Internships in large-scale urban redevelopment	Jung (2018), Schwartz (2015)

Table 4.2 Real world learning through civic engagement—four case studies

Title	Author
International Practicum Pilot: Limerick Inside Out	Tracey Gleeson, Kerstin Mey and Anne Warren-Perkinson, University of Limerick
The Solent Football Leadership Programme (SFLP)	Tracey Bourne, Solent University
The Community Innovation Programme, Healthy Living Project	Amy E. King, Solent University
Making Change Happen—Civic Engagement in Practice	Linda Cooper and Duncan Reavey, University of Chichester

The principle of *interdisciplinarity* features strongly in the case studies from the universities of Limerick and Chichester with the former stating, “Exchange, sharing and collaborations with communities in the city and the region have been developed in and across disciplines, from health and sports to law and languages, from entrepreneurship to the sciences and the creative and performing arts” (Gleeson et al.). The ‘Making Change Happen—Civic Engagement in Practice’ case study from the University of Chichester states, “Projects only work if students learn how to work with many different kinds of people and acknowledge that success comes from working across disciplines” (Cooper and Reavey).

The case studies illustrate how the principle of challenge can *empower* students and community stakeholders as agents of change. For example, the University of Chichester case study stresses that projects “required students to come up with a creative solution to make change happen” (ibid.). Students engaged in the International Practicum Pilot ‘Limerick Inside Our’ “felt that the direct interaction with community representatives and the teamwork were most empowering” (Gleeson et al.). In the Solent University ‘Healthy Living Project’, “Collaboration with the women was critical in shaping the project further and provided the participants and students with a feeling of shared ownership and empowerment” (King).

The principle of *ensuring community voice* features across the four case studies with the University of Chichester example emphasising “From the start, students listen to the broader community voice so they begin to

understand diversity of views of stakeholders in the broadest sense—not just a head teacher or the CEO of a charity but children on the School Council, teachers in staff meetings, people in the neighbourhood” (Cooper and Reavey). The University of Limerick case study states, “By participating in the students’ welcome session and the final public exhibition, various community partners with different interests came together in an informal and special setting to give voice to their work” (Gleeson et al.). The ‘Solent Football Leadership Programme’ highlights the local community “engaging with the project work and voicing their needs, not just for developing football itself, but also for developing communities and community cohesion via the vehicle of football” (Bourne). This illustrates the potential of community-based learning to cascade benefits beyond the direct initial focus of the initiative—important for its reach and legacy.

All of the case studies are characterised by principles of *reciprocity* and *mutual benefit*, for example, the ‘Healthy Living Project’ from Solent University “provides the students with a platform to put into practice classroom taught theories and skills as well as providing the community with a sustainable initiative addressing a health or social need” (King).

Collectively the case studies demonstrate diverse ways of developing and implementing real world learning through civic engagement. They express how students, faculty and community members effectively undertake challenging initiatives across a range of disciplines. They show how students forge deep connections between theories learned in lectures and seminars with the ‘real world’ beyond. They demonstrate how strong sustainable links are created between university and community and illustrate practical ways of promoting and inculcating principles of *equity and social justice* through real world learning. Importantly these four case studies clearly show how principles of real world learning through civic engagement can be applied in practice.

For real world learning through civic engagement initiatives to be similarly effective and sustainable, it is vital they be strategically led, encouraged and appropriately supported by their institutions; energy and commitment of students, staff and communities are necessary but insufficient. We turn our attention to this matter in the following section.

Institutions Must Do Their Own Real World Learning: Leadership and Strategy

Linking Institutional Imperatives

Writing the university civic engagement mission statement is the easy bit; the difficulty for institutions is to create a *holistic ethos* of critical reflection and open dialogue which promotes and supports real world student learning through civic partnerships. The challenge is to create learning opportunities that benefit and empower students, communities and faculty. Excellent opportunities exist to capitalise on synergies between different strategic imperatives: developing professional and personal graduate attributes—employability, learning for sustainability and active citizenship. This can be achieved by integrating agendas for critical civic engagement with those of ESD and citizenship education—linking drivers for regional, national and international development.

Implementing real world learning through civic engagement demands commitment and action on multiple fronts. Our international scoping survey showed that whilst increasing numbers of institutions had been *committing* to student learning through community engagement, there was little alignment between this commitment and institutional processes to support it (McEwen & Mason O'Connor, 2013). Other findings were the following: wide variability in recognition and reward ranging from well-established promotion processes to absence of any form of recognition; frequent lack of accounting for community engagement as part of workload allocation; few coherent processes of supportive staff and educational development, and inflexible institutional procedures which curb staff enthusiasm.

Distributed Leadership in Action

Whilst the literature on leadership of university civic engagement points almost universally to the importance of ‘distributed leadership’, it acknowledges there is no optimal approach; institutions need to work out for themselves how leadership is distributed, recognising that “the

infrastructure for engagement does not necessarily align with the institutional hierarchy” (Liang & Sandmann, 2015, p. 37). Leadership must take place at all levels across the institution to build and support innovative creative institutional cultures. This is particularly challenging when academics are arguing that forces of marketisation generate “continuous pressures to standardize, conform, obey and duplicate in order to be ‘transparent’ to measurement” (Lesnik-Oberstein et al., 2015). Leaders need to challenge institutional boundaries: “entrenched interests of disciplines, academic departments, and traditional epistemology militate against the full emergence of community engaged scholarship” (Giles, 2016, p. 194). Relaxing the ‘disciplinary grip’ (Iverson, 2018) requires considerable leadership skill and courage. Establishing porous boundaries enables and encourages networking and innovation across and beyond the institution and “supports two-way flow of information, people and resources ... which integrate and connect universities physically, digitally and intellectually to society” (Wilson, Manners, & Duncan, 2014, p. 9). It advances and fosters claims by communities within and beyond its parameters that the institution is ‘*our* university’.

Transformative pedagogies and key principles are the hallmarks of real world learning through civic engagement. Leading change in this direction is challenging; transformative learning, as previously indicated, can be “troublesome” (Perkins, 1999), a risky endeavour with uncertain outcomes. Leadership is required to develop courses and university quality assurance processes agile enough to foster and accredit learning that takes place in contexts where outcomes are unpredictable and where new ones might emerge. In our work on developing community engagement (Mason O'Connor & McEwen, 2012, p. 12), we devised a set of questions to assure quality of accredited community-based learning: for example, “How are ‘unanticipated learning outcomes’ to be recognised and assessed?”; “How is mutual benefit and reciprocity for all stakeholders maintained?”

Importantly, leadership and strategy have to ensure support and recognition for the three key stakeholders engaged in real world learning through civic engagement: students, community and faculty.

Support and Recognition for Students

Through critical community-based learning, students can acquire a variety of graduate attributes for employability, sustainable development and active citizenship. A recent publication on graduate attributes and higher education (Normand & Anderson, 2017) reinforces the view that graduate attributes sought by employers extend well beyond the possession of disciplinary knowledge. In rapidly changing social and economic contexts, a range of interpersonal skills and abilities are vital, such as self-awareness, resilience, adaptability and empathy. Real world learning through civic engagement can be a key means of developing these attributes (Mason O'Connor, Lynch, & Owen, 2011). It must be emphasised, however, that students beginning, undertaking and concluding civic engagement initiatives require appropriate support and encouragement not only for the 'academic' element of their work but, crucially, for the affective element where long-held understandings and beliefs may be challenged and the outcome of the initiative is uncertain. Importantly, students should be supported and assessed on the development of their reflective learning throughout the process of civic engagement rather than the 'success' or otherwise of the initiative.

Support and Recognition for Community

Communities are not extra-mural laboratories for university use. Community learning has to be supported and evaluated on a par with student learning. As individuals and/or groups, community members may need support for participation in civic engagement initiatives particularly those communities who are 'under-served'. This could, for example, include funds for any costs incurred engaging with university students, such as the use of reciprocal engagement spaces. As Collins (2019) proposes, communities need to be compensated justly for their work. For radical civic engagement to be facilitated, it is necessary to ensure that "equity, justice, and an appreciation of diverse value systems

and perspectives are included in the development of civic actors, civic learning, and shared projects of social change in local communities” (Hicks Petersen, 2015, p. 17).

Support and Recognition for Faculty

Based on their research and work with a wide range of institutions in the UK, Manners and Duncan (2018) conclude, “without an explicit focus on developing supportive organisational cultures, staff feel discouraged from engaging externally; and the quality and effectiveness of that engagement can be compromised” (Manners & Duncan, 2018, p. 3).

In our work on building staff capacity for university-community engagement, we identified key staff attributes, skills and attitudes and dispositions which contribute to effective university-community engagement. Attitudes and dispositions include “commitment to social justice” and “willingness to engage and take risks”; skills include “design for mutual benefit” and “interdisciplinary working”; knowledge included “ethical practice” and “pedagogies of active reflective learning” (Mason O'Connor & McEwen, 2012, p. 14). Some skills needed by Faculty for CBL link well to the research skills in community-based participatory research (Durham Community Research Team, 2011). These take greater account of issues of power, rights and responsibilities and roles of all stakeholders, based on respect for, and partnership with, community members.

As well as requiring support, civic engagement has to be incentivised, recognised and valued (McEwen & Mason O'Connor, 2013). Boland's research showed engagement work was seen by academics as something they *elected* to do. “A corollary of the elective nature of this work is that civic engagement is not generally regarded as part of the academic role” (Boland, 2014, p. 190). Recruitment, promotion and appraisal systems need to recognise this work.

We conclude our discussion on leadership and strategy by referring to an international meeting of vice-chancellors in Melbourne. Acknowledging staff reluctance to be involved in civic engagement work because university rankings systems foreground research, the vice-chancellor of

Queensland University issued a challenge: “many of these global rankings are based on what we can readily measure, rather than what we have to learn to measure” (Havergal, 2017).

Conclusion

We have shown in this chapter that real world learning through civic engagement encompasses a range of rationales, pedagogies and approaches. It has developed from a paradigm of expanding learning opportunities for students through volunteering to one in which students are challenged to develop as empowered active citizens. Students are prepared for future uncertainties and opportunities, learning in partnership with others to bring about positive change. Underpinning this paradigm are key principles. Exploring, developing and applying these principles through effective leadership at all levels can enable universities to connect with communities locally and globally, providing institutional aspirational rhetoric with rich ‘real world’ realities.

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