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Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement

The role of higher education is changing in today's world because the world itself is changing, and complex problems confront us daily. This essay will explore the role of an emerging group of individuals who can serve as a bridge between the academic community and the world at large. These administrators, faculty members, staff, students, and community members can help create new opportunities for different disciplines to work together and for all parts of a campus community and members of the broader society to form new working relationships to address the complex problems of today's world. What role will these boundary spanners play in building a culture of engagement? How will their work change our ideas about faculty work, staff work, and the role of students in achieving the goals of the institution and in responding to the changing world around us?

Reflective Essays

Narratives from 3 presenters at the closing session of the 2013 Engagement Scholarship Consortium Conference demonstrate that higher education institutions and communities can forge deep and sustainable relationships to address the "wicked problems" in their countries and communities. University leaders in Nigeria described how students and faculty at the American University participate in service-learning courses and programs that have generated important local economic impacts. A community partner described the

The analysis revealed that difference and inequality are salient themes and shape the relationships and possibilities for joint action between U.S. students and their hosts. A typology is suggested that includes symbolic, instrumental, and pragmatic performances of solidarity. By highlighting the perspective of Nicaraguan hosts, this study fills an important gap in the literature on service-learning. It also contributes to the conceptual elaboration of an often heard but rarely defined concept: solidarity.

Community engagement professionals and partners serve as, work with, study, and build the capacity of boundary spanners. To augment knowledge about these functions, the Weerts–Sandmann Boundary Spanning Conceptual Framework (*2010*) has been operationalized through a survey instrument to examine community engagement boundary-spanning behaviors by campus-based actors—leaders, faculty, staff, and students—as well as by community-based spanners in different contexts. This article provides an explication of the underlying theoretical constructs and the development and testing process of the instrument, along with applications for multiple audiences. Implications are presented concerning contextual issues of boundary spanning and generalization of boundary-spanning roles across a variety of potential subjects.

Dissertation Overviews

Today's Cooperative Extension organization continues to face challenges of providing relevant, quality programming in urban communities. Challenges include the ability to build capacity in Extension's urban youth educators to assess and interpret the unique, variable needs of urban clients and to communicate effectively the identified needs to the state land-grant institution to leverage resources. To be responsive, intentional change can be informed and initiated by those closest to the challenges of creating thriving 4-H programs in urban environments – the urban Extension youth educator. Guided by open and sociotechnical systems theory, this multiple case action research study used the critical incident methodology to explore boundary-spanning behaviors of urban Extension youth educators. Four conclusions were drawn from an analysis

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Weerts and Sandmann (*2010*) institutional model. The Framework for Community Boundary Spanners in Engaged Partnerships identifies four distinct roles community boundary spanners may play. This study provides institutional partners with the tools and techniques to better locate and engage community boundary spanners through partner identification and development.

Hunter Phillips Goodman
University of Central Arkansas

Community boundary spanners create ties that bind the campus and its surrounding region for reciprocal relationships. Using community boundary spanning literature as a conceptual framework, this study went beyond existing research on public and 4-year comprehensive universities to examine how university leadership at rural, private liberal arts institutions can more deeply integrate civic engagement into institutional priorities and be more responsive to community needs. A qualitative multicase study was conducted to explore how leaders of rural, private liberal arts institutions and their community partners view civic engagement relative to the college's mission. The study examined university leaders' and community stakeholders' perceptions of civic engagement at 5 liberal arts institutions in the Bonner Scholars Program network. The conceptual framework in Weerts *(2005)* and Weerts and Sandmann *(2010)* was developed into a foundation for university leaders at liberal arts institutions to embed and develop community engagement into their institutions' culture and ethos.

Practice Stories

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A model is presented for coordinated community planning to address multiple service needs in two countries. Two communities, one in western Texas and one in the United Kingdom, found that despite the considerable efforts of multiple organizations, the local social, educational, and health services remained uncoordinated. Furthermore, there was no unified data collection to enable determination of which

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From the Guest Editor's Desk…

I grew up in northern San Diego County where my worldview was shaped by geography. In the summers, my mother would drive us to the beach where we would build sand castles, search tide pools for starfish, and cool off in the waves of the Pacific Ocean. My world was defined by knowing my cardinal directions—the sun rose in the East and set over the Pacific Ocean in the West. This perspective was challenged when I traveled to Panama City in the Republic of Panama. I arrived after sundown and did not know what direction my hotel room faced. In the morning, as I looked out the window, I saw a beautiful view—the broad expanse of the Panama Bay leading into the Gulf of Panama; beyond that was the Pacific Ocean. On my left was the mouth of the Panama Canal. Behind me, the sun rose from a direction that did not align with my sense of cardinal directions. Even after consulting a small tourist map in the room, I was disoriented by the view and could not get my bearings. Ultimately, a Panamanian told me that many tourists are confused by this view because the sun rises from the South across the water, not the West. My Panamanian experience challenged a deeply seated orientation to the world.

As a higher education leader, I have found that this experience is applicable to my perspectives about higher education. There are numerous accounts of legislative and university initiatives that challenge the very mission of higher education. With so much dissonance, it is easy to become disoriented and in need of a new view for the future of global higher education. Much of our learned experience about directions has been disturbed in the wake of deep, global change. Scholars and leaders across the world are awakening to the need to change their orientation and get bigger maps. In order to facilitate this transition, in this Special Edition we offer manuscripts from university and community scholars addressing their research and experiences in numerous communities and countries. This volume, and the journey that it represents, was initially generated from the 2013 Engagement Scholarship Consortium (ESC) conference, Boundary Spanning Across Disciplines, Communities, and Geography.

A call for manuscripts was issued in October 2013 and generated research papers, practice stories from the field, reflective

essays, projects with promise, and dissertation overviews. In addition, in order to diversify the media utilized in this volume, the 2013 ESC conference poster session award winners were invited to submit their abstracts and links, which are included so that the reader can view the digital posters archived on the ESC website (at http://engagementscholarship.org/awards/esc-poster-award/2013). The editorial team of the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* managed the editorial process in which all manuscripts were evaluated through the *Journal's* double-blind peer review process, with the exception of those that were invited, the dissertation overviews, and the book reviews.

From a 2013 ESC plenary session, Judith Ramaley's article addresses internal spanning behaviors that traverse the silos of academic departments and disciplines to address "wicked" societal problems that demand collaboration and a larger view. From the ESC 2013 Closing Session, university and community partners from Canada, Brazil, Nigeria, and the United States share essays that describe how they forge connections between universities and communities in various geographical and cultural contexts. In another reflective essay, Romero suggests the power of "riding the bus" to encourage students and faculty to venture into local neighborhoods and communities.

A research article by Gates et al. presents an ethnographic study situated in an international service-learning context. Another research article that speaks to measuring boundary-spanning behaviors utilizing the Weerts-Sandmann Boundary Spanning Conceptual Framework is followed by five dissertation overviews with perspectives on boundary-spanning behaviors and actors in varying engagement contexts. In a practice story from the field, Back describes a strategy that utilized participatory action research with community members in the United Kingdom and the United States. The book reviews entice the reader to investigate further the "third space" of higher education and boundary spanning in organizations. Finally, abstracts from the 2013 ESC poster award winners provide a rich picture from text-based and visual evidence of community engagement partnerships across the United States.

These articles all address the theme of "boundary spanning," but from many different points of view. Authors share their theory building, research findings, reflections, and experiences about

transcending historical and expected perspectives and partnerships in order to generate new learning experiences and knowledge. The volume contributes to the literature of a changing context and orientation for the role of higher education and communities in society—local and global. I am indebted to the authors, community partners, the Engagement Scholarship Consortium and its 2013 conference contributors, the many reviewers, and the mentorship of *Journal* editor Lorilee Sandmann, managing editor Diann O. Jones, and associate editor Burt Bargerstock, as we have collaborated together to bring this Special Edition to fruition. It is my hope that works presented here will support further investigation into university–community partnerships and promote boundary spanning that is needed to address the most critical challenges to the future of our world.

With best regards,
Valerie Osland Paton

Valerie Osland Paton is an associate professor in higher education in the College of Education at Texas Tech University. She formerly served as vice provost for planning and assessment and the institutional liaison for regional accreditation. Paton's research focuses on engagement; online learning; and higher education policy, planning, assessment, and accreditation. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Southern California.

Reflective Essays

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The Changing Role of Higher Education: Learning to Deal with Wicked Problems

Judith A. Ramaley

Abstract

The role of higher education is changing in today's world because the world itself is changing, and complex problems confront us daily. This essay will explore the role of an emerging group of individuals who can serve as a bridge between the academic community and the world at large. These administrators, faculty members, staff, students, and community members can help create new opportunities for different disciplines to work together and for all parts of a campus community and members of the broader society to form new working relationships to address the complex problems of today's world. What role will these boundary spanners play in building a culture of engagement? How will their work change our ideas about faculty work, staff work, and the role of students in achieving the goals of the institution and in responding to the changing world around us?

Introduction

The role of higher education is changing in today's world because the world itself is changing. All of our postsecondary institutions, regardless of their mission, are exploring how we can educate our students to become the kind of educated citizenry that we need in our nation today. We also are examining how our institutions can model informed and collaborative interactions with the broader society both locally and wherever our missions and interests take us. These goals have implications for the nature of our curricula and our conceptions of what it means to be well-educated. There also will be consequences for how we approach scholarship, teaching, and learning; how the careers of our faculty unfold; the roles and responsibilities of staff; the structure of our institutions; and how we support our mission. There also will be changes in our interactions with the communities that make up our world, both internally and externally. The future opening up to us is both challenging and exciting.

This essay will explore these elements and consider the role of individuals—administrators, faculty members, staff, students, and community members—who see the world in new ways, who can construct a deeper sense of today's realities from perspectives drawn from many disciplines, and who can draw others together

to design solutions to the problems we face as a society and as a global community. These people who can help create new opportunities for different disciplines to work together and for all parts of a campus community and members of the broader society to form new working relationships are boundary spanners. Others call them "transacademic interface managers" *(Brundiers, Wiek, & Kay, 2013)*. They can come from within the academy or from the external community. Their roles are emerging, and they are seeking to find their way in a world that blends the traditions of an academic culture and the knowledge, experiences, and expectations of a broader community. In this essay, we will consider several questions. What role will these individuals play in building a culture of engagement? How will their work change our ideas about faculty work, staff work, and the role of students in achieving the goals of the institution and in responding to the changing world around us?

Higher Education in the 21st Century: Learning to Deal with Wicked Problems

Our nation's colleges and universities have always sought to prepare their graduates for life and work in their own era. The pressures we face as educators and administrators in higher education today, both from outside the academy and from within our own community, are complex, interlocking, and hard to manage *(Ramaley, 2013)*. These challenges require us to rethink what it means to be educated in today's world and to explore ways to provide a coherent and meaningful educational experience in the face of the turbulence, uncertainty, and fragmentation that characterize much of higher education today. We have faced times like this before, and our imagination, creativity, and commitment to the common good have helped us through. As Rudolph *(1990)* explains it:

> War, declining enrollments, the sudden instability of whole areas of knowledge. Dynamic social and economic changes—these and a multitude of other developments have often thrown the American college back upon itself and forced upon it a moment, perhaps even an era, of critical self-assessment and redefinition. *(p. 110)*

We are again in such a time, and we face a fresh set of "other developments" that now throw us not simply back upon ourselves but into the sometimes confusing and difficult territory of

campus/community collaboration and the effect of new forms of scholarship and practice. Open for fresh consideration are how we express our roles as scholars, teachers, and learners; the pathways we pursue in our careers; and the way that our work will be evaluated by peers, both within the academy and beyond. Collaboration with partners in the broader society will, I believe, offer a workable accommodation and response to the growing number of challenges that affect us as institutions and that we must address as we perform our responsibilities as intellectual and social resources for our society. These relationships, however, will require us to rethink the nature of the work we do and the impact of our contributions on how we generate knowledge, create an inspiring educational environment, and assist our students in acquiring the knowledge and skills they will need to work effectively with others to address complex problems. As we work to create greater institutional resiliency and adaptability in an uncertain world, we have a responsibility to learn both with and from others and to contribute to the efforts of other organizations and communities that are facing the same or similar challenges.

Workable responses and solutions to today's problems require new ways of learning, new ways of working together, and new definitions and measures of progress and success. I will make the case for the power of engagement as a way to approach our core functions of scholarship, teaching, and learning and as a strategy for linking scholarship and learning to the improvement of life in the community. Engagement can tap resources that would otherwise not be available to our institutions and our communities because they represent tacit knowledge and expertise accumulated by individuals or small groups of residents within the community. Engaged work draws upon many perspectives to frame questions, explore options, and develop and then apply solutions to challenges, both in the local community and beyond.

The formal definition of engagement developed by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching *(2013)* is built upon the Boyer *(1990)* model of scholarship in which discovery, interpretation, and application of knowledge become a shared commitment and an endeavor that brings together scholars from across the disciplines and members of the external community who bring different perspectives and experiences to work on problems of common interest.

Community engagement describes collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial

exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.

> The purpose of community engagement is the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good. *(Carnegie, 2013, para. 4)*

Unlike the culture of traditional scholarship, which is assessed by academic peers *(Glassick, Huber, & Maeroff, 1997)*, engaged scholarship and engaged learning must meet both the standards of the academy and the expectations of community partners and representatives.

At its core, engagement follows the same decision-making and solution-finding path that should be familiar to all of us who came of age in the traditional academy. The roles and responsibilities of the participants are clear. What differs is who plays those roles and how different participants interact with each other to advance the agenda (adapted from *Mathews, 2006*). In engaged scholarship, members of the academy and community partners share responsibilities for each of these tasks.

- Who names the problems and asks questions?
- Who identifies and evaluates the options?
- Who shares resources to advance the agenda?
- Who cares about what choices are made?
- Who bears the risks and who enjoys the potential benefits?
- Who interprets the results and defines success?

Education in Today's World: Engaged Learning

One of the best descriptions of what it means to be educated was produced early in our current era by William Cronon *(1998)*. An educated person can be described as fully by how they interact with other people as by what they know *(Ramaley, 2005)*. In Cronon's list of traits, a clear portrait emerges of educated people who (1) listen and pay attention to the ideas of others; (2) read and understand; (3) can talk with anyone; (4) can write clearly, persuasively, and movingly; (5) can look at something complicated, figure out how it works and how to respond to complex and changing problems; (7)

focus on other people's ideas, dreams, and even nightmares, not just their own mental landscape, and practice humility, understanding, and self-criticism; (8) know how to get things done in the world and leave the world a better place; (9) enjoy nurturing and encouraging other people and appreciate the value of being a member of a community; and (10) above all, follow E. M. Forster's injunction from Howards End—"Only connect"—by which Cronon means the ability to see the connections that allow us to make sense of the world and to act within it in creative and responsible ways.

Kim Stafford *(2003)*, in his reflections on the writer's craft, summed up these ideas in his own way. He wrote, "A new connection among a constellation of dispersed facts is always original. There lies the pleasure of discovery and creation" *(p. 61)*. Reading the world in this way, according to Stafford, "honors an old paradox about reading, for the verb 'to read' originally meant both to decipher a text and to explain a mystery" *(p. 77)*. Engaged learning and scholarship open up new ways of seeing, new approaches to sensemaking, and new opportunities to work together to apply what we learn by "reading" our environment. These ways draw upon the mental models, values, and language of different disciplines and different ways of understanding the world.

Dealing with Wicked Problems

Kim Stafford's (*2003*) reflections on "reading" the environment offer a way to address wicked problems, the kind that permeate our lives today both in our own communities and across the globe. These are the kind of problems that we must address through the public problem-solving that takes place in a healthy democracy *(Oh & Rich, 1996)* and that we must learn to model in our campus communities as well.

The concept of a wicked problem was developed by Rittel and Webber *(1973)*, who argued that

> the professional's job was once seen as solving an assortment of problems that appeared to be definable, understandable and consensual . . . but now that these relatively easy problems have been dealt with, we have been turning our attention to others that are much more stubborn. *(p. 156)*

According to Rittel and Webber (*1973*), these kinds of wicked problems cannot be definitively defined; they continue to change as we study them; the choice of an appropriate response or solution is

never clear-cut; there is little if any room for trial and error; every problem is essentially unique; every problem is tangled up with other issues and may be a symptom of a larger, more complex challenge; and there isn't much margin for error in understanding the issues and in choosing strategies for handling the problem because every choice creates new problems of its own.

The management of this kind of problem requires collaboration, a sharing of exposure to risk and an opportunity for benefit, and a willingness to learn as the problem changes. It is this sort of challenge, defined as contested questions coupled with unclear and often disputed solutions, that lends itself to engaged strategies of scholarship, teaching, and learning. The prevalence of this kind of problem also is reshaping our approach to professional education and our collaborations with professionals in our communities as we seek to prepare people who have not only content knowledge but also the ability to use that knowledge wisely while continuing to learn, who can read the environment of practice, and who can work with others to address the needs of the people and organizations they serve *(Palmer, 2007)*. Professionals who possess these skills are also reflective practitioners, individuals who live in Donald Schoen's "swampy lowlands" and navigate through often murky and uneven terrain *(Schoen, 1987, p. 37)*. Experience with the integration of research, education, and application or professional practice can prepare a student to take on the role of an integrator and boundary spanner.

According to Camillus *(2008)*, a wicked problem can be identified by studying its characteristics. These problems happen in the "swampy lowland" of daily life *(Schoen 1987, p. 37)*.

> Wicked problems often crop up when organizations (or communities) have to face constant change or unprecedented challenges. They occur in a social context; the greater the disagreement among stakeholders, the more wicked the problem. In fact, it's the social complexity of wicked problems as much as their technical difficulties that make them tough to manage. Not all problems are wicked; [however] confusion, discord and lack of progress are telltale signs that an issue might be wicked. *(Camillus, 2008, p. 100)*

Building the Capacity to Manage Wicked Problems

The features of a wicked problem sound very much like those workings of democracy in our nation today that arouse our concern. To quote Camillus *(2008)* again, any wicked problem "involves many stakeholders with different values and priorities" *(p. 100)*. The problem itself is a tangled knot, like an impacted wisdom tooth with multiple roots. These problems are "difficult to come to grips with" while they "change with every attempt to address them" *(p. 99)*. As if that were not enough, these challenges have no obvious precedent, and there is no well-practiced or simple way to solve them. Life in a community, on campus or off campus, often follows this kind of pattern.

Wicked problems often create nested or tangled elements that are difficult to unravel. The description of a wicked problem that Camillus *(2008)* offers also sounds very much like the pressures we all are facing as we seek to steer our colleges and universities through a turbulent and increasingly uncertain environment. Our roles and purposes are increasingly questioned; our sources of support, both financial and social, continue to dwindle; and our efforts are criticized in ways that cause us to wonder whether the public purposes for which our institutions were founded are fading away *(Humphreys, 2012)*.

The elements from which we build an institution are also changing. The educational environment is no longer fully within our control. The world itself is both a classroom and a laboratory, and all of us can learn at any time, in any setting, and for a multiplicity of reasons. For a number of years now, patterns of participation in higher education have been shifting to complex models of intermittent enrollment, transitions from one institution to another, and co-enrollments of various kinds *(Adelman, 1999)*. Similarly, the composition of the professoriate and the career paths open to academics are changing *(Austin, 2003)*. Concerns about success in these complex environments have led to criticism from external stakeholders about the cost of an education, the economic value of a college degree, low graduation rates, and different success rates across social and economic groups *(Humphreys, 2012)*. These demographic and cultural shifts are further complicated by technology that is changing how we communicate with one another, how we learn, where we learn, what we want to know, and how we will use the knowledge we have acquired *(Shirky, 2008)*.

Today's global challenges *(The Millennium Project, 2013)* are especially difficult wicked problems, ranging from democratization to sustainable development and climate change, clean water, health issues, energy sources, and peace and conflict. To prepare ourselves and our students to deal with problems like these, whether they are playing out in our own communities or across the globe, we must learn to engage our students, faculty, staff, and community partners in the task of working on a problem that changes as we study it, defies easy solutions, and requires us to work with people we have never met before who may or may not share similar values and who most certainly bring with them very different perspectives and expertise.

In a recent report from the Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Commission on the Humanities and Social Sciences *(2013)* asked, "Who will lead America into a bright future?" (*p. 17*) The report answered the question succinctly and issued a challenge to all of us who both seek to educate our students and live responsible, creative, and productive lives ourselves.

> Citizens who are educated in the broadest possible sense, so that they can participate in their own governance and engage with the world. An adaptable and creative workforce. Experts in national security, equipped with the cultural understanding, knowledge of social dynamics and language proficiency to lead our foreign service and military through complex global conflicts. Elected officials and a broader public who exercise civil political discourse, founded on an appreciation of the ways our differences and commonalities have shaped our rich history. We must prepare the next generation to be these future leaders. *(Academy, 2013, p. 17)*

The leaders of today's world must have experience with questions like these and some opportunity to come up with workable ways to manage them in a collaborative, open, and respectful way as a part of their education, at home or abroad or both. To provide appropriate exposure to various aspects of wicked problems and to foster the knowledge, intellectual skills, and social and civic responsibility that can inform and shape how we react to problems of this kind, universities must learn how to work in a solution-finding mode as well.

The task of organizing our intellectual assets in ways that contribute to in-depth exploration and broad integration across fields

and perspectives offers its own kind of wicked problem. Academic institutions have grown accustomed to organizing intellectual capital in discrete domains that we call departments and disciplines. Although most of us have various forms of integrative mechanisms and support structures for collaboration and cross-disciplinary scholarship, it is rare for these efforts to shape our curriculum and our expectations of our graduates. The *Degree Qualifications Profile (Lumina Foundation, 2011)* offers one attempt to define a model of coherence, integration, and progression over time, held together by reflective learning and practice shaped by attention to real-world problems. As more institutions experiment with approaches to designing an education that meets the demands of a new era, they will develop new ways to model, foster, and assess the knowledge, skills, and inclinations that will be needed by productive, creative, and responsible people in today's world.

In the 20th century, universities were recognized for their comprehensive array of disciplines, the research funding they obtained from a small set of federal agencies and the publications that arose from that sponsored work, their focus on technology transfer and outreach supported by a dedicated infrastructure managed by professional staff and extension agents, and a highly selected and well-prepared student body. The excellence of the institution was, in sum, the aggregate of the individual scholarly efforts of faculty, interpreted and applied primarily by outreach professionals *(Holland, 2012)*.

Although this model of institutional achievement will surely continue to be part of our academic culture, the overall reputation and impact of a university will increasingly shift to a new pattern of achievement based on a different approach to the production and use of knowledge that is collaborative, open, and global in character *(International Business Machines Corporation, 2006)*. In the 21st century, universities will focus on a number of signature themes that reflect both their academic interests and the characteristics of the communities and regions that they serve. Institutions will build extensive collaborative partnerships with other universities, sectors of society, local communities, and even nations to generate knowledge, address societal challenges, and create learning environments in which to educate their students. Universities will work together to address the needs of a much more diverse student population and to enhance the overall level of persistence and success in the educational environments created both by individual institutions and by networks of cooperating institutions. Innovative technology-based and experiential teaching methods *(Kuh, 2008)*

will be developed and utilized to support student learning and success and to engage students in collaborations that address wicked local and global problems. In this model of engaged scholarship and learning, excellence will acquire new dimensions. The reputation and impact of a university will be created through measurable effects on the quality of local and global life, culture, health, economic stability, and environment *(Holland, 2012)*.

The Role of Boundary Spanners

As in all organizations, the collective behavior that constitutes institutional mission, culture, and capacity depends upon the work of each member of the campus community. Boyer (*1990*) published a landmark text that addressed the implications of the ways that the work of the academy, exemplified most significantly at that time by the scholarship of individual faculty members, was adapting to "shifting priorities both within the academy and beyond" *(p. xi)*. Boyer's observation that the faculty reward system was narrowing "at the very time that the mission of American higher education was expanding" set the stage for his argument that "[at] no time in our history has the need been greater for connecting the work of the academy to the social and environmental challenges beyond the campus" *(p. xii)*. He set out to define in more comprehensive terms what it means to be a scholar and how teaching and research represent aspects of the same complex process of making sense of the world.

Over 20 years later, the same issues are still with us, but the larger worldview that is informing our changing sense of mission and purpose now includes the work of students, professional staff, and members of the broader community as well. As Boyer (*1990*) foreshadows in his aptly titled chapter "The Faculty: A Mosaic of Talent," our entire campuses are now a mosaic in which each piece matters, but the value of each contribution takes on a greater meaning when seen in the broader context of the responsible use of the knowledge that is generated both within the academic enterprise and in society at large. Leading a university is now rather like conducting a large orchestra made up of individually talented musicians who are still learning how to play together. Some are experienced and wise and willing to help their younger colleagues along, some are full of energy and enthusiasm but lacking in confidence or ability to listen well to others, and some are annoyed at the choice of the composition to be played and prefer to play a solo piece.

The people who are growing into the role of boundary spanner must ask themselves several defining questions as they develop a distinctive identity and purpose within the academy and seek to advance the practice of engaged scholarship, learning, and teaching in cooperation with members of the community both on campus and beyond.

1. How do you see yourself as a scholar?
2. How do you describe your work to others?
3. What do faculty and students and members of the broader community want to learn, how do they want to learn, and what do they want to do with the knowledge they gain?
4. What adaptations is your institution making to the changing nature of the production and use of knowledge and what we now expect from college graduates in today's environment?
5. What is your own role in this changing environment, and how can you best contribute to the development of a culture of engagement? How can you use your own expertise and connections to inform and support adaptations of the academy to the realities of life today?

Although these questions are not comprehensive, they do offer a start in exploring roles and responsibilities and patterns of influence in the changing academic world and how best to link the world of the academy to the experiences and knowledge of the broader community to create a working environment that supports engaged forms of scholarship, teaching, and learning. At its heart, the question is about how best to manage from the middle of an organization *(Bolman & Gallos, 2011)*. People in the middle of a complex organization must learn ways to work in an environment in which they often have scarce resources, a crowded schedule, limited authority, and several layers separating them from the senior leadership of the college or university in which they are playing boundary-spanning roles.

Boomgaarden *(2008)* offered some sage advice for people in this position. He cautioned boundary spanners and middle managers to stay alert to system dynamics and adjust to them by wisely using their influence and power to enlist and coach others, act as

facilitators of new patterns of interaction, and find support and solace in the company of others who share their goals.

Creating a Culture of Engagement in the Academy

Engaged scholarship and teaching and learning draw upon a distributed base of information and knowledge *(Gibbons et al., 1994)*. The nature of wicked problems requires an approach built upon many disciplinary perspectives and experiences, leading to greater collaboration across fields and to the involvement of new participants who bring fresh knowledge and perspectives from their own professional experiences and cultural knowledge. The university must create new forms of infrastructure to support and sustain these new working relationships while encouraging faculty and students to seek out integrative and collaborative opportunities that address today's complex problems. These new hubs of activity and sources of technical support are being staffed by a new class of professionals who consider themselves scholar-practitioners and boundary spanners. The people they support and bring together are also boundary spanners. These individuals have experience both in the academic world and in the community but often are more familiar with and more at home in one of those environments. Their responsibility is to help universities develop new partnerships, new ways of learning together, and new expectations that add up to work that is mutual and reciprocal across fields and between the university and broader society, collaborative in nature, focused on learning with and from partners, and supported by a sense of shared purpose.

In today's university setting, engagement is often found in pockets—individual courses that include an experiential component, individual faculty scholarly work that derives its inspiration and questions from some aspect of community experience or concern, curricular designs in a few professional fields that have revisited how they prepare their students for professional practice and moved beyond standard clinical experiences to educating reflective practitioners *(Schoen, 1987)* through some form of problem-based work (e.g., *Bridges, 1992)*.

As Schoen *(1988)* says in his prefatory remarks:

> In the varied topography of professional practice, there is a high, hard ground overlooking a swamp. On the high ground, manageable problems lend themselves to solution through the application of research-based

> theory and technique. In the swampy lowland, messy, confusing problems defy technical solutions . . . in the swamp lie the problems of greatest human concern. *(p. 37)*

In the 1980s there may have been a number of these high promontories where well-researched answers could be applied to crisply defined questions. In today's world, those vantage points are few and far between, and the capacity to address today's messy and confusing problems will need to be infused across our entire institutions and through our collaborations with our communities as well. To learn new ways of working together, new ways to learn, and new ways to measure our progress, we must attend to all aspects of campus life and structure. A fully realized culture of engagement will provide:

- access to innovative and relevant educational programs and to research and information resources;
- partnerships that address social, economic, and environmental issues;
- scholarship that arises from and informs efforts to promote human well-being in a healthy environment;
- integrated efforts across the entire university in ways that draw upon the distinctive perspectives and expertise of all fields;
- a culture that recognizes and supports engaged scholarship, learning, and teaching; and
- resources to invest in collaboration.

These components of an engaged culture will be shaped by: (a) how a university approaches its educational mission and the design, delivery, and expectations contained in that curriculum; (b) the scholarly agenda developed by individual faculty and the integrating themes that bring different disciplinary perspectives together to address large questions; (c) the nature and purposes of collaborations and other interactions between campus and community; and (d) the infrastructure that holds these integrative models together both internally and externally and the development of a group of people—the boundary spanners on staff and on the faculty—who develop and maintain a culture of meaningful engagement.

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Boundary Spanning: Engagement Across Disciplines, Communities, and Geography

Valerie O. Paton, Charles C. Reith and Karon K. Harden, Rogério Abaurre, Crystal Tremblay

Abstract

Narratives from 3 presenters at the closing session of the 2013 Engagement Scholarship Consortium Conference demonstrate that higher education institutions and communities can forge deep and sustainable relationships to address the "wicked problems" in their countries and communities. University leaders in Nigeria described how students and faculty at the American University participate in service-learning courses and programs that have generated important local economic impacts. A community partner described the impact on educational access and civic leadership for a partnership between a Brazilian high school curriculum provider and a U.S. university, Texas Tech. A young Canadian scholar who works with "marginalized, stigmatized, and excluded communities in the world" described these partners as "environmental heroes" and shared a powerful vision of university and community collaboration across the globe. Together, these narratives weave a vision for global partnerships that have tangible impacts for peace, economic security, educational access, and quality of life.

Introduction

Valerie O. Paton

In October 2013, the Engagement Scholarship Consortium (ESC) Conference was held at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. In 2010, ESC admitted its first international university and began to reframe the organization to embrace engagement at the international level. To strengthen these connections, the 2013 ESC Conference was titled "Boundary Spanning: Engaged Scholarship Across Disciplines, Communities and Geography." Representatives attended from universities in Canada, Brazil, Mexico, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, South Africa, Thailand, and the United States.

The conference closing session attempted to celebrate the work of U.S. and international universities and partners. Reflecting the conference theme, participants shared their stories of "Boundary Spanning: Engagement Across Disciplines, Communication and Geography." University leaders from Canada,

Nigeria, and the United States shared their unique experiences, and a community partner from Brazil shared his thoughts about international partnerships. As the convener of this session, I asked each participant to use the following prompts about engagement and its applicability to the "wicked problems" that our global communities are facing:

1. Describe your university's or community organization's engagement efforts locally, globally, and across disciplines.
2. From a reciprocity and mutuality perspective, what have you learned from working with community partners or universities that has strengthened your understanding and institutional leadership roles?
3. How does the academy respond to the wicked problems of society, which are typically transdisciplinary in nature?

Each participant narrated their responses from their unique perspectives. As they delivered their narratives, participants discovered resonance with each other's stories. At the end of the session, participants found that they held significant common values about the role of university–community partnerships and their potential impact on civic engagement and empowerment in the United States and across the globe. The participants expressed their deep personal commitment to their engagement efforts as well as the commitment of their universities and organizations.

As the session closed, we were all in agreement that these stories needed to be written and shared more broadly. Therefore, the following essays flow from the presentations given at the 2013 ESC Closing Session, but have been expanded to more carefully describe university and community partnerships and their potential for local and global impact.

During the 8 months between the closing session and submission of the essays for editorial review, several major events occurred that spoke to the power of these partnerships, particularly in Nigeria. Reith and Harden's initial essay on the commitment to "service" as part of the mission of American University of Nigeria (AUN) referenced the activity of the Boko Haram (which, loosely translated, means "Western education is forbidden"; *Chothia, 2014*)

before the abduction of 200 schoolgirls in April 2014. From their perspective in the midst of this conflict, Reith and Harden tell us,

> Perhaps the ultimate service to a community is keeping the peace. . . . AUN views every service project as an instrument of peacekeeping by virtue of increasing our region's economic and social security; however, our students are engaging increasingly in even more direct service in the interest of peace by implementing plans and programs of the Adamawa Peace Initiative.

Resonating with AUN and its students, community partner Rogério Abaurre of Brazil's High School Serviços Educacionais (HSE) introduces his essay by describing his expectations of the partnership:

> With the development of an increasingly complex, intertwined world, occasionally hostile, often friendly, but always competitive, coupled with the arrival of faster and more accessible communication and information technologies, the supportive and foundational needs of every nation's society have demanded that its youthful citizens become educationally, socially, and culturally prepared to join this advancing global community environment.

Through the HSE partnership with Texas Tech University Independent School District, Brazilian high school students and U.S. college students are forging relationships that have the potential for long-term impact in both countries. Abaurre enumerates 12 "core characteristics and guiding principles" which, from his perspective as a community partner, are essential to successful relationships.

In the final essay, Crystal Tremblay of the University of Victoria champions the idea of "cocreation of knowledge" with communities:

> There is enormous benefit for communities and IHEs [institutions of higher education] to be partnering and working together in cocreating local solutions. In order to really respond to the "wicked" problems that society faces, we need a multiperspective, multidisciplinary approach that spans multiple sectors. Complex problems are often multifaceted and have social, economic, political, and environmental dimensions, which need

> to be approached with these considerations. We need to be working across campus, creating research clusters where students, scholars, and community can be active in cocreating solutions that are rooted in the community and have impact for positive change. We need to be forging collaborative relationships between civil society, government, and IHEs in cocreating locally informed solutions. These solutions are often found in the community, where extensive knowledge already exists.

Tremblay has had the unique opportunity of providing support to the UNESCO Chair in Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education, a collaboration between Budd Hall and Rajesh Tandon. Based upon this experience and her partnerships with communities, Tremblay discusses the power of institutions of higher education and communities working together to cocreate knowledge. She tells us, "We need to open our hearts and minds to new ways of living in this world and of organizing ourselves."

The essays close with Budd Hall's (*2013*) poem "A Great Turning," which was first shared at the 2013 Global University Network for Innovation and is reprinted here with his permission. In part of the poem, Hall challenges us:

> And sometimes we even feel that the turning has begun. But we are unsure of the nature of the turning, and we are unsure of what it means for ourselves and even for our work.
>
> And even more we ask how do we make the road together? What are scholars and civil society leaders and public officials and funding agencies and artists and students for in this age? What is the use of our power to read the world?

The following essays give voice to university leaders, students, scholars and community partners in response to these questions.

Community Service in a Development University

Charles Reith and Karon Harden

Introduction

The closing plenary at ESC's 2013 conference was an excellent forum for describing how community engagement and service at the American University of Nigeria (AUN) is the central agent of actualizing our mission to be Africa's premier development university. This essay follows up to describe our many service initiatives and their benefits to the students, our host community, and beyond.

AUN is uniquely committed to development, and it has been so from the start. The university was founded in 2005 by Atiku Abubaker, a successful politician and business leader who was educated while a primary school student by the U.S. Peace Corps. Atiku was impressed by the way the Peace Corps served the community and delivered an "American-style education." He attributes much of his success to the analytical thinking he learned from the interactive nature of the classroom, which contrasted with the more regimented, lecture-oriented European system in most Nigerian schools. But even more, he was impressed with the way the Peace Corps dedicated itself and its people to the betterment of the community, not just alleviating poverty but striving for its eradication through teaching and service.

Service and Engagement at AUN

Many schools are laudably increasing the emphasis on service and engagement in their repertoire. AUN occupies a special place in higher education—certainly in African higher education—because service is at the very core of our history, mission, strategic plan, and education. In recent years we have developed a service-based cocurricular infrastructure that makes it possible to continuously expand our service program and to extend its reach into the community wider and deeper.

AUN's service activities originate from throughout the university; however, the central, coordinating entity is the Office of Community Engagement and Service Learning in the university's Student Affairs program. This office offers our students weekly extracurricular, volunteer community service opportunities such

as tutoring, building renovation and painting, well restoration, tree planting, and drug awareness campaigns. A highly touted event is the annual Residence Hall Community Service Competition in which dorms compete with one another to complete service projects. This office also provides logistical support to the service-learning courses discussed below, along with other community development initiatives.

A student's experience in our service programs begins right away in Gen 101: Freshman Seminar. This mandatory course introduces students to AUN, its mission, and major themes in development. In addition to academic requirements, students must complete 10 hours of service per semester consisting of on-campus or off-campus activities in the local community. Many of these experiences are very formative, commencing student–community relationships that may last for the full duration of a student's AUN experience. A frequent destination for Gen 101 service activities is one of several women's centers for non-government organizations that provide economic assistance, empowerment, or support in the face of adversity such as HIV, abuse, or family loss. One woman's project involved making valuable products out of plarn, a plastic yarn cut in strips from recycled plastic grocery bags. Amazingly, AUN's students—many of whom hail from the country's privileged echelons—helped their instructor sort bags from the recycle stream, wash them, and provide them to the aspiring artisans. The fruits of their labor are reflected in several hundred of Yola's previously unemployed or underemployed women now earning handsome incomes crafting products sold under the brand Yola EcoSentials (YES). YES truly arose from the intersection of academics and service. The venture was designed, financially planned, and branded by a second-year course in entrepreneurship, and it was "subsidized" during its formative period by the gratuitous labor of service students.

After completing their mandatory Gen 101 service experience, students may enter Applied Community Development (CVD) courses at the 100 or 300 level. Besides providing academic perspective on Africa's developmental challenges and general solutions thereto, the courses immerse their students in service-learning experiences in one of five different foci:

- Tutoring to reinforce basic academic skills in local primary school pupils in Yola
- Designing and delivering technical training in computer literacy, directed not only to K-12 students but

also civil servants, small business owners, unemployed youth, and farmers

- Providing training on economic literacy and health awareness at local women's centers
- Coaching leadership and development sessions for women planning small income-generating projects

One perhaps unexpected and successful experiment in AUN's service program was assigning our students who were struggling in their academic performance to tutor local primary school students. Many AUN students undertook their assignments quite grudgingly, interpreting them as punitive as much as remedial. However, most found the service experience truly transformative, as expressed in end-of-semester essays that conveyed deep appreciation for the experience of helping others learn what they themselves had so taken for granted.

Most of AUN's service activities have focused on foundational needs of the community such as empowerment, literacy, and economic development plus facility fix-ups, landscaping, and even litter patrol. However, our advanced courses are increasingly deploying students toward more nuanced elements of community development. In several courses, students are performing advanced surveys and inspections to characterize poverty and vulnerability in a way that will optimally target future resources toward economic development and health awareness. In another course, students are teaching local tribes to grow jatropha, a cash crop for producing biofuel. In addition to providing hands-on training, the students are operating demonstration plots to show regional readiness for a transition from imported to locally grown diesel and petrol.

Perhaps the ultimate service to a community is keeping the peace, especially in the face of the worrisome violence perpetrated by Boko Haram just one state away. AUN views every service project as an instrument of peacekeeping by virtue of increasing our region's economic and social security; however, our students are engaging increasingly in even more direct service in the interest of peace by implementing plans and programs of the Adamawa Peace Initiative such as (a) an AUN-fostered campaign that convenes community leaders from all walks of life into regular meetings; (b) a Peace Curriculum to deliver in schoolrooms, churches, and mosques to students and adults of all ages; and (c) special events such the weekly "Peace League" games for men's soccer and women's volleyball. In November 2014, many of AUN's students

will perform or exhibit their service portfolios on Adamawa Peace Day, an annual campus celebration that attracts thousands of visitors from the community.

Conclusion

AUN's program of service and engagement arises from its core mission—as articulated in its strategic plan—to be "embedded in the community, working with local change agents to understand the economic, social, cultural and political environment, and together sharing solutions" (*The American University of Nigeria, 2011, p. 7*). We are deeply motivated to showcase this model not just to Nigeria but to all of sub-Saharan Africa because we believe it to be an important agent of the development needed to deliver our continent a secure and prosperous future.

Engagement Across Geography: A Dual-Curriculum Program for Brazilian–American Engagement

Rogério Abaurre

Introduction

With the development of an increasingly complex, intertwined world, occasionally hostile, often friendly, but always competitive, coupled with the arrival of faster and more accessible communication and information technologies, the supportive and foundational needs of every nation's society have demanded that its youthful citizens become educationally, socially, and culturally prepared to join this advancing global community environment. Gaining a deeper understanding of the strengths of the requisite skills to create an interdependent relationship extending beyond national and continental borders requires a broader educational and cultural experience. Students of today must be aware and have a sense of the history, culture, language, and problems of their neighbors. In order to compete in the world market, students require international or global knowledge. This is the goal of the joint academic partnership dual-curriculum program created by High School Serviços Educacionais (HSE) in Vitória, Espírito Santo, Brazil in collaboration with Texas Tech University Independent School District (TTUISD) in Lubbock, Texas, U.S.A. The program provides Brazilian students with the

opportunity to study a dual curriculum that integrates American and Brazilian subjects.

About the Partners

HSE and TTUISD are partners in offering an American high school diploma program in 54 selected Brazilian schools. This partnership allows students in Brazil the opportunity to study, in their own local Brazilian school, subjects from the official State of Texas American High School Curriculum, provided by TTUISD under the national coordination of HSE. The local accredited Brazilian schools that house the program in communities throughout the country provide the Brazilian curriculum component.

Pedagogical Objective and Design

The pedagogical objective of the partnership can be very simply described as to increase the global academic and professional engagement of our students. This goal is attained by providing them the opportunity to study two high school curricula: Brazilian and American.

In the 54 accredited Brazilian schools that house the program, students in the dual-curriculum program are taught all subjects from the Brazilian curriculum (mathematics, biology, physics, chemistry, Portuguese, arts, physical education, world history, world geography, Brazilian history, Brazilian geography, etc.) by certified Brazilian teachers during grades 9, 10, 11, and 12. During the regular school week, students have two afternoons dedicated to studying American high school subjects (literature, writing, speech, U.S. government, U.S. economics, and U.S. history) provided by TTUISD and taught by native English speakers in Brazil (physically present in the classroom) and certified TTUISD teachers (at a distance through Moodle) during grades 9, 10, and 11. Grade 12 is dedicated only to the Brazilian subjects and a strong college prep program. The sum of credits from both Brazilian and American curricula meets the 26-credit State of Texas graduation requirements and qualifies the students for receiving both an official American high school diploma from TTUISD and an official Brazilian high school diploma from their Brazilian schools. Not only must the students in the program pass all exams in both curricula, but they must also take and pass the equally rigorous Texas Education Agency's STAAR EOC exams, which verify that students have mastered curricular expectations for the State of Texas.

By design of HSE and in agreement with the community partner, students have local classes in their Brazilian schools with tutors who are native speakers of English from the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, South Africa, Australia, and other countries. Students are also tutored by TTUISD certified teachers based in the United States, who are officially responsible for grading all lessons and exams. All instructional materials are provided by HSE.

Each physical high school classroom in Brazil can accommodate a maximum of 20 students and is equipped with whiteboard, desks, table, mini library, air conditioning, digital projector, Internet-connected computer, sound system, video camera, and other equipment. Each school has a high school coordinator who locally manages all high school teachers and students and serves as the main liaison between the Brazilian school and HSE/TTUISD. HSE provides training, instructional materials, and pedagogical and operational support for all coordinators and teachers.

The credits (grades) earned in every Brazilian high school subject that corresponds to an American high school subject (e.g., mathematics) may be transferred as valid credits toward the American curriculum if they meet predefined TTUISD criteria. The sum of the credits taught in both the American and the Brazilian curricula totals the number of credits mandated by Texas Education Agency's graduation requirements. TTUISD high school students, like any other students admitted to an official school in the State of Texas, are subject to the educational laws and regulations of that state. Changes in those laws and regulations may affect the program at any moment, with or without previous notice.

This program is unique in that it allows students to be in their native country and, at the same time, connect with the world outside and gain global insight through the TTUISD high school curriculum, learning material taught in the many schools and classrooms throughout Brazil. Embedded in the program is the recognition that knowledge is the key to achieving global stature, mounting an innovative culture, and developing an entrepreneurial force among the future citizens of Brazil. Now more than ever, nations need to be more globally interconnected, with workers who are oriented toward technology and creativity through liberal arts as well as mathematical and scientific learning. This type of background is key to ensuring students' success in their education, work, and life, including advanced academic and professional contexts such as seminars, negotiation meetings, undergraduate and

graduate programs, and employment opportunities in Brazil, the United States, and other countries.

Pedagogically, the program attempts to integrate critical thinking skills with reading and writing skills in the hope of developing students' ability to contrast, compare, hypothesize, critique, and discover multiple and alternative points of view and ultimately to express their voice by authoring content. Through exposure to numerous different primary sources of information, students can make previously held assumptions the focus of newly posed questions. From there, they can evaluate media biases, interpret judicial decisions, assess political platforms, and develop their identities.

Institutional Relationship Between HSE and TTUISD

The success and achievements of such an international academic partnership, with its diverse operational needs, require that its essential pillars be built upon a spirit of mutuality, transparency, and reciprocity from both institutional partners. This foundation is based on the core characteristics and guiding principles at the heart of this joint program:

- sharing a common interest in advancing the field of international education;
- existing trust and ethics between the partners;
- continued transparency between the partners;
- maintaining a mutual understanding of each partner's cultural and academic environment;
- knowingly dividing roles and responsibilities;
- participating in effective and regular communication, including regular and frequent visits by HSE staff to Texas and by TTUISD staff to Brazil;
- engaging in joint strategic planning, training, and implementation of the program plan and changes;
- a strong commitment from all staff and management;
- the ability to make decisions collaboratively;
- being open in conflicts and in differing perspectives;
- maintaining a broad supportive institutional infrastructure; and
- providing monitoring and continuing evaluation.

Despite some obvious fundamental differences in language, history, and geography, the interactions between the Texan and Brazilian counterparts focus more on their similarities than their differences. This joint collaboration has brought to the forefront such inherent cultural characteristics as cordiality, graciousness, affability, creativity, and steadfast professionalism in an extremely harmonious working relationship based upon their strong mutual work ethic.

As a result of this joint academic partnership, a collaborative environment has evolved that has led to the strengthened educational development of both cross-institutional and cross-cultural capacities, all founded upon a respect for the interdependence of each individual partner's self-identity. Today, a total of 2,307 students from 54 schools in 33 Brazilian cities benefit from the HSE–TTUISD dual curriculum. Participants are fully able to develop creativity, flexibility, adaptability, advanced communication skills, excellent scholastic performance, strengthened perseverance, and enhanced civic and social engagement.

Additional collaboration beyond the high school curriculum has emerged from the HSE–TTUISD partnership. In 2011, a group of five educators from Brazilian partner schools, led by HSE, traveled to Lubbock, Texas to create jointly with TTUISD a summer camp that would enable the Brazilian students in the program to learn about U.S. culture and history by traveling to several sites in Texas and attending a summer intensive academic camp with U.S. students on the Texas Tech campus. In 2012, 54 Brazilian students traveled to Texas to attend the summer camp. Positive word of mouth led to 140 Brazilian students attending in 2013. In June and July of 2014, a group of 180 students is expected to come to the Texas Tech main campus. On another front, in 2014 a group of Brazilian high school students joined graduates from Texas Tech's Rawls College of Business in a study trip to Rio de Janeiro where they visited Brazilian industries, banks, and NGOs. During the visits, strong bonds formed between Brazilians and Americans, promoting better understanding of their cultural differences and similarities.

HSE and TTUISD have become increasingly aware of the role that this partnership has played in advancing our goal of an international educational project and that the successful achievement of our joint agenda has been made possible only by our maximization of the networks and alliances that have been forged between the two partners to this venture.

HSE is currently working with TTUISD on streamlining the operational and curricular elements of the U.S. curriculum component to expand the program globally, using the model perfected in Brazil as a model for other countries. The idea is to provide the same opportunity to as many students as possible in the world so they can be empowered to new levels of global collaboration.

Conclusion

From the perspective of an international community partner, the HSE–TTUISD relationship has endured as a result of the core characteristics and guiding principles discussed in this essay. International relationships require even more stewardship than those involving partners in close geographical proximity. However, international partnerships also hold the promise of a beneficial impact on current and future generations in a global community environment.

Engagement Across Geography—Cocreating Knowledge for "A Great Turning"

Crystal Tremblay

Introduction

It was a pleasure to participate as one of the plenary speakers in the closing ceremonies of ESC's 2013 conference. The following is a brief reflection of what I shared in working with communities around the world and the need for greater institutional adaptation and leadership in higher education.

I am an emerging scholar from Canada with a background in social geography and communications. My work is multidisciplinary and has been focused largely on waste and resource management, citizenship, and livelihood enhancement. I am particularly interested in the critical theory and practice of participatory action research (PAR) and other approaches to research that value and strengthen community knowledge and interrogate traditional structures of power in decision making. During my graduate studies, I was exposed to PAR and community-based approaches to doing research and had the opportunity to work with communities in Brazil, Canada, India, and elsewhere. I have worked primarily with the informal and cooperative recycling sector, also known as binners in Canada and catadores/catadoras in Brazil. This is one of the most marginalized, stigmatized, and excluded communities in

the world. I call them "environmental heroes." Together, we have used arts-based tools such as participatory video and photo-voice to document and challenge power structures with local governments and as a tool for communication for more inclusive policies in waste management.

Working in this knowledge cocreation space, the communities I have worked with are the researchers driving the change. The process has been incredibly effective at fostering collective voice, building individual agency, and taking actions for policy change. I have also learned that I have a lot to learn. I know that the communities I work with are the experts; they understand the relationships, issues, and solutions needed to improve their own lives. These collaborative approaches have helped sharpen my own critical reflections of how to conduct research and have provided the tools I need to listen and contribute in meaningful ways.

There is no doubt that civic engagement has become a high priority for many institutions of higher education (IHEs) around the world. At the University of Victoria, for example, there has been significant progress in the last 10 years in the institutional commitment to community–university engagement (CUE) with the new Institute for Studies and Innovation in Community–University Engagement. There are many other excellent models of this institutional commitment globally. Since 2012, I have had the pleasure of working with the UNESCO Chair in Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education, a collaboration between Budd Hall and Rajesh Tandon. This is a very unique cochair in that it is split between a civil society organization (the Society for Participatory Research in Asia, based in New Delhi, India) and an IHE (the University of Victoria, based in Canada), providing a valuable perspective between community and academia in driving the research process and negotiating the agenda priorities. The focus of the UNESCO chair is assisting countries in building knowledge societies through a lens of knowledge democracy. With a particular focus on the Global South, some of our work is currently exploring how to strengthen institutional structures for community–university research partnerships globally and developing capacity-building tools for teaching and learning in this field, particularly for the next generation of community-based researchers.

There is enormous benefit for communities and IHEs to partner and work together in cocreating local solutions. In order to really respond to the "wicked problems" that society faces, we need a multiperspective, multidisciplinary approach that spans mul-

tiple sectors. Complex problems are often multifaceted and have social, economic, political, and environmental dimensions which need to be approached with these considerations. We need to be working across campus, creating research clusters where students, scholars, and community members can be active in cocreating solutions that are rooted in the community and have impact for positive change. We need to be forging collaborative relationships between civil society, government, and IHEs in cocreating locally informed solutions. These solutions are often found in the community, where extensive knowledge already exists. Growing networks around the globe are spearheading this movement, including the Global University Network for Innovation (GUNi), the Living Knowledge Network, the Global Alliance for Community Engaged Research, PASCAL Observatories, The Research University Civic Engagement Network (TRUCEN), and others. These networks are important platforms in strengthening community-based research and social responsibility in higher education and in promoting a discourse on building a knowledge democracy. We need to open our hearts and minds to new ways of living in this world and of organizing ourselves.

I close my reflections with a poem written by Budd Hall (*2013*), called "A Poem for the Great Turning," bringing our attention to the voices of the people and embracing an alternative paradigm of knowledge production, one where all knowledge counts.

> We have seen the images, the flames. We have seen the anger and the confusion in the faces of our friends. But, we are told that perhaps . . . perhaps is a special time.
>
> And sometimes we even feel that the turning has begun. But we are unsure of the nature of the turning,and we are unsure of what it means for ourselves and even for our work.
>
> And even more we ask how do we make the road together? What are scholars and civil society leaders and public officials and funding agencies and artists and students for in this age? What is the use of our power to read the world?

Do we have the skills to support the reenchantment of the earth. If you would be a person for the turning, make your work capable of answering the challenge of apocalyptic times, even if this means sounding apocalyptic.

You are Gandhi, you are Martin Luther King, you are Mandela, you are Wangari Mathaai, you are Audre Lorde, you are Neruda, you are Pasolini, you are Walter Rodney, you are every voice from every part of the earth, you can conquer the conquerors with your words, . . . and with your new knowledge.

If you would be a turner, write living works. Be a scholar from outer space, sending articles to the journal of the new world rising, to a great new editor, an Indigenous woman, who cries out for contributions to this new reality and she does not tolerate academic bullshit.

If you would be a turner, experiment with all manner of words, all forms of representations of the new day dawning, of theatre and painting, of poetry, erotic broken grammars, ecstatic religions, heathen outpourings speaking in tongues, bombastic public speech, automatic scribbling's, surrealist sensings, found sounds, rants and raves . . .To create your own limbic, your own voice.

If you would be a turner, don't just sit there. These are not the times of sedentary occupations; this is not a 'take you seat' time in history. Stand up and let them have it. Have a wide-angle vision, each look a world glance. Express the vast clarity of the outside world, the sun that sees us all, the moon that strews its shadow upon us, quiet garden ponds, willows where the hidden thrush sings, dusk falling along the river banks, and the great spaces that open out upon the sea . . . high tide and the heron's call . . .

And the people, the people . . .yes the people all around the world . . .all around our wild and loving earth, the people speaking Babel tongues.

Give voice . . .Give voice to all of them.

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Riding the Bus: Symbol and Vehicle for Boundary Spanning

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Abstract

This reflective essay examines the activity of a bus tour organized as the result of an ongoing university and city partnership. The author illustrates how riding the bus is not only symbolic for positionality in our society but also how it can be a viable mechanism for initiating boundary spanning and promoting opportunities for place-based learning and future engagement. This essay focuses on the concept of boundary spanning and the roles and domains most often associated with this activity by exploring the language and metaphors invoked in the term. The notion of boundary spanning is framed as an activity system, coupled with consideration of how riding the bus facilitates less traditional participants' engagement. The author concludes by proposing that the activity of riding the bus can inform the boundary spanning metaphor while also serving as a mechanism to mobilize further engagement efforts.

Introduction

As I boarded the once yellow but now brightly decorated old bus, I suddenly realized that despite my many years in the United States, not to mention an uncountable number of bus rides across an array of countries, contexts, and climates, I had never actually ridden a school bus. I was entering domains uncharted, spanning a new boundary, yet all the while building on common ground at both the individual and institutional levels *(Friedman & Podolny, 1992)*.

Often in our daily lives we face new challenges, cross into new contexts, and span new boundaries in order to access and connect to new knowledge, practices, or communities. However, the way in which we define and participate in boundary spanning varies considerably from one context to another. As an academic and an administrator, as well as a first-generation immigrant to this country, I have done my fair share of boundary spanning across disciplines, across multicultural and multilingual communities, and across diverse geographies. In each instance, access and participation in each new setting involved a gradual process of learning and adaptation. There is an extensive body of research, particularly in human development, that seeks to account for how people engage

with and participate in new communities and that posits a carefully structured process at play, a form of "peripheral participation" *(Lave & Wenger, 1991)* which, not surprisingly, is highly contingent upon observation and a gradual immersion into the given community. As universities seek to bolster engagement as a method for teaching, learning, scholarship, and service with faculty, students, and communities, we are sometimes hard pressed to develop processes that allow for forms of peripheral participation, observation, or exploration. Frequently we turn to experienced boundary spanners, executive leadership, senior colleagues, and others known for proven connections or a trusted position to identify sites and communities for engagement. As a result, we may unintentionally overlook or leave unexplored certain sites or communities simply on the grounds that they are unknown to us.

In this reflective essay, I examine the simple activity of a bus tour and illustrate how at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) in Greeley, Colorado, this has become a viable mechanism for initiating boundary spanning and for promoting opportunities for future engagement. I begin by briefly considering the everyday practice and symbolism of riding the bus, and then I reflect on the concept of boundary spanning and the roles and domains most often associated with this activity before exploring the language and metaphors evoked by the term. Next I illustrate the notion of boundary spanning as an activity system and consider how riding the bus facilitates less traditional participants' engagement. Specifically, I describe how riding the bus acts as a vehicle to engage faculty and students in a transformative process of place-based learning, which produces a kind of "nexus effect" that manages boundaries, forges common ground, and enables discovery of new frontiers *(Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011)* by connecting participants to the local city, government, and communities. I conclude with reflections on ways in which riding the bus affords new perspectives and ways of knowing, symbolic and literal, with regard to boundary spanning.

Riding the Bus: Making the Familiar Strange

Riding the bus is an almost universal communal activity in many parts of the world, from large metropolises to remote rural villages; often it serves as the only means of collective transportation. Within the U.S. context, riding the bus also evokes powerful sociohistorical associations: Rosa Parks, the Freedom Riders, and the American Civil Rights Movement. Riding the bus and one's right to a seat on the bus in essence constitute both a public vehicle

and a sociopolitical symbol that represents individual positionality, crossing borders, challenging boundaries, and upholding basic human rights. Since the notion of positionality involves "multiple, unique experiences that situate each of us in relation to each other" *(Takacs, 2002, p. 175)*, riding the bus offers a distinctive yet recognizable shared space that allows participants to collectively explore less familiar spaces. In this essay, riding the bus serves as a qualitative lens through which to reflect upon how institutions and communities can initiate engagement efforts with each other; further, as a situated activity it delivers potential for more formal engagement initiatives. Riding the bus builds on the familiar to explore the unknown, literally repositioning individuals and encouraging distinctive ways of thinking and being in our communities.

Back on the old school bus I sat down next to a young woman, a junior in a class of undergraduate education students who, together with the professor, were taking a tour of our local city. The professor had participated in a faculty bus tour earlier in the year and as a result was so inspired that she worked with UNC's Office of Engagement in partnership with the city to organize a similar event for her undergraduate course for preservice teachers. As the windows on the bus fogged up, we wiped them down to look out at passing neighborhoods, the schools and businesses, points of interest, and housing areas that all border the university. About four blocks from campus, the city tour guide drew our attention to the oldest house in town: a four-room adobe building that had belonged to Nathan Meeker, founder of the Union Colony who met his death at the hands of Native Americans. Like many of her peers, the young student sitting next to me was unaware of this unusual house and its history.

The bus tour, originally titled "From Study Hall to City Hall" and more recently "Greeley Unexpected," is just one component of ongoing collaborations between our university and the local city government. These collaborations grew out of and include other initiatives such as the Town-Gown and University District partnerships. Over the past several years UNC and the local city have actively partnered on various interconnected projects that bring together local teachers, lawyers, business partners, and faculty who, having recognized that the institutional identity is closely related to the city's, are partnering to address priority actions including growth and development through education initiatives and neighborhood design projects. The city bus tours are one specific activity that has emerged and involves individuals and groups from across campus, mostly using the city's public transportation system. When

I initially learned, through my participation in our Town-Gown and in my previous role overseeing faculty professional development, that the city had offered a bus tour to incoming hall directors and resident assistants, the idea occurred to offer a similar tour to new faculty. Unlike a tourist sightseeing tour, the city tour is designed to build authentic connections with the local community where one lives and works, to connect faculty to one another, and to identify opportunities for community-based learning. Unperturbed by the potential logistical difficulties and encouraged by an amazing city manager, we set forth to plan the first faculty bus tour, including a welcome tea hosted by a local bed and breakfast. Almost 40 new and returning professors participated in the tour, which required two city buses.

Given the size and location of our town, most faculty drive and own a car so for some colleagues, the tour was the first time riding the city's public transport. Even those who had lived and worked in town for many years were impressed with this form of exploration and new learning about parts of the area that were unfamiliar to them. As a resident for almost 8 years, I nonetheless found that some of the seemingly familiar parts of town appeared newly distinct from aboard the bus; in fact, the city took on quite a different complexion. It is through my ongoing professional participation, experiences, and learning in these bus tours that I reflect upon not only how the seemingly simple activity of riding the bus can be an effective vehicle for mobilizing new forms of boundary spanning, but also how the activity can serve as a symbol for further understanding boundary spanning, especially with faculty and students.

The Concept and Language of Boundary Spanning

Traditional definitions of boundary spanning as a conceptual framework underscore the sharing of new knowledge and information from institutions of higher education to stakeholders beyond the institution, and boundary spanninng is often referred to as a form of "building bridges from campus to community" *(Weerts & Sandmann, 2010, p. 706)*. More recently, and with increasing emphasis on engagement as a "two-way street," boundary spanning has been reframed with regard to community partners and their roles as "spanners" in this activity *(Adams & Sandmann, 2012; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Miller, 2008).* Both approaches have yielded fluid and dynamic models of community and institutional boundary spanners with regard to particular domains of activity, emphasizing technical or socioemotional tasks and potential intersections among them as

well as the defining traits or characteristics of those institutional leaders or community figures engaging in boundary spanning. In both institutional and community models of boundary spanning, the individuals and domains identified in most instances concern positions of leadership, authority, and power. Institutional champions tend to be presidents, provosts, or deans and directors; similarly, community advocates are often known leaders or board members. Boundary spanners' roles are essentially to connect others, support capacity building, and develop partnerships. In many ways, they can be considered spanners of spanners in that they build the connections for others to engage. Implied in this concept is the idea that even those who do not occupy such leadership positions—the students, the faculty, and the community members in general—must eventually span boundaries if they too are to become engaged.

Like much academic discourse and language in general, the term "boundary spanning" is by definition a metaphor, a symbol intended to capture a necessary concept and tangible practices fundamental to engagement. By their nature, the metaphors we live by provide a means to "experience and understand one kind of thing in terms of another" *(Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 5)*. Metaphors establish a reference point, often one associated with spatial, temporal, or personal images. Boundary spanning as an image allows us to conceptualize and analyze the unique ways in which individuals, institutions, and communities reach out and interact with one another around mutually beneficial goals and issues. All conceptual metaphors shape the human thought process because metaphorical concepts highlight or draw attention to some aspects and hide or obscure others. Boundary spanning is no exception; it evokes an image that connects and provides coherence to a larger system of spatial meanings prevalent in the discourse of education, organizational leadership, and other arenas that emphasize varying landscapes, pipelines or pathways, and trajectories or journeys in which we move through or across loosely or tightly defined spaces and boundaries. Examples of such language might include the ever-changing educational landscape, the academic pipeline, or students' career pathways, to name a few. Where boundary spanning is concerned, we understand the metaphor by reference not only to a body of scholarly research and literature, but also because of our lived experiences, our movement and travel into and out of spaces, our associations of crossing boundaries, borders, or bridges either on foot or by another means of transportation. In fact, the very notion of boundaries is an integral part of our spatial and

mental mapping because it is how as physical beings we tend to situate ourselves in the world:

> Each of us is a container, with a bounding surface and an in-out orientation. We project our own in-out orientation onto other physical objects that are bounded by surfaces. . . . Even where there is no natural physical boundary that can be viewed as defining a container, we impose boundaries—marking off territory so that it has an inside and a bounding surface—whether a wall, a fence, or an abstract line or plane. *(Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 29)*

By reflecting on the activity of riding a bus as a vehicle for undertaking boundary spanning, it is possible to examine the interactive and multilayered nature of this process, contemplating the literal and metaphorical journey, as well as the opportunities to discover new frontiers. In the following sections, I frame the discussion of the bus tours with reference to the scholarship of engagement, boundary spanning, and sociocultural theories of human activity and development.

Boundary Spanning as an Activity System

By definition the scholarship of engagement *(Boyer, 1996)* is concurrently an invitation and an appeal for faculty and universities to revisit their origins and missions, to rediscover institutional connections with local and global communities, and to reframe scholarly work in and for the public good. Boyer's holistic approach pushes the boundaries of intellectual activity beyond the mere creation of new knowledge or the scholarship of discovery and instead emphasizes the interconnections of the scholarships of teaching, integration, and application as engagement, thus serving as a constant reminder of the interrelated nature of the work we conduct. Expanding upon Boyer's work, others have emphasized the need to increase community and partners' roles and voices in the process of engagement from the beginning of any collaborative partnership through to the dissemination of findings or new knowledge *(Ramaley, 2000; Rice, 2005; Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2011)*. Consequently, engagement as a term shifts conceptually from unidirectional notions of outreach and service to the idea of a two-way street, promoting a coconstructed relationship, emphasizing mutual benefits and reciprocity. However, notwithstanding these shared assumptions, there remains an absence of "ordinary lan-

guage" *(Oiumette, 2014)* in the ways in which we conceptualize, construct, and disseminate the scholarship of engagement. In an effort to promote shared understandings and invoke ordinary language, I propose that the activity of riding the bus can inform and expand the boundary-spanning metaphor as a construct and can serve also as a mechanism to mobilize further engagement efforts. Riding the bus in these contexts is a distinguishable, yet familiar, exploratory activity that offers participants (students, faculty, and others) a means to span new boundaries in a supportive mode. Accordingly, the bus constitutes a neutral space, creating common ground, transporting participants as passengers to less familiar or unknown areas, and facilitating a journey across new boundaries.

Boundary spanning, as mentioned, evokes images of building bridges and of deliberate actions undertaken to sustain connections and relationships between entities. Nevertheless, and where university–community partnerships are concerned, "boundary-spanning behaviors are shaped by a number of complex social, cultural, and political factors" *(Weerts & Sandmann, 2010, p. 706)*. These include cognitive know-how or awareness toward the task at hand and varying degrees of social alignment. In the bus tour instance, task orientation is facilitated by "knowing how to ride a bus": that is, understanding how to sit and behave on the bus. Similarly, social alignment is aided by an "understanding of why you are riding the bus and where you going": appreciation of basic roles and responsibilities of driver, passengers, and others and basic knowledge of the purpose of the tour. Additionally, boundary spanning when framed as a behavior or human activity is inevitably dynamic, often linked to leadership roles, simultaneously laden with both promises and tensions; it is intricately networked with other activity systems working toward specific ends. Accordingly, and drawing on activity theory (*Engeström, 1999; Engeström & Miettinen, 1999*), boundary spanning can be conceived of as goal-directed activity, composed of a series of actions directed toward a particular object.

Activity theory emphasizes the notion that all human activity is mediated by tools or artifacts, which are always socioculturally and historically situated and can be material or symbolic. Language is an example of a symbolic tool, and pens, computers, or other writing instruments are examples of material tools. Each tool and how it is used in any given activity influences the physical endeavor and the mental representations of the activity *(Wertsch, 1998)*. For example, reading a book is not the same as watching a movie because each is a distinct activity, evoking different cognitive representations and responses. When conceptualizing riding the bus as a form

of boundary spanning, the activity can be mapped out according to the basic principles of activity theory, as shown in Figure 1. Individual actors undertake an activity, in this instance broadly conceived of as boundary spanning by riding the bus, which is oriented or directed toward a particular goal, such as learning about a community. On one level, a range of sociocultural tools and artifacts mediate the activity including the bus, maps, and language. On another level, a series of underlying components—rules, community, and a division of labor—structure the activity. The outcome of any activity will vary depending on the participants. In the case of riding the bus, outcomes include a raised awareness, shifts in perspectives, and new knowledge or understanding about a given community.

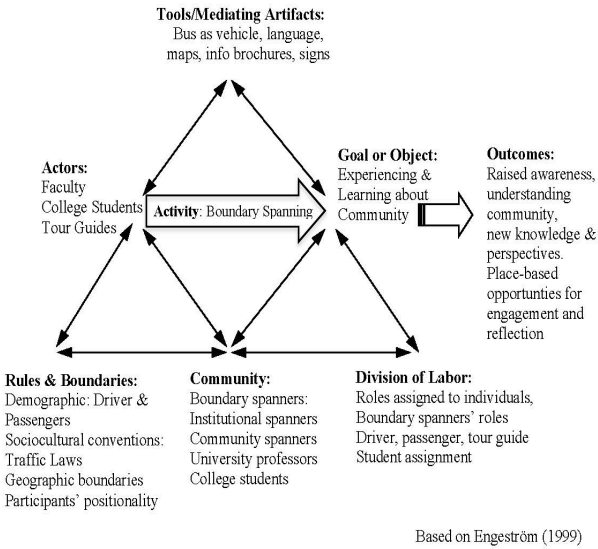

Figure 1. Conceptualizing boundary-spanning as an activity system.

Riding the Bus as Symbol and Method

Undoubtedly, how we manage and engage in boundary spanning as an activity on both institutional and individual levels and the ultimate success of these endeavors is also contingent upon "a new understanding of vertical, horizontal, stakeholder, demographic, and geographic boundaries" *(Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011, p. xii)*. With these considerations in mind, I analyze how riding the bus extends the metaphors of boundary spanning and as a vehicle serves to mobilize boundary spanning and ultimately promote engagement. For students and faculty, riding the bus afforded

different types of boundary spanning and outcomes and involved varying degrees of task orientation, positionality, and social closeness.

Vertical boundaries are perhaps some of the most established boundaries to overcome, and they reference how individuals within an institution or a social context are pigeonholed or organized by levels and ranks, often reflected in the physical location, spacing, and work ethic in buildings and organizations. For boundary spanners the challenge is to break free of the hierarchy and embrace collaboration. Expanding on the bus activity and its symbolism, the vertical boundaries exist in the traffic laws, the roads that a bus travels and that connect a campus to a community, and the rules or norms for riding the bus. When individuals came together aboard the bus, they entered a common space defined by new rules and positionality. While they retained their unique identities as professors and students, they also assumed a shared identity as passengers. As an audience listening to the commentary and description of the tour, they became participants in an exchange of information about the city, sharing with one another personal facts or knowledge acquired through other courses or experiences. Additionally, as participant passengers they reached new understandings that resulted from experiencing the journey; the routes taken; and, in several instances, the need for the bus driver to follow local traffic laws. One illustrative example is that when approaching railroad tracks, which happened several times in the journey, the driver stopped the bus and opened the doors despite the bitter cold exterior temperature. The guide explained that this act was both performed in remembrance and required by a state law imposed after a tragic accident in which over 30 children lost their lives when an oncoming train that the driver failed to hear hit their school bus. In this regard, being on the bus, stopping at the railroad tracks, and experiencing this very place-based activity combined to provide participants with "a meaningful entry point to the topic, and one that increases the topic's prominence" within the context of a local community *(Cocciolo & Rabina, 2013, p. 99).*

Riding the bus is a means to overcome and reconsider horizontal boundaries, which typically refer to not just the walls that separate and divide units or groups but also to the organizational and management structures and the division of labor that can support or hinder cross-group collaboration and partnerships. Aboard the bus these boundaries are simultaneously the physical build and stability of the bus (rickety old school bus or executive tour bus) and the journey and roads that the bus travels as organized and

planned in the city tour. The bus tours described here were developed through the city planning department and in consultation with different individuals from the university. They were planned and intended to be reciprocal and mutually beneficial. For the city, this meant the opportunity to showcase and engage passengers in a tour of traditional sectors in the local community, its sociocultural history, and the commerce and leisure offerings with a view to raising awareness and inviting collaboration. For the university, this was a method to provide faculty and students with new connections and exploration of the city as well as to promote thinking about engaged scholarship and community-based learning opportunities connected to varying disciplines and scholarly interests. Moreover, riding the bus afforded participants, faculty, and students literally new views of the city, new learning and discovery of parts previously unknown. On each tour individuals commented that despite already living in the city, they had learned new facts, gained a different perspective, visited unknown locations, or simply connected to someone new.

Riding the bus enabled innovative forms of boundary spanning with regard to stakeholder boundaries, or those that concern issues of access and communication between the city and the institution and between individuals. Stakeholder values are sometimes considered the "doors and windows," and they ultimately reference a value chain that is communicated between constituents. The organization and planning of the bus tour required university administrators to consult with the city manager and the local transport system. City employees hosted the tours on a pro bono basis, recognizing the value of engaging with UNC faculty and campus along with the potential for partnership building, new internships, and collaborative research that might result. Access to and use of the bus was negotiated through the city and the local transport system in accordance with the Federal Transit Administration and the charter rule, whereby local public transport systems subsidized with federal monies can provide up to 80 hours at no cost to government agencies and low-income groups. The university, through the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning and the Office of Engagement, coordinated publicity and registration and collaborated with the city to finalize planning and other logistics.

Additionally, riding the bus literally spans new demographic and geographic boundaries. Demographic boundaries concern the identity spaces that exist between diverse groups of individuals who engage with one another in any given context and potentially exist across "the entire range of human diversity from gender and

race to education and ideology" *(Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011, p. 28).* Although geographic boundaries concern primarily the location and interrelations or constraints of individuals and groups working regionally, nationally, and globally, they also include the physical and virtual mediums and the boundaries entailed by new technologies, cellular phones, the Internet, and computers. When riding the bus, demographic boundaries are inherent in the passengers, in the driver, in the tour guide, and in other visual images or representations viewed during the experience. However, it is the journey the passengers undertake together on the bus through the city across geographic and community boundaries, ranging from low-income largely industrial areas to wealthy residential neighborhoods and leisure parks, that promotes a reframing of both individual and collective identities. The city of Greeley, founded on traditions of agriculture and farming, has a long, rich history of immigrant settlers, from European colonists at the turn of the last century to Latino field workers and laborers and more recently, an influx of East African and Burmese refugees who relocated to work in the meat packing and cheese factories. These recent demographic changes have brought with them sociocultural changes in schools, in workplaces, and in the community as a whole. The bus tour crosses historical, social, and demographic boundaries and provides insights into the rich multicultural fabric and diversity that make up this area. For one student, riding the bus through one of the low-income largely immigrant neighborhoods was a poignant reminder of her own childhood growing up poor. It inspired her to think about the kinds of students she would have in her future classroom and to consider how she might engage them in mapping activities and self-reflection.

Boundary Spanning: Moving Beyond the Comfort Zone

As the old school bus pulled back into the campus parking lot, the students gathered their belongings and prepared to get off. The professor reminded them she would be following up with questions and reflections about the experience. I could already hear students' enthusiasm. One young woman turned to me and explained how she had been on campus for over 3 years but rarely had the need or occasion to leave. Yet on this day, in this one bus ride, she had seen and learned more about the city than she had in all her time here. The bus ride had given her insight and reason to explore more new areas and engage with the community in the future.

Riding the bus, for faculty and students alike, has proven a productive and worthwhile experience at our institution. The bus ride is a vehicle that facilitates participants' reflection on their formal roles and their relationship to the external communities beyond campus. In other words, riding the bus promotes opportunities for reimagining one's connection to and possibilities within a community; it promotes a structured form of boundary spanning that, as one student commented, transported her out of the regular comfort zones. Thus from a conceptual standpoint, the bus tour repositioned the participants as novice spanners and from an experiential standpoint, it bolstered the degree of social closeness and alignment among participants by enabling them to share the ride together. In so doing, it fostered meaningful connections with the communities in which they live, study, or work. By traveling through neighborhoods and communities, students not only came to see other people's positions but were also able to reflect on their own positionality. In subsequent responses and feedback, another student described how because of the bus tour, she was seriously thinking about staying in town over the summer to get more involved. Riding the bus revealed the local city as a meaningful place, investing it with new value and human understanding *(Harrison & Dourish,* cited in *Cocciolo & Rabina, 2013)*.

As a visual symbol, riding the bus connects to and extends the language of boundary spanning, evoking the activity as a journey and as a vehicle providing a tangible method in which it can be undertaken. Traditionally, boundary spanning has been framed mainly with reference to leaders and those in positions of power. In juxtaposition, riding the bus provides a basically public and shared means by which novices and less experienced others can begin to span boundaries. Ultimately it is the undertaking of the journey—riding the bus, not the bus itself—that defines the engagement. As institutions seek to endorse engagement as a scholarly method of teaching, learning, and scholarship, let us not lose sight of the ordinary; it is time to offer everyone a seat on the bus.

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"A Pesar de las Fronteras"/"In Spite of the Boundaries": Exploring Solidarity in the Context of International Service Immersion

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Abstract

The move to "internationalize" United States universities has contributed to increased interest in global service-learning. This article presents qualitative data collected by a team of faculty and students during a service immersion in Nicaragua. The solidarity model of service-learning attempts to address shortcomings of earlier approaches and deserves further examination. This study illuminated the dynamics of solidarity from a largely unexplored perspective: host families and community leaders. The analysis revealed that difference and inequality are salient themes and shape the relationships and possibilities for joint action between U.S. students and their hosts. A typology is suggested that includes symbolic, instrumental, and pragmatic performances of solidarity. By highlighting the perspective of Nicaraguan hosts, this study fills an important gap in the literature on service-learning. It also contributes to the conceptual elaboration of an often heard but rarely defined concept: solidarity.

Introduction

The move toward internationalization in United States institutions of higher education has contributed to increased interest in and support for service-learning. Broadly defined, international service-learning occurs at the intersections of study abroad, service-learning, and international education *(Bringle & Hatcher, 2011)*. Along with expanding opportunities, there has been increased discussion of the various models that shape service-learning in cross-national contexts *(Sherraden, Lough, & Bopp, 2013)*. On one end of the continuum of service is the "charity" model *(Morton, 1995)*, now widely regarded as outdated and problematic *(Marullo & Edwards, 2000)*. Rooted in a "missionary ideology" *(Weah, Simmons, & Hall, 2000, p. 675)*, the charity model assumes that service is an "inherent good" and largely apolitical (*Baker-Boosamra, 2006, p. 4)*. Notably, this approach avoids critical discussion of differential power and the dynamics of privilege and oppression that are often unspoken sources of tension between U.S. students and host communities. Despite mounting critiques, these

assumptions (while not always explicit) continue to shape international service-learning, and their uncritical adoption contributes to overly simplistic—and optimistic—understandings of intercultural exchange.

The solidarity model, which emphasizes partnerships, reciprocity, and collective action, has been posed as an alternative *(Baker-Boosamra, Guevara, and Balfour, 2006; Weiley, 2008)*. Because it foregrounds concerns of privilege and mutuality, this approach is more compatible with the social justice goals of many service-learning programs. Despite the progress it represents, however, solidarity does not necessarily resolve the tensions between U.S. students and host communities. We suggest that the concept and practice of solidarity deserve further examination. In this article, through an in-field study of international service-learning, we explored performances of solidarity using the voices of host community members, a rarely heard perspective on these topics.

This article is based on fieldwork conducted by a team of students and faculty during a 3-week service immersion trip to Nicaragua in May 2013. Because most research on international service-learning is focused on the experiences of student participants, we were interested in hearing from native Nicaraguans who host students in their homes (i.e., homestay families) or work with students to complete community projects (i.e., community leaders). Through participant observation and interviews ($N = 26$), we were guided by an open-ended research question: What is your experience of hosting and interacting with U.S. American students? Using elements of grounded theory, our questions led us to focus on issues of difference, action, and solidarity. Specifically, we ask: How are difference and the dynamics of inequality understood and navigated by Nicaraguan host communities? How do these differences shape the possibilities for joint action across geographic, social, and cultural boundaries?

We begin with a targeted review of the literature and, drawing on interdisciplinary perspectives, propose an emergent definition of solidarity. Next we describe the context for and process of data collection and analysis and provide a snapshot of our sample. Our findings suggest that difference and inequality are salient concepts for Nicaraguan host communities, and we present examples that show wide variation in how these concepts are experienced and understood. Through analysis of the three subgroups in our sample, we suggest a preliminary typology for understanding joint action and symbolic, instrumental, and pragmatic performances of solidarity. Rather than make broad claims about the nature of

solidarity and its usefulness as a model, our study illuminates the dynamics and complexity of this concept from a largely unexplored perspective: homestay families and host community leaders. We conclude with discussion of programmatic as well as theoretical implications for students, universities, host communities, and scholars.

Background

International Service-Learning

The vast majority of scholarship on international service-learning has focused on the experiences of students and, to a lesser extent, the institutional and pedagogical implications of these programs. This literature has documented the transformative potential of international study and community-based work for students *(Meyers, 2009; Schmidt-Rinehart & Knight, 2004; Stephenson, 1999)* but has left largely unexamined the experiences of host community members, including homestay families and community leaders. Our work responds to this gap and to recent calls (including from this journal) to expand the scope of inquiry to all participants *(Crabtree, 2013; Sherraden et al., 2013)*.

One example of research on host communities was provided by Baker-Boosamra et al. *(2006)*, who studied Salvadoran community partners in an international exchange with U.S. students. Their study provided a model for exploring the perspectives of community stakeholders by examining their perceptions of what international exchanges should and can be. They pointed to several limitations, such as students' language (i.e., lack of Spanish knowledge), length of the exchange (i.e., too short), and students' preparation (i.e., study of history, culture, and other background) prior to their arrival. The crucial concern for stakeholders was that students fulfill the host community's expectations for "critical reflection, public action, and ongoing communication" upon returning home to the United States *(p. 495)*. The authors concluded that international exchange programs should avoid overemphasizing service at the expense of reflection and action. This model of reflexive solidarity provides an important framework for our analysis.

We situated our exploratory case study in the broader critique of international service-learning, which has begun to address the unique challenges of conducting community-based work in cross-national contexts. Students' lack of understanding of local context

and global dynamics is one such problem, described through this paradigmatic example by Sutton *(2011)*:

> Planting trees without knowing why an area is deforested, without knowing what trees are locally valued, without knowing who controls the land on which the trees are planted is naïve, dangerous, and misses the research and learning opportunities in this activity. *(p. 126)*

Critical perspectives on service-learning foreground issues of power and have underscored the unfortunate potential for service-learning, when poorly conceived and executed, to reproduce dynamics of inequality *(Clark & Nugent, 2011)*. The current study was motivated by a similar concern that international service-learning often falls short of its stated goals—or worse.

Nicaragua–U.S. Relations

The history and present state of U.S.–Nicaragua relations provides necessary context for this study. The economic contrast between the two countries is stark: Nicaragua is the second poorest country in the Western Hemisphere; the United States is considered a global economic and political hegemon. This disparity is associated with a pattern of economic and military intervention by the United States. Most recently, many Nicaraguans attribute declining wages and persistent poverty with the Dominican Republic Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR)—a trade policy driven by largely U.S. interests that went into effect in Nicaragua in 2006. Ever present in Nicaragua is the history of U.S. military intervention and, specifically, support for the Contra counterinsurgency during the 1970s and 1980s. This legacy is still viewed as highly problematic for Nicaraguans and continues to shape the tenuous relationship between the two countries today. These factors provide a backdrop to understanding the complicated dynamics and potentially mismatched (or poorly understood) goals of visiting U.S. students and their Nicaraguan hosts.

Solidarity

With roots in the labor movement, solidarity is often associated with unity, fellowship, and collective action. In the context of international service-learning, solidarity models are offered as a counterpoint to the more limited charity model *(Baker-Boosamra, 2006; Baker-Boosamra et al., 2006; Morton, 1995; Weiley, 2008)*. This is

a productive move as it brings more attention to key questions of reciprocity, partnerships, privilege, and action. As a sensitizing concept for our analysis, we provide brief discussion of the concept here.

The salience of solidarity for this project flows in part from the specific context and history of Nicaragua–U.S. relations. The Central American Solidarity Movement was founded in the 1980s by U.S. Americans concerned about civil wars in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. What is referred to broadly as a movement actually consisted of a number of distinct but overlapping efforts by multiple organizations (e.g., Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, Witness for Peace, the Overground Railroad). The common thread linking these organizations and their efforts was a shared understanding and critique of U.S. involvement in these wars. According to movement activists, this intervention by the U.S. government and military demanded a response from U.S. American citizens. At the time, acting in solidarity with the people affected by civil wars included sending U.S. nationals to act as human rights accompaniers, organizing political action in the U.S. to defund military support of these wars, providing aid to refugees fleeing these wars, and engaging in political education of ordinary U.S. Americans about the U.S. involvement in Central America *(Coutin, 1993; Nepstad, 2013; Perla, 2008)*.

In exploring the forms and definitions of solidarity, social and political philosophers have raised questions that shaped our analysis. In the introduction to her book *Political Solidarity,* Scholz *(2008)* recalls her experience as an undergraduate participating in a 3-day urban plunge. As part of a one-credit sociology course, she and her classmates spent 3 days and nights volunteering and sleeping at a homeless shelter with the goal of being "in solidarity with the homeless" *(p. 1)*. Scholz used this anecdote to describe how she first came to question the nature of solidarity. She asks, "[H]ow could someone who . . . had no experience of oppression . . . possibly share the same consciousness with those who live the oppression relentlessly?" *(p. 2)*. Like others *(Kolers, 2005, 2012),* Scholz pointed to how colloquial understandings of solidarity tend to overemphasize commonality and shared interests at the expense of recognizing particularity and difference (see also *Sánchez, 2013)*. Drawing on this critique, we adopted a definition that balances unity and distinction, articulated here by Kolers *(2012)*: "[S]olidarity is not a sentiment or attitude, but a type of action: working with others for common political aims, paradigmatically in the context of *incompletely shared interests* [emphasis added]" *(p. 367)*.

As illustrated by Scholz's question, this problem is particularly relevant to examinations of service-learning.

Methods

This study was conducted in May 2013 during a 3-week service-learning immersion trip to Nicaragua. The research team consisted of two social science faculty, the service-learning program director, and eight undergraduates. Drawing on ethnographic methods, data collection consisted of participant observation and in-depth interviews ($N = 26$). Our selection of methods and our analytical approach—reflecting our constructivist theoretical orientation—was motivated by our research question. In asking native Nicaraguans about their experiences hosting U.S. American students in their homes and communities, we hoped to capture the perspectives of this group in their own words. Although we came to the field with some sensitizing concepts, our data collection and analysis were driven by the data rather than a specific hypothesis.

Context

The Nicaragua immersion trip was established by the University of Portland in 2005. The original motivation for creating a Nicaragua service trip grew out of the complex political and economic connections between Nicaragua and the United States and (then) recent ratification of the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). Students enter the Nicaragua immersion program through a competitive application process, and only one third of students who apply are selected. Students are interested in participating for a variety of reasons. Some are attracted to the idea of international travel and cultural exchange; others are motivated to learn firsthand about the social justice issues connected to global capitalism; some want to volunteer and serve. Once selected, participants commit to learning about the history and politics of Nicaragua and raising funds as a group to cover the costs of travel. As part of the preparation, facilitators aim to cultivate a critical perspective on traditional forms of service. Through readings and discussion, students are asked to consider the potential limitations of a charity model (common to many international service trips) and, in studying the history of U.S. involvement in Nicaragua, are introduced to the concept of relationships based on solidarity. Overall, the preparation is designed to give students a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the issues and ask them to consider carefully their role as participants on the trip.

In 2009, an attempt was made to deepen learning and improve the service experiences by formally partnering with organizations working in Nicaragua. In 2013, the year we conducted this study, University of Portland engaged two organizations—Witness for Peace and Foundation for Sustainable Development—as partners who would facilitate students' experience on the ground. Students' time was divided evenly between the two organizations.

Witness for Peace. In 1983, Witness for Peace (WFP) was founded as a response to the role of the United States in the Contra War. As an organization, its primary goal was to educate U.S. citizens about the social impact of their government's foreign policy. This was facilitated by media campaigns and group immersions or delegations. Delegates would accompany Nicaraguan people in war zones to document what was occurring. Based on these experiences, delegates were asked to educate others and mobilize a political response in the United States. Over time, WFP's mission has expanded to include documentation of corporate practices and economic policies in Latin America and the Caribbean. WFP is currently active in Nicaragua, Mexico, Colombia, Cuba, Honduras, Bolivia, and Venezuela. Although politically independent, Witness for Peace provides programming that reflects a decidedly critical view of the U.S. government and its role in promoting neoliberal economic policies in the region. Flowing from this analysis, the itinerary with WFP included conversations with community organizers, feminist organizations, economists, and labor groups in and around Managua. Students then traveled to Santa Rosa, a rural community near Matagalpa that has worked with WFP for over 2 decades. Students completed a 4-day 3-night rural homestay in Santa Rosa.

Foundation for Sustainable Development. This organization (FSD) was founded in 1995 as a way to link students and professionals with grassroots development initiatives around the world with the goal of addressing local health, social, environmental, and economic concerns. FSD engages students and professionals through training programs geared toward students pursuing a gap year, international internships, extended volunteer opportunities, and global service trips. In contrast to WFP, FSD focuses on strengthening community capacity and providing technical assistance and material support (through, for example, grant-making opportunities). FSD staff, which includes native Nicaraguans, also serve as consultants and educators for effective approaches to sustainable community development.

The University of Portland partnered with FSD through the global service trip program, which serves sites in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In preparation for this delegation, FSD worked with community leaders in Pacamba, a semirural community, to identify projects for student participation. FSD also coordinated a 7-day homestay in the city of La Masía, a 20-minute bus ride from Pacamba.

Data Collection and Analysis

We conducted 26 interviews with a total of 29 people (including two interviews with mother-daughter and husband-wife pairs). All but three individuals were native Nicaraguans who hosted students (homestay families) or worked directly with students to complete service projects (community leaders and two Nicaraguan staff of FSD). We also interviewed three U.S. American staff members from the two host organizations, WFP and FSD. Participants in our study ranged from 19 to 68 years old. The majority of interviewees ($n = 24$) were women (see Table 1). Most interviews lasted 25 to 30 minutes (range: 5–48 minutes). To protect the identities of research participants, the names of all respondents and locations have been changed.

The research team included both faculty and students. Leading the data collection team was a faculty member who was bilingual (English-Spanish) and brought more than 15 years of cross-cultural experience with Spanish-speaking communities in the United States and Central America. Student members of the research team were selected based on their Spanish language skills and included three students who were native Spanish speakers (all of Mexican descent) and four students who had achieved fluency through study and immersion experiences. In preparing student researchers, faculty members reviewed the interview protocol, trained students in interviewing techniques, and observed and critiqued students' interviewing skills in role plays.

Research team members invited individuals to participate by explaining the purpose of the study: to learn more about the experiences and views of host families and host communities. All interviews were conducted in the native language of the participant (Spanish or, in the case of the three U.S. staff members, English). Interviewees chose the location for the interview. For homestay families, the interviews took place in the homes and for community members in Pacamba, the interviews took place in a public setting—outside the clinic or the elementary school or on the bus.

Student interviewers conducted interviews in pairs. All interviews were audiotaped.

We used a semistructured interviewing technique (*Weiss, 1994*) and began with five demographic questions to establish participants' age and experience with outside groups. Depending on the population (homestay families or community leaders), we asked five to seven open-ended questions asking them to describe their experiences. Sample homestay questions included: "Why did you decide to host students?", "What did you need to do to prepare to host?", and "What have you most enjoyed about this experience of hosting students, now or in the past?" For community leaders, we asked: "What is the focus of your organization?" and "What do you hope student groups take away from conversations with you or your organization?" Both groups of participants were asked at the end of each interview, "Is there anything you would like to ask us?"

All interviews were transcribed by the third author, who is a native Spanish speaker and fully bilingual, as well as being an experienced translator. All participants were assigned pseudonyms. We began with open (line-by-line) coding of a subset of interview transcripts. From there, we collapsed these into a set of focused codes (e.g., "difference," "shared humanity," "community struggle," "cariño"), which were then used to code the remaining transcripts. For each interview, case summary notes—consisting of a brief summary and highlights from the interview—were written. Integrative memos and ongoing conversations across the research team were used to link codes and construct themes and categories across the interviews.

Table 1. Characteristics of Interview Sample by Subgroup

Organizational affiliation	Subgroup *Location*	Gender Total individuals	Age range (years)	Average years hosting/ working with students
Witness for Peace	Rural homestay families *Santa Rosa*	Women: 8 Men: 2 Total: 10	19–54	Range: 1–23 years Most families had hosted U.S. delegations over the last 10–20 years.

Foundation for Sustainable Development	Urban home-stay families *La Masía*	Women: 6 Men: 0 Total: 6	36–68	Range: 5–10 years Average number of years hosting was approxi-mately 8.
	Rural commu-nity leaders *Pacamba*	Women: 7 Men: 1 Total: 8	22–52	This was the first time com-munity leaders in Pacamba had ever hosted a for-eign delegation.
	FSD Nicaraguan staff *Pacamba/ LaMasia*	Women: 1 Men: 1 Total: 2	24–45	2–4 years
WFP and FSD	U.S. American staff of these organizations	Women: 2 Men: 1 Total: 3	(Early 20s)	1-2 years
TOTAL		Women: 24 Men: 5 TOTAL: 29	19–68	1–23 years

Limitations

We acknowledge the multiple limitations of this study. Our research design as well as the nature and size of our sample prevent us from drawing any generalizable conclusions from our results. Our goal, however, was to illuminate the perspectives of a group that has rarely been asked (in a systematic way) about their experiences, despite their integral role in international service-learning.

The short timeframe of the study posed obvious limitations and likely affected the responses we received. We interviewed host families and community members only days after our arrival in

each location, so we did not have the luxury of prolonged contact. More extensive contact could have enhanced our data.

A central limitation relates to the positionality of researchers and their relationship to research participants. As U.S. students and faculty—members of a privileged group and guests—asking homestay families and community members about their experiences with U.S. American student groups, we were sure to elicit a highly curated response. We assume that Nicaraguan participants would likely exaggerate the benefits and downplay the negative aspects of their experiences as hosts—that is, they would edit their responses to avoid offending interviewers. Although participants in the study frequently commented on the benefits they received from hosting and what they enjoyed about these exchanges, we observed that interviewees had no trouble recalling and sharing past experiences that had been difficult. They were forthcoming about what students should and should not do as guests—what has worked well and what has not. This suggests to us that participants were not simply providing answers that would be pleasing to interviewers but were interested in giving honest feedback. Although we do not doubt that another set of interviewers would be able to probe more deeply into the concerns of Nicaraguan hosts, we maintain that the responses we received contain important insights from a population that has been largely ignored in conversations about global service-learning. In our discussion, we suggest ways to mitigate these limitations—specifically, by incorporating more participatory elements into future research on these questions.

Results and Analysis

In this section, we present findings that emerged in response to our overarching question to Nicaraguan hosts: What is your experience of hosting and interacting with U.S. American students? The results and analysis are organized into two parts. The first section addresses how hosts and community organizers expressed how they learned to navigate and cope with difference in cross-cultural spaces, a prominent theme in our data. In the second section, we draw on solidarity as a conceptual framework to analyze findings on difference and action. Specifically, we attend to how difference and the dynamics of global inequality shape relationships and possibilities for joint action across geographic and community boundaries. Through targeted examples rooted in participants' experiences, we propose a typology that includes symbolic, instrumental, and pragmatic performances of solidarity.

Navigating Difference

This section explores how Nicaraguan participants described the experience and meaning of crossing cultural boundaries with visiting U.S. American students. Navigating difference was sometimes a source of difficulty, but respondents indicated that there is value in exposure to and critical reflection on differences. Some respondents displayed instances of "universalizing"—minimizing difference and emphasizing a common human connection—and others theorized that difference is the essential ingredient for learning and transformation. In essence, difference is a constant, but the meanings attached to it and their implications are far from obvious. Below we outline and contextualize three main themes in our data that highlight how difference was both a source of inspiration/connection and tension/struggle: (1) "It's not like in your country", (2) "in spite of the boundaries", and (3) learning and transformation through reflection on difference. Together these narratives help answer our guiding research question by teasing out the nuance in this type of exchange.

"No es como en su país" ("It's not like in your country"). In asking homestay families to describe their experience of hosting U.S. American students, the subject of difference arose in discussing concerns about how students would navigate the dramatically different social and economic conditions in Nicaragua. This concern was especially prominent in Santa Rosa, the rural community where families live at or below a subsistence level. Doña Dalia, who has been hosting delegations for 20 years, explained:

> It's not like in your country because—well, here, at least, we don't have a bathroom, we don't have potable water, a lot of things.

Other families openly lamented not having amenities and basic conveniences such as running water and indoor plumbing. Some described past experiences with students who had difficulty using the outdoor latrines and who, despite every effort, developed stomach illness during their stay.

Host families drew their own conclusions about how students dealt with these vastly different conditions. One host father said, "You won't be as comfortable as in your home country, but—como pobre—like a poor person, you have a room and a bed" (Don Marcos). Another host mother, during the interview, turned to

the student interviewer and asked directly: "I imagine that it's a struggle for you to be in our community because of the lack of conveniences—bathrooms, running water, other things. I imagine that you feel—well, bad. Is that right?" (Doña Amalia). One recommendation that surfaced in our conversations was a desire by host families for students to be "psychologically prepared" (Doña Dalia) for the kinds of conditions they would experience.

"A pesar de las fronteras" ("In spite of the boundaries"). While negotiating perceived and real difficulties of difference was a common theme, host families did not view socioeconomic or cultural difference as a barrier to strong affective connections. In both urban and rural homestay settings, families described familial ties that formed between themselves and students:

> "I think of them as my own daughters." (Doña Alicia)

> "I see them as my children." (Doña Leticia)

> "When we are waiting for them to arrive, it's like waiting for a member of our family." (Don Marcos)

Nicaraguans are, of course, known for their tremendous hospitality and for going out of their way to make guests feel welcome. Yet what they described in terms of these emotional connections and the "cariño" (affection) they felt was not simply a function of hospitality. Host families stated that they appreciated students' warmth and willingness to immerse themselves in the daily lives of the community, however difficult it might feel for them. Families also described the sadness they felt upon students' departure. One respondent began crying during the interview when remembering and describing connections she felt with past students who had stayed with her.

We observed a universalizing impulse among respondents—that is, an emphasis on a common human experience and shared expectations for basic human dignity. In these conversations, the universalizing trope demands a response to inequality. Doña Consuelo, who has hosted students for over 20 years, explained that

> in one form or another, we're all children of the same God. And a God that doesn't want there to be differences between us, [God] wants us all to be equal. So…

> we can know that . . . perhaps we're not going to have the same conditions, but yes, we're part of creating those ideals—humanistic ideals. And of sharing, of seeing things from another point of view.

Doña Dalia offered a complementary perspective on the role of connections across boundaries:

> It's a positive experience because, in spite of the language, and in spite of the boundaries, you can feel . . . that love and unity . . . for both students and families . . . so it's really beautiful because, in spite of their seeing how much poverty we are living in, they—there's a real sincerity in sharing our lives, in trying to achieve that closeness.

Here, difference and inequality are both a source of connection/inspiration and tension/struggle.

Learning and transformation through reflection on difference. Respondents believed that international exchange offered a context for learning and the potential for transformation. Although they recognized that it is not always easy, crossing cultural boundaries was viewed as a net positive, as typified in this host mother's comment:

> We want to . . . know about students' lives over there, with the ones here. At least that way, we realize, well—the lifestyle there, and you [students] too realize what the lifestyle is here. (Doña Berta)

Although this comment highlights the potential for mutual learning, most respondents emphasized the unique benefits to students. In Pacamba, one community leader explained:

> There is a continuous relationship, the experience of a North American young person from a developed country with a country that is in the process of developing . . . you [U.S. Americans] benefit from that experience too. . . . You learn how we do things here. (Don Adolfo)

Don Adolfo went on to describe an experience from the previous day in which the foreman used a translucent tube and water

to construct a makeshift level. Students were amazed at this process, what Don Adolfo referred to as "rudimentary technology." He concluded by saying, "You take that lesson with you—that it's not necessary to have a sophisticated apparatus."

Some respondents suggested that exposing students to this new setting was valuable precisely because it challenged the students to think more critically about difference and examine their own position and privilege. One rural host father explained that "Here you can [learn] a lot—at the very least, it's not how people live in [your] country. Here you see a lot of poverty" (Don Marcos). Another host mother explained, "It's beneficial for them—for students to see what maybe seems like another world, but it's a world that is all around them" (Doña Consuelo).

A few interviewees theorized that learning about these differences and, specifically, the dynamics of inequality "de cerca" ("up close") was the key to "conscientización" ("consciousness transformation"). In the words of Doña Dalia:

> This is one way of sharing our lived experience because we understand that the world students live in is very different. It's—it's very different from ours. And so, it's also a way of—so that young people . . . would have an awareness that—how should I say it?—that the comforts of their lives are based on the difficult lives of others.

Doña Dalia's comment stood out for its pointed analysis, but she was not alone among our respondents in hoping that students would begin to ask questions about their privileged position in a global society. Doña Consuelo, who has hosted U.S. delegations for over 20 years, explained her belief that this experience created the conditions for transformation:

> We are helping in the process of transformation of—of their experience, their lives—and . . . it benefits them as much as us. For them—students—that they might see another world, and then—in coming here, they learn so much. They see how things are here, and then later they start to understand the relationship between their country and here, and so I think it benefits them a lot.

Over the years, she reports that the experience changes "how [students] think about things and—their way of being." Again, the potential for transformation is located in the lived experience:

> Once they realize the reality—in which, others are living, well, many families. And other countries like ours. . . . There are so many poor people and so maybe they haven't ever seen that . . . you come from another culture, and so all of those things that—well, I know that this is a transformative experience for many young people. They've been changed and they've started to see the realities of others.

Like her neighbors, Doña Amalia encouraged students to share these experiences more widely, urging students to "take what you have learned here with us in our homes and go—share it in your country." Implicit in these claims is the argument that insight necessarily leads to transformation and action. Although that is the case for some students, we do not assume a simple causal relationship between insight and transformation. In the next section, we explore more fully the question of action.

Performances of Solidarity: A Typology

As underscored in the previous section, host communities actively interpreted the experience of boundary crossing. They believed that students are learning not only about differences but also about inequality and global dynamics of privilege and oppression. In this section, we build on participants' theories of difference and add our own analysis, using solidarity as our conceptual framework. We seek to add to the existing understandings of solidarity models of engagement in international programs by analyzing targeted examples of action from the perspectives of three subgroups: rural homestay families, urban homestay families, and community leaders in the semirural community of Pacamba. Our analysis reveals a new way to think about performances of solidarity—and more broadly, how a solidarity model might provide an effective platform for students and hosts to connect across vast boundaries related to social, political, and cultural difference. To demonstrate some of these various expressions, we offer a typology of symbolic, instrumental, and pragmatic performances of solidarity.

Rural homestays: Symbolic solidarity. During students' 3 days in Santa Rosa, most of the time was spent visiting with families, playing with children, and hearing from community leaders in

the different sectors. One of the few structured activities occurred on the second morning when students were invited to take part in a community project. A bridge at the entrance to the community was being built, and—although there was no construction happening due to lack of materials—community members decided that students could help by picking up rocks from a nearby field and carrying them to the construction site several hundred feet away, where they could be used as fill. This task would also clear the field for cultivation.

Students carried rocks of varying sizes in their arms or in woven plastic bags provided by the community. Despite the heat, they made many trips and took breaks as needed. Some students expressed frustration at the tediousness of the task. Community members who had joined the effort encouraged students to go slowly and to lift only what they could easily carry. After a couple of hours, community leaders decided that the project was over. Some students were left wondering what progress had been made and whether their contributions amounted to much. Others viewed the project as a community-building activity.

This experience (which is not atypical in the context of international service-learning) constitutes a performance of solidarity that is largely symbolic: Students' substantive contributions were small, but the act of carrying rocks demonstrated students' willingness to support a collective effort and respect for community leadership. Note that in our analysis, students' feelings are secondary—since solidarity is beyond "sentiment" *(Kolers, 2012, p. 367)*, we are more interested in examples of action.

We identified other examples of symbolic action and solidarity between students and host families in Santa Rosa. As described in the previous section, community members hoped that students would be transformed by the experience of bearing witness to poverty and "limitations" (Doña Consuelo). Some of these hopes were expressed in abstract terms: "[Students] start to realize that—in the world, we have to make a change because . . . we all have the right to live with dignity . . . we are fighting so that there would be equality among us, as humans" (Doña Consuelo). Doña Dalia described wanting students to influence policy change:

> We want students to internalize this experience so that—that would raise their consciousness so that they might apply pressure to change U.S. policies, so that, well, [these policies] might take into consideration a little more the situation of poor countries like ours.

A young couple, Fredy and Herminia, who were hosting students for the first time, expressed a similar hope:

> We would like them to share their experiences and, so that they might find a way to [pressure] the government to help our communities . . . so that the U.S. government might support Nicaraguan communities a little more. Taking some kind of action in support of Nicaraguan communities, by the U.S. government. (Don Fredy)

When asked for more details ("What kind of support?"), Fredy discussed various needs in the community—education, malnutrition, and health care. Although these needs call for concrete assistance, the request for students "to change U.S. policies" remains largely abstract.

These comments reflect, in part, the orientation of the host organization (WFP) and its long-term mission, as described by one organizer, to reveal "the impact of U.S. foreign policy and corporate practice in Latin America and [see] out where it is leading to poverty and oppression and working to change that" (Colin). But we were left wondering—in what policies and practices were students being asked to intervene? Given the difficulty students experienced in articulating the insights gained from these experiences to peers and family, how realistic is it to think that students will engage in policy advocacy, as requested by community members? These obstacles aside, we argue that this expressed focus on policy change is another example of symbolic solidarity.

Community leaders: Instrumental solidarity. In Pacamba, the focus of students' daily visits to the community was to engage in service projects. During that week, students would arrive in the community by 8:30 a.m. and begin work on one of three projects: (a) a dengue prevention campaign that involved going door-to-door in a particular neighborhood distributing information and larvicide (Abate) provided by the Ministry of Health, (b) an environmental education program and tree-planting with students at the elementary and middle school, and (c) a construction project building an outdoor waiting area for the health clinic. Students would break at noon for lunch and then return in the afternoon, on most days working until 4:30 p.m. Over the course of the week, students, with community health promoters, distributed information and materials to one fifth of the whole community; designed and painted a mural with local elementary and middle school students to promote environmental stewardship; planted more than

50 trees; and, against all odds, completed most of the health center construction project.

These projects are paradigmatic examples of the kinds of service in which students often engage as part of service immersion trips. On the surface, the action here seems self-evident. Students built relationships and participated in community-led activities that resulted in measurable changes. Our data, however, reveal another layer to this story. Although students' involvement in these service activities was much appreciated by community leaders, the action (and performance of solidarity) preceded students' arrival in Pacamba. We learned from our interviews with community leaders in Pacamba and with one of the Nicaraguan FSD organizers that the plan to host a delegation in Pacamba set in motion a process that facilitated the community's achieving its goals. Specifically, Pacamba community leaders were able to leverage the planned arrival of a U.S. delegation to organize both internal and external support.

1. Increasing collective efficacy. For community leaders, the delegation's arrival provided leaders with a resource to organize the broader community, and specifically the youth. One member of the host organization explained the community's response to learning that the U.S. student group would be coming:

> When people realize, "There's a group of gringos, a group of foreigners coming," [they say], "Oh, that's great! We'll get to know them, we'll talk," so they get excited . . . when they see foreigners, it's like—they get excited and they come out to participate. (Karla)

2. Securing government support for community projects. Another stated benefit was that FSD was able to use the U.S. group's visit as a way to secure support from the Ministry of Health (MINSA) for the dengue prevention project.

Earlier that year, the community health promoters had organized a group of youth to assist in conducting a dengue prevention campaign. MINSA had agreed to provide the needed supplies (including the larvicide Abate used to kill dengue-carrying mosquitoes). When it came time to launch the campaign, the supplies were never delivered. Disheartened, the community abandoned their efforts and concluded that MINSA was not a reliable source of help. Later that year, when FSD established a partnership with the community, FSD representatives went to MINSA to explain that a U.S. delegation would be coming to the community to participate

in the public health campaign. This time, MINSA promised to provide the materials and delivered on its promise. We cannot know all of the factors that influenced this outcome, but, significantly, community leaders perceived that the arrival of U.S. students played a role in holding MINSA accountable.

We call this a case of instrumental action and solidarity. Community members capitalized on the privileged social position of the U.S. group to mobilize their community and secure needed support from their government. This part of the experience was largely concealed from students (prior to our interviews with community members) and yet was a crucial contributor to the success of the service projects.

Urban homestays: Pragmatic solidarity. The relationships between students and urban host families do not conform to standard definitions of solidarity. As middle-class, urban professionals, these families tended to downplay differences between themselves and U.S. students. Their homes had running water, a bed for each student, Internet connectivity, and washing machines. Some had traveled to or had family members living in the United States. In the words of one host mother, "I've traveled outside of [Nicaragua], so more or less I know your customs" (Doña Yolanda). In an absolute sense, there was less social distance between U.S. students and urban host families.

The urban host families cast themselves as providing a service that facilitated students' involvement in rural community development. Their task, as they described it, was to provide meals and a safe, comfortable place for students to return every night after their day of community service. One host mother described her work as an extension of the work of students by proclaiming that host families are part of "un común servicio social"—a common social service or intervention. She went on to explain that "what we do, what I do is contribute—I collaborate so that you can come and do good in any one of our communities" (Doña Alicia). Another host mother explained that she loves being part of this effort. "They [students] come to help. I love [hosting] because Nicaragua needs help, especially in the rural zones" (Doña Leticia). In these statements, families demonstrate awareness of the global dynamics of privilege and oppression while also differentiating themselves from "poor communities" (Doña Leticia).

Although there was a great degree of mutual affection between students and urban host families, this relationship also resembled a business partnership. That these families receive substantial pay-

ments for hosting students further cements the consumer/service-provider dynamic. It is fair to ask whether this setting and the nature of these relationships preclude expressions of solidarity. We propose that what occurs between students and urban host families constitutes a pragmatic performance of solidarity. Students and families approach the relationship and their respective roles focused on practical dimensions of the exchange. Students are grateful for the comforts provided to them by host families, and families benefit from the material assistance provided to them in exchange for hosting. The relationship is, of course, more complicated than a simple exchange. Families also described the experience of hosting as a type of vicarious participation in service—"un común servicio social." Together, students and families provide one another with the opportunity to fulfill a shared goal—serving rural communities—that neither party, working alone, could accomplish in quite the same way. In this sense, we see an expression (albeit in nontraditional form) of solidarity, defined as joint action across groups with "incompletely shared interests" *(Kolers, 2012, p. 367)*.

These three cases suggest new ways of looking at solidarity. Symbolic performances of solidarity that occurred between rural homestay families and U.S. students were characterized by profound differences in social location and abstract and intangible expressions of support. Instrumental performances of solidarity in Pacamba revealed that the main activity (community-based work) may mask even more important processes that facilitate joint action and advance community goals. Instrumental solidarity draws on the global dynamics of difference and inequality. Internally, community members were activated by the knowledge that U.S. students would be coming; externally, the Ministry of Health was more motivated to follow through on its promises to avoid looking bad in front of international guests. Finally, pragmatic performances of solidarity—that is, those driven by practical concerns—occurred between students and their middle-class, urban host families. Although this example stretches the traditional understanding of solidarity, we argue that the elements of shared action across difference are present.

Discussion

Our analysis provides a new way to think about solidarity in the context of international service-learning, especially as it relates to our broader research question: What is your experience of hosting and interacting with U.S. American students? In asking this question, our goal is not to substantively evaluate these shared performances of solidarity but to explore how solidarity is enacted in multiple contexts by students and host communities. Our theoretical contribution is in documenting the complexity of this seemingly straightforward concept while continuing to interrogate the existing models of international exchange often practiced uncritically in higher education. Our analysis affirms the critique by political philosophers that solidarity is often abbreviated as "unity" without sufficient attention to "incompletely shared interests" *(Kolers, 2012, p. 367)*. In fact, our typology suggests that the nature and extent of differences between students and host families—which necessarily involve inequality—crucially shape the possibilities for collective action. Although we have described these as analytically distinct types, we acknowledge that the reality is likely much messier and may be better represented as points on a continuum. Still, the preliminary results of this case study tell us something new about international exchanges and their related implications. We offer a few key examples below.

1. **Model Clarification**

   For universities and colleges engaged in international service-learning, our analysis reinforces the need to clarify the motivations and terms of the model being used. Institutional leaders should proceed with extreme care when planning international exchanges involving U.S. students traveling abroad to foreign countries and contexts. The intended goals (and their conceptual foundations) must be made as transparent and community-centered as possible—a process that may require outside training and consultation. In short, given the differentials of privilege and power in these cross-cultural contexts, a tradition of service and expressions of good intentions are not sufficient (*Illich, 1968*). We urge administrators to deconstruct the motivations for these programs with a critical perspective on both the promises and pitfalls of international service-learning.

   There are inherent challenges to many exchange models, but the solidarity model may offer greater opportunities for wider participation in decision-making and conscious-

ness-raising. If this is the chosen model, a program must closely examine how it will address issues of difference and inequality. How, for example, are students being educated about the global dynamics of neoliberal political economic forces? As expressed by one of the interviewees (Doña Dalia), to what extent are students "psychologically prepared" to experience conditions of economic deprivation and interpret the meaning of these disparities? Additionally, how do programs establish authentic partnerships with host communities? And how do they decide (together) what constitutes meaningful action?

2. **Greater Preparation and Follow-up With Students**

   For students, we encourage greater commitment to reflexivity. To that end, we argue for even greater pretrip preparation for students. Students should be engaged in deeper conversations about the potential problems of service-based models of international exchange. In learning about globalization and global poverty, in particular, students should be asked to examine their own social location—that is, their positionality, lifestyle choices, and cultural values—before experiencing the Other. This reflection can provide students with a more balanced and critical perspective on what it means to traverse these boundaries and how to develop authentic relationships with host communities.

3. **Deeper Engagement with Host Communities Around These Dilemmas**

   As illustrated through our study, host community members are eager to share their experiences and opinions about service-learning. In line with recent calls to engage in more community-based participatory research, we argue that community members should be involved in this type of investigation. A truly participatory project would involve community members at every stage of the research process—from designing the research question to collecting and analyzing data and disseminating findings *(Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 1998)*. By spanning the boundaries of traditional research roles, a participatory project would begin to address the limitations of existing research by placing host communities' perspectives at the center of inquiry. The results of such a study could provide crucial insights for deciding whether and how international service-learning should take place.

Conclusion

Solidarity is a useful but underexamined concept in international service-learning. This article introduced issues that deserve far more attention than space here allows. Does solidarity, as suggested by Weiley *(2008),* help students "mov[e] away from *othering* and judging" (*p. 337*, emphasis in original) in the context of global service-learning? And are certain types of performance of solidarity more desirable than others? We encourage more discussion on this topic but remain concerned with issues of how power and privilege operate (implicitly or explicitly) to shape these global interactions between U.S. students and their hosts. A broader issue is whether the stated goals of these programs to develop "globally competent citizens" (*Plater, 2011, p. 37*) may have unexpected negative consequences. That is, can these programs effectively reinforce (rather than dismantle) the dominant–subordinate dynamic between students and hosts that is reflective of global political dynamics? Although we are not the first to highlight these issues in global exchange, we hope to stimulate further conversation on methods for crossing boundaries in the spirit of ethical human relationships and recognition of global interdependence.

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Measuring Boundary-Spanning Behaviors in Community Engagement

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Abstract

Community engagement professionals and partners serve as, work with, study, and build the capacity of boundary spanners. To augment knowledge about these functions, the Weerts–Sandmann Boundary Spanning Conceptual Framework (*2010*) has been operationalized through a survey instrument to examine community engagement boundary-spanning behaviors by campus-based actors—leaders, faculty, staff, and students—as well as by community-based spanners in different contexts. This article provides an explication of the underlying theoretical constructs and the development and testing process of the instrument, along with applications for multiple audiences. Implications are presented concerning contextual issues of boundary spanning and generalization of boundary-spanning roles across a variety of potential subjects.

Introduction

Hermes, the mythical Greek god who served as a messenger between humans and the gods, was one of the first recorded boundary crossers *(Sandy, 2011)*. In our highly networked, transdisciplinary, global society, the ability to span boundaries is increasingly critical. Community engagement professionals and partners serve as, work with, study, and build the capacity of boundary spanners. Investigating and measuring these boundary-spanning behaviors will enable better understanding and improved practices for these vital roles. Since a measurement instrument for this application did not exist, this work describes the theoretical underpinning for and the process of developing an instrument to measure boundary-spanning behaviors and roles of a variety of professionals and volunteers connecting organizations and communities. Using the previous conceptual work of Weerts and Sandmann *(2010)* as our basis, in this article we review the relevant literature, present a theoretical framework, and describe the process completed by two advanced graduate students and two faculty members. In order to make the instrument more robust, the researchers collaborated to design and test an instrument applicable to multiple audiences to measure boundary-spanning

behaviors among varied organizational and community environmental contexts.

Background

From the first colonial colleges to today's institutions of higher education, connecting with and serving the people has been a mission of education. As Boyer *(1996)* observed, "Higher learning and the larger purposes of American society have been inextricably interlocked" *(p. 11)*. As part of their collective civic mission, universities and other institutions of higher education are increasingly challenged to partner with communities, organizations, schools, businesses, and government to address societal problems and support the democratic system *(Glass & Fitzgerald, 2010)*.

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (*n.d.*) defined community engagement as the "collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity" (*"Classification Definition," para. 1*). Driscoll *(2009)* indicated further scholarship is needed for community engagement's potential to be reached as authentic reciprocal partnerships.

Prior research has examined what constitutes community engagement; how to institutionalize engagement; and how engagement contributes to student, faculty, and community learning and understanding. Scholars, however, have focused less attention on how community engagement is nurtured and developed at the individual level among faculty, staff, students, and community partners. Individuals serve an essential role in navigating the waters of community engagement, lending an ear to the community voice, and sharing the community's thoughts and ideas with the university. Certain individuals in the community serve a parallel role in representing the university within the community. These individuals perform a variety of tasks formally and informally. Weerts and Sandmann *(2010)* described these individuals as boundary spanners.

Boundary spanners engage in unique behaviors that occur at the periphery of groups, organizations, and institutions. Boundary spanning can be described as "the bridge between an organization and its exchange partners" *(Scott, 1992, p. 196)*. Aldrich and Herker *(1977)* further defined the behavior of boundary spanners as processing information from various environments and providing

representation to stakeholders outside the organization. Boundary spanners engage stakeholders, negotiate power dynamics, communicate expectations, and build connections *(Fariar, 2010)*.

Each of these activities can occur at the individual level, at the departmental or group level, and at the organizational level. Tushman and Scanlan *(1981a, 1981b)* found that some boundary spanners act within organizations and cross-pollinate ideas and information internally, and others share ideas and information with external individuals or other organizations. Researchers vary in who is considered a boundary spanner. Tushman and Scanlan *(1981a, 1981b)* found that many types of employees engage in boundary-spanning behaviors; other researchers have focused on boundary spanners who interact with external individuals as a part of their formal job role *(Kim, Murrmann, & Lee, 2009)*. These types of positions include hotel front desk employees, waiters, and similar service industry positions.

Boundary spanning as a theory is emerging. Using systems theory as a basis, multiple disciplines have examined boundary spanners and their competencies, purpose, and successes in organizations. The earliest quantitative studies of boundary spanning focused on knowledge diffusion and communication between and across organizations *(Aldrich & Herker, 1977)*. More recently, Williams *(2011)* used a survey to identify, describe, and categorize boundary-spanning competencies and effective collaborative behavior. Despite the appeal of this theoretical work and the strength of previous empirical studies, an instrument to measure boundary-spanning behaviors and activities among these diverse individuals has not been developed.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this work is to describe the methodology used by a team of researchers to develop a robust instrument to investigate boundary-spanning roles and activities among a variety of individuals working in organizations. We developed the instrument to investigate research questions such as:

1. What specific boundary-spanning behaviors are more prevalent in a particular population?
2. To what extent are boundary-spanning behaviors explained by personal characteristics such as race, gender, age, community, or organization position or status?

3. What contextual factors predict an individual's boundary-spanning behaviors?

The instrument was designed to be effective in the context of any group working to connect communities and organizations. In particular, in its inaugural applications, the instrument will be used for researching the roles of community engagement boundary spanners, specifically adult volunteers working in youth organizations as well as higher education faculty and staff members serving the military community. The overall instrument development process is summarized in Table 1, which outlines the organization of the article. The methodology used to guide the process and develop the instrument is consistent with Spector (*1992*).

Table 1. Instrument Development Process

Process Steps	Activity
Clarification of the theoretical framework	Reclassification of the Weerts and Sandmann (*2010*) model
	Concept clarification
Item pool development	Research development of possible items & constructs
	Elimination of duplicate items and clarification of items
Item pool refinement	Review of items by 5 advanced students for clarity and purpose
	Validity sort conducted by 21 students
	Refinement of item pool
Construction of response scale	Identification of three response scales
Pilot test	Draft recruitment materials
	Receipt of administrative approval
	Institutional Review Board approval
	Data collection
Data analysis	Data cleansing
	Reliability analysis
	Interitem correlation

Clarification of the Theoretical Framework

The logical model for this development work is an extension of a boundary spanners model proposed by Weerts and Sandmann *(2010)*. Weerts and Sandmann's qualitative study relied on the seminal research of Aldrich and Herker *(1977)* in identifying and describing boundary-spanning behaviors. The quantitative focus

of this study generalizes their model for use in other boundary-spanning research contexts.

Along two perpendicular axes, as illustrated in Figure 1, Weerts and Sandmann *(2010)* proposed task orientation and social closeness as the two domains differentiating the ways boundary spanners "reduce conflict and facilitate spanning goals" *(p. 708)*. Task orientation "relates to an individual's formal job role and how it influences that person's relationship with external constituents" *(p. 709)*. Those serving as boundary spanners may take a leadership or advocacy role for boundary spanning, resulting in a socioemotional or leadership task orientation. Others will focus on technical, practical tasks. The tasks that spanners complete may also be influenced by personal characteristics and skillsets of individuals in relation to others around them. These differences may influence variation along the scale.

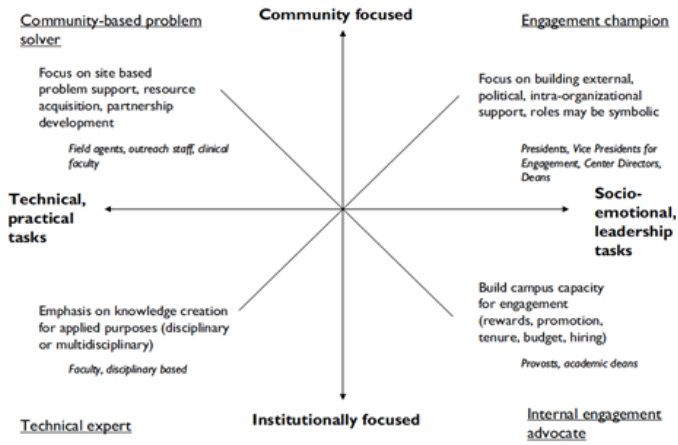

Figure 1. University–community engagement boundary-spanning roles at public research universities *(Weerts & Sandmann, 2010)*.

The second domain, social closeness, is "the degree to which the spanner is aligned with the external partner [vis-à-vis] the organization that he or she represents" *(Weerts & Sandmann, 2010, p. 709)*. As in task orientation, an individual's position influences social closeness, but other personal and organizational characteristics—including personal and professional background, experience, disciplinary expertise *(Weerts & Sandmann, 2010)*, and loyalty *(Miller, 2008)*—play roles as well.

The two domains create four quadrants within which boundary spanners may find themselves aligned. Weerts and Sandmann

(2010) classified the individuals in these quadrants: (1) community-based problem solvers, (2) technical experts, (3) internal engagement advocates, and (4) engagement champions. The model is not predictive of future roles but rather examines the current roles individuals play when organizations engage with others.

As we worked to operationalize Weerts and Sandmann's (*2010*) framework based on their qualitative data, it became apparent to us through our brainstorming and both formal and informal critique panels that using the two domains, task orientation and social closeness, may be inadequate. As we studied the model, we realized we had two significant choices. The first choice was determining whether we were measuring types of people, those who found themselves inside the four quadrants Weerts and Sandmann defined, or measuring behaviors engaged in by those types of people identified in the model as they span boundaries. We decided to measure behaviors. These behaviors included both observable actions and cognitive processes. We included cognitive aspects because a growing body of research indicates that cognitive and affective processes influence observable behaviors *(Chisholm, Risko, & Kingstone, 2013)*. This choice offered us more flexibility in measurement and provided data most relevant to researchers and practitioners working with boundary spanners.

The second choice we faced was deciding whether to maintain the two axes of the model. Through discussion, we discovered that the two ends of the axes may not be inversely related. For example, individuals' behaviors and activities could be classified as both high in community orientation and high in organizational orientation. Because we wanted to measure this possibility, we reconstructed these two bipolar dimensions into four independent constructs.

After deciding to use four constructs to measure a boundary spanner's social closeness and task orientation, the research team derived definitions (Table 2) from the literature for the four orientations: (1) technical-practical orientation, (2) socioemotional orientation, (3) community orientation, and (4) organizational orientation.

We then standardized terminology of organizational orientation. Because we wanted our instrument to have applicability outside institutions of higher education, we used the broader, less formal term organization to include voluntary associations of community based on interests and proximity.

Table 2. Constructs of Boundary-Spanning Behaviors Based on the Weerts and Sandmann (*2010*) Model

Constructs	Definition
Technical-practical orientation	The degree to which an individual's behaviors focus on transforming inputs into outputs in a way that enhances the performance of an organization or group
Socioemotional orientation	The degree to which an individual's behaviors support developing the knowledge, skills, abilities, and needs of others as well as the reward system and authority structures that exist in a group or organization
Community orientation	The degree to which an individual is aligned with the interests of the community, a unified body of individuals with common interests, external to the individual's organization
Organizational orientation	The degree to which an individual's behaviors are aligned with their own organization's overarching mission, vision, and interests

Several relationships are key contributors in correlation with boundary-spanning behaviors. These relationships include

- the individual's relationship to the organization, which encompasses the individual's current relationship, previous experience, and proximity, and
- the individual's relationship with the community, including the community's type and the individual's proximity to and experience with the community.

The variables relevant to the study also follow factors related to both the participants and the organization. These variables include

- how frequently participants exhibit boundary-spanning behaviors, and
- the prevalence of boundary-spanning roles in the organization, as well as organizational components relevant to boundary spanning. These include policies and guidelines that influence organizational support

through training, recruitment, or orientation to specific boundary-spanning roles.

These relationships can be characterized using the variables personal characteristics and organizational characteristics that may predict the outcome variable boundary-spanning behaviors. These relationships are depicted in Figure 2 for the study of community engagement boundary spanning.

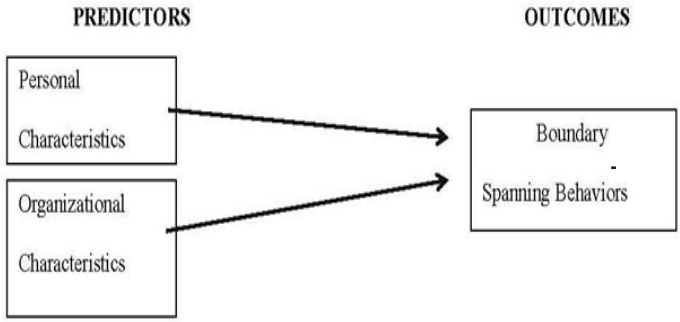

Figure 2. Proposed model in the study of boundary-spanning behaviors.

Item Pool Development

After concept clarification, we identified a preliminary list of items for measuring boundary spanning roles. The research team drew on the work of a larger group of emerging scholars studying boundary spanning and community engagement that included representation from multiple universities. Working with a larger research team made it possible to develop a summation of a larger pool of items measuring boundary-spanning behaviors and levels of participation. Sources for the preliminary items included extensive literature review, preliminary data from current research of doctoral students studying boundary spanning at the University of Georgia, and data from the emerging scholars studying boundary spanning and community engagement at other universities. Any item describing boundary-spanning behavior was included in the preliminary list and keyed to a potential construct. The initial item pool included 60 technical-practical items, 52 socioemotional items, 48 community orientation items, and 34 organizational orientation items. These 194 items were coded by source so that further clarification or review would be possible.

Item Pool Refinement

Each item was redefined within the four constructs of boundary spanning from Weerts and Sandmann *(2010)* with consideration for content and construct validity. Through further refinement of both the original research and the applicable construct, the research team of graduate students and tenure-track faculty members evaluated the item lists. We refined the individual behavior items, combined duplicate items, and removed or clarified items that could be classified in more than one of the orientations. Each item was assigned to one possible construct.

In order to remove, consolidate, or change an item from the initial item pool, both graduate students had to agree. After several iterations, the graduate students scheduled an item-critique session with one of the faculty members and advanced doctoral students who had experience in boundary spanning, quantitative measurement, or both areas. In this 2-hour session, five advanced doctoral students provided feedback on unclear items, items possibly not fitting the assumed constructs, and readability of items. The reviewers analyzed 16 technical-practical items, 16 socioemotional items, 17 community orientation items, and 16 organizational orientation items. The feedback provided through this session enabled the graduate students to reconsider items, combine like items, and remove those that were unclear.

The graduate students worked together and in consensus to refine and clarify the pooled items. The faculty member on the research team who was serving as the methodologist challenged these students to ensure that the items offered flexibility among contexts for administration of the survey but were not so vague as to allow multiple interpretations.

Validity Sort

Having created a 40-item instrument, the research team conducted a validity sort to establish the validity of the items. Because some of the concepts were closely related, it was important to be sure that all items measured different concepts. The methodologist offered the participants in this project the opportunity to work with graduate students in his construct and survey development class. This enabled the research team to have the items validated to the constructs and also enabled students in the class to practice a real-world technique for surveys and to experience the process of survey and instrument development.

Kits were developed for this activity, with each kit containing instructions for the process; four colored envelopes labeled with a construct and definition on each; and 40 index cards, each with an item from the instrument. Each item on a card had been randomized and numbered for tracking. Each student received a kit to use for the sort.

The students were introduced to the process by the methodologist. One graduate student from the team explained the research, including the basic framework for boundary spanning. This student further described the purpose of the instrument being developed and the goals of the two graduate students' research.

During the class period, construct and survey development class students individually reviewed the definitions, asked limited questions for clarity, sorted the items and reviewed the sort, and placed items in an identified constructs envelope. Each student then placed all four envelopes in a larger white envelope. Students had the option of noting their reactions to the process.

Following the sort, the research team recorded each student's placement of the items in a matrix table in Qualtrics. The use of Qualtrics as an electronic collection tool allowed the research team to review an individual's placements across several items as well as reviewing the total placement of the items.

The validity sort involved 21 participants. In considering the participants' responses, the research team established 15 accurate placements of the identified construct as a threshold for definite inclusion of the item in the final instrument. In order to determine the final items for the pilot study, the graduate students included all items for which 15 or more individuals correctly identified the construct. Fifteen was selected because it represents a greater than 70% placement of the item in the appropriate construct. In evaluating the items against the standard of 15, the graduate students identified several trends.

First, in examining the community orientation and organizational orientation constructs, the research team identified five items in the community construct and one item in the organizational construct that met the standard for inclusion in the pilot study. The research team decided that in some instances the phrasing "individual or groups" had led a number of individuals to incorrectly identify an item as a socioemotional behavior rather than a community or organizational behavior. These phrases repeatedly skewed the placement in a way that differed from the

research team's initial consideration. In response, these items were rephrased but not removed.

For socioemotional and technical-practical orientations, the graduate students were faced with fewer than eight valid items in each orientation from the validity sort. The graduate students looked to those items with responses closest to the standard of 15 correctly identified and determined which were best aligned with items in the literature. The language of these items was refined based on the literature to more accurately describe the behaviors.

One item resulted in validity sort participants dividing the item evenly between socioemotional and technical-practical orientation. This item was removed. After completing the validity sort of the items in all the constructs, the team finalized the eight (8) items for each construct for inclusion in the instrument (Table 3).

Table 3. Item Pool Contents by Stage

	Initial item pool	Refined item pool	Pre-validity sort pool	Final item pool
Technical-practical orientation	60	16	10	8
Socioemotional orientation	52	16	10	8
Community orientation	48	17	10	8
Organizational orientation	34	16	10	8
Total Items	194	65	40	32

Construction of Response Scale

The next stage of the instrument development process was construction of the response scale. During the initial item pool development, two possible response scales were created and examined. One was a Likert 6-point agreement scale from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. The team chose an even-point scale to remove the neutral option from respondents. Because boundary spanners perform a variety of tasks and behaviors, the team assumed that respondents could use the neutral response to signify both agreement and disagreement with the items. The second response scale explored was a frequency scale. The team experimented with frequency scales by altering the item stems to include simple statements and participle phrases to indicate importance.

After the item critique session, the research team concluded that a 6-point agreement scale might not accurately reflect the

amount of variation. The research team agreed that a frequency scale could indicate the level of importance an individual attaches to certain activities based on how frequently the respondent engages in those activities. A frequency scale would give adequate variation and could be scaled appropriately for the respondents by altering the items in the community and organizational orientations.

At this time as well, the team decided to alter the items for community and organizational orientation, making them parallel with almost identical items. This occurred because the team realized items in the socioemotional and technical-practical categories could reflect very different behaviors, but behaviors related to community and organizational orientation were identical except for the word community or organizational. This factor had become particularly evident in the validity sort. A boundary spanner may self-identify as high in both community orientation and organizational orientation; however, the behaviors themselves support either organizations or communities. The graduate students took each item in both community orientation and organizational orientation and redesigned them so that each one had both a focus on community and a focus on organization. These items became dyads, forming eight dyads from the 16 items.

Pilot Study

The purpose of the pilot study was to test and refine the survey instrument designed to identify the boundary-spanning behaviors of individuals working with communities. Specifically, the pilot study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. Do the proposed data collection methods work?
2. Is the survey instrument reliable and valid?

To answer these questions, a pilot study was conducted with Georgia Cooperative Extension faculty and staff representing two land-grant universities in the state. This audience was selected because it shares certain characteristics with the populations slated for eventual study but remains distinct from them. Additionally, we settled on using the Georgia Cooperative Extension faculty and staff because the diversity of individuals in this sample would align to the Weerts and Sandmann *(2010)* descriptors. The 48-item questionnaire was administered through Qualtrics. The questionnaire included informed consent followed by the survey items and

demographic information specific to this audience. Institutional Review Board approval was secured.

For preparation of the pilot instrument, the graduate students separated all the questions into three sections: (1) tasks and activities, (2) perspectives toward community and organization, and (3) program and personal information. This allowed the community and organization statements to be paired together for clarity and enabled survey participants to focus on each topic more easily in completing the survey.

The demographic and predictor variables identified for this audience attempted to mirror similar predictor variables for the researchers' final studies. The demographic and predictor variables included county work setting, residence of the employee, length of employment, current position and rank, percentage of time budgeted by program area, estimated percentage of time spent by program area, estimate of salary source, gender, highest degree obtained, race/ethnicity, and year of birth.

The research team used a list of Georgia Cooperative Extension faculty and staff provided by and with the permission of the associate dean for Extension at the University of Georgia. The list encompassed all e-mail addresses of the EXTALL e-mail list for Cooperative Extension in Georgia. The research team removed duplicate addresses and approximately 140 generic county extension office addresses. The generic county office e-mail addresses are intended to serve as a generic e-mail address for the local office, and the county secretary typically forwards e-mail from these addresses to the individuals intended to receive the information. This yielded 949 potential participants with unique e-mail addresses.

The data collection plan for the pilot study mirrored each respective research team member's final research study. Members of the EXTALL list received a prenotification from the associate dean for Extension. Each individual then received a unique invitation from the graduate students through Qualtrics to complete the survey. The survey included one follow-up reminder, which was sent 8 days after the initial request. Of the 949 potential respondents, 377 participated. This achieved a 39.7% response rate. Because this population does not represent the populations we will eventually study, we cannot assume the response rate will hold across the other groups.

Pilot Data Analysis

For the pilot study, the research team decided the instrument was technically adequate. In a review of the data, a few suspicious entries appeared. The researchers noticed that several individuals who skipped certain portions of the survey may have believed that the questions did not apply to their positions. For example, several Extension faculty serving in a scope beyond a county skipped the community and organizational orientation questions (Section II). The two graduate students—who are also Extension faculty—felt that the district- and state-level Extension educators may have excluded themselves from completing parts of the survey because some standard procedures within Extension call for the exclusion of district and state faculty since their community is not defined by county lines. For future studies, it is recommended that the instructions emphasize the importance of completing each section, regardless of whether the respondent feels a section directly applies to him or her. Additionally, clarifying how community is defined as it relates to the respondent would be helpful. The researchers did not use a descriptor or limiter for the community in the instructions or overview. In order to prevent this possible confusion, the researchers will make changes in each final instrument to clarify community for the specific sample of future respondents. The team discussed defining a community of impact in the instructions but felt this might not provide the needed clarity.

In the first analysis we examined the item distribution in order to ensure that the constructs would capture enough variance and the response scale was utilized appropriately. As depicted in Table 4, all items performed well. Of the individual items, 29 of the 32 items used all six points on the response scale. Respondents did not use all six points for three items: (1) I support others in their accomplishments and challenges, (2) I identify issues in communication, and (3) I build trust with people I interact with. Issues of communication used five of the points on the scale; the other two items used four points on the scale. After examining the minimum and maximum responses, the researchers examined the frequencies of each response for each item. Many showed evidence of a normal distribution. Overall, the items' frequencies were distributed fairly evenly with a slight shift toward the points on the response scale representing greater frequency. The researchers determined that this is acceptable based on the formal boundary-spanning roles these employees engage in as a part of their positions. Eight (8) of the 32 items had frequencies with the top point on the response scale receiving the greatest number of responses. Eleven (11) indi-

viduals responded with no variance to the socioemotional orientation and community orientation items, 12 respondents had no variance among their organizational orientation items, and 13 individuals responded with no variance to the technical-practical orientation items. Consequently, we did not alter any item.

Table 4. Distributions and Reliability of Key Measures

Measure	Number of items	*M*	*SD*	Mean item mean	Coefficient alpha
Technical-practical orientation (*n* = 281)	8	37.1	7.2	4.6	0.893
Socioemotional orientation (*n* = 280)	8	36.5	6.3	4.6	0.839
Community orientation (*n* = 277)	8	35.5	8.1	4.4	0.922
Organizational orientation (*n* = 2.75)	8	35.2	7.6	4.4	0.905

The four dependent variables, the central variables of the study, were highly intercorrelated. Through discussion, the researchers determined that this, in itself, was not detrimental to the study because the essence of boundary-spanning activities brings about the interrelated nature of the constructs. To reach this conclusion, the researchers examined the interitem correlation among all 32 items collectively by creating a 32 × 32 matrix. This was done to ensure that no duplicate or overly correlated items appeared in the questionnaire. Any items with a correlation coefficient of .70 or higher, which would indicate 49% shared variance (coefficient of determination), were examined by the research team to determine whether those pairs of items were, in fact, conceptually different (see Table 5). Of the 496 interitem correlations, 13 were cause for concern. In all 13 cases, the researchers agreed that the correlations were high but reasonable. Thus, no items were changed.

Table 5. Interitem Correlations with 49% Shared Variance

Item 1	Item 2	*r*	r^2
I identify expertise in individuals.	I build capacity among individuals.	.727	.529
I design processes for projects.	I manage projects.	.802	.643
I determine solutions for challenges.	I design processes for projects.	.719	.517

I apply my skills to new situations.	I determine solutions for challenges.	.725	.526
I negotiate power among individuals.	I resolve conflict among other individuals.	.735	.540
I identify barriers to success.	I identify resources to support projects.	.697	.486
I find ways to meet organization needs with community partners.	I find ways to meet community needs with organization partners.	.819	.671
I identify expertise in the organization to support the community.	I find ways to meet community needs with organization partners.	.800	.640
I identify expertise in the community to support the organization.	I find ways to meet organization needs with community partners.	.741	.549
I identify expertise in the community to support the organization.	I identify expertise in the organization to support the community.	.726	.527
I develop partnerships that benefit the community.	I communicate the community's interests to others.	.697	.486
I develop partnerships that benefit the organization.	I develop partnerships that benefit the community.	.793	.629
I advocate for community policy that supports the organization.	I advocate for organizational policy that supports the community.	.727	.529

We calculated the intercorrelation of the four scales to determine divergent validity. As Table 6 shows, all display moderate to high intercorrelation. Based on closer examination of the interitem correlation among the constructs, the researchers determined that this intercorrelation is understandable as the levels are reasonable though the constructs are different.

Table 6. Construct Intercorrelation Matrix

	Technical-practical orientation	Socio-emotional orientation	Community orientation	Organizational orientation
Technical-practical orientation	1.000	.635	.626	.629
Socioemotional orientation	.635	1.000	.961	.929
Community orientation	.626	.961	1.000	.880

Organizational orientation	.629	.929	.880	1.000

The final analysis examined the reliability of the central variables. The four constructs yielded a high reliability. The technical-practical and socioemotional items had an alpha of .893 and .839, respectively. The community orientation and the organizational orientation items had a reliability of .923 and .907, respectively. In reviewing the reliability of each item within a construct, removing any item did not significantly increase the reliability of the construct. In looking at the technical-practical orientation construct, only one item's removal resulted in increasing the reliability an insignificant amount. In the socioemotional, community, and organizational orientations, no item's removal resulted in increasing reliability. The reliability was adequate to extremely high. Therefore, no changes were made.

Tailoring the Instrument

The research team determined that although the core instrument would go unchanged, the survey should be adapted for specific contexts. This research team encourages future researchers to retain the core items and constructs in their current form and to tailor the instrument for their specific research questions using the methods described below.

Language may be changed to clarify the instrument. For example, a definition of community may be offered in the instructions to help respondents understand that community may be a community of place or a community of interest. This is especially helpful in that some contexts may involve employees and others may involve volunteers. Additionally, the phrase "your work" may lead volunteers to consider employment rather than volunteer roles. As volunteer roles are not considered employment, a language change is needed in those instructions as well.

Future researchers will benefit from the use of predictor and outcome variables. These variables, including age, gender, and other descriptors for sample and external reliability, not only will assist researchers in responding to specific research questions but also will ensure external reliability among new and diverse audiences. Demographic variables as well as other construct variables, scaled or indexed, may be appropriate.

This tailoring of the instrument will not alter the underlying items and constructs. The goal of tailoring the instrument is to

provide for a wide and diverse environment in which to apply this questionnaire to build a robust and generalizable understanding of boundary spanning behaviors. Results of the pilot study analysis and the other activities performed to establish the instrument's validity and reliability, as well as the encouraging results from the pilot data, indicate that this instrument is ready to use in a variety of settings.

Applications and Implications From Measurement of Boundary-Spanning Behaviors

This survey instrument was developed to operationalize the Weerts–Sandmann Boundary Spanning Framework *(2010)* to measure community engagement boundary-spanning behaviors of campus-based actors—leaders, faculty, staff, and students—as well as those of community-based spanners in different contexts. It is a multifaceted, researcher team-designed electronic online self-completion survey that was constructed and pilot tested for that purpose. Instrumentation included a process of concept clarification, item identification, and response scale construction. The instrument was designed to examine areas such as predictor variables, personal and program characteristics, and the four constructs of the boundary-spanning activities and entities. The constructs of boundary-spanning activities were the primary measurable constructs of the instrument. The other constructs were included to measure predictors and the resulting networks formed by the boundary-spanning activities. The use of the instrument can result in both theoretical and practical applications.

Applications and Use of the Instrument

The instrument has been developed to offer flexibility of application among boundary spanners that connect communities to organizations without specific limitations regarding the types of boundary spanners, communities, and organizations. This flexibility is one of the greatest strengths and greatest limitations of the instrument. As the measured behaviors are very general boundary-spanning behaviors, the instrument does not address those behaviors that may be specific to a role or community. For example, the instrument will be used with volunteers who connect youth-serving organizations with communities, yet none of the measured behaviors are specific to roles that boundary spanners may play within youth organizations. Therefore, the instrument

may not specifically address behaviors unique to the roles required in a particular organization.

Because of its flexibility, the instrument can be used in a variety of contexts. The pilot test examined roles of public service faculty and staff representing a land-grant institution. Future studies will focus on volunteers representing a youth-serving organization and military contractors in institutions of higher education. The variety reflected in these organizations represents just one aspect of this instrument's flexibility as a tool for measuring behaviors. Furthermore, the communities relevant to these surveys represent a variety of community types. The community for most Extension staff members is a community of place and tied directly to a location with physical boundaries. This parallels the youth-serving organization volunteer's community in most cases. However, the military contractor community is by definition a community of employment or interest and may not have physical boundaries. This variety of community types illustrates the complexity confronted by research concerning boundary spanners and their communities, which the instrument addresses. The research team designed this instrument to provide for this flexibility in addressing what is a community, and what is an organization. The instrument attempts to measure boundary-spanning behaviors between two specific boundaries. Even an organization can have similar challenges of identifying the boundary. Boundaries exist within organizations at departmental, functional, geographic, and other levels; boundary spanners may define their organization as a subunit of a larger organizational entity.

The instrument has been developed so that boundary spanners can be studied in a variety of contexts to inform both scholarly research and the practice of those working with spanners. This includes but is not limited to community leaders, faculty and staff in higher education, volunteer managers, and even those in the field of business.

Augmenting Scholarly Theoretical Knowledge

Community engagement professionals and partners serve in a number of roles associated with the function of boundary spanning. Given the importance of these vital linking roles, research is needed beyond anecdotal or narrative studies. Larger scale investigating and measuring of these boundary-spanning behaviors will enable better understanding and improved practices of boundary spanning. Although it contributes to our understanding

of the underlying constructs, this work also points to areas needing future theoretical and empirical work, such as those indicated by Leifer and Delbecq *(1978)*, including the relationship between boundary-spanning activity and organizational effectiveness or the knowledge diffusion between and among groups, organizations, and the external environment through the intervening variable of boundary-spanning behaviors. Other salient issues relate directly to the boundary spanners themselves around issues of motivation and power, participation in decision making, and feelings of stress and satisfaction.

Improving Practical Knowledge to Benefit Practitioners and Those Who Work With Them

Working from the Weerts and Sandmann *(2010)* model also can assist practitioners in developing the skills and abilities of individuals performing these boundary-spanning roles. Thus, in addition to augmenting the theoretical base of understanding for boundary spanners, results from this instrument can inform practice. Understanding boundary-spanning behaviors can direct practitioners in leading, training, supporting, and mentoring boundary spanners, whether community engagement professionals, volunteer managers, human resource directors, or other partners perform this role.

Specifically, the four constructs of organizational and community orientations and socioemotional and technical-practical orientations serve as key components of training and orientation programs. These components when matched with behaviors can better prepare developers to meet the needs of boundary spanners. Understanding boundary-spanning behaviors may also assist boundary spanners in developing their own skills and meeting the goals of their boundary-spanning roles.

Conclusion

As community engagement scholars and practitioners, the research team sought to operationalize the conceptual Boundary Spanning Framework of Weerts and Sandmann *(2010)* with a survey instrument to examine boundary-spanning behaviors. This team designed an instrument that is flexible in nature yet valid and reliable in measuring these behaviors. The instrument provides a method to further expand the theoretical understanding of boundary-spanning behaviors as well as a source of information that practitioners can apply to better support boundary spanners

in connecting communities and organizations. Hermes would be pleased to know that efforts are still being made to improve the understanding and practice of boundary spanning!

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Dissertation Overviews

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Boundary-Spanning Actors in Urban 4-H: An Action Research Case Study

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Abstract

Today's Cooperative Extension organization continues to face challenges of providing relevant, quality programming in urban communities. Challenges include the ability to build capacity in Extension's urban youth educators to assess and interpret the unique, variable needs of urban clients and to communicate effectively the identified needs to the state land-grant institution to leverage resources. To be responsive, intentional change can be informed and initiated by those closest to the challenges of creating thriving 4-H programs in urban environments – the urban Extension youth educator. Guided by open and sociotechnical systems theory, this multiple case action research study used the critical incident methodology to explore boundary-spanning behaviors of urban Extension youth educators. Four conclusions were drawn from an analysis of the findings including an adaptation of the community-based problem solver quadrant of the Weerts and Sandmann *(2010)* university–community engagement model. Boundary-spanning behaviors can inform organizational policies related to program development, staff development, hiring procedures, and performance evaluation procedures.

Introduction

The increasing demand for outreach to address the needs of the ever-growing urban population—as opposed to the shrinking rural population—has forced urban youth educators to become more innovative in their programming approaches. Despite a culture deeply rooted in Cooperative Extension's rural orientation and despite organization leaders who "do not recognize the disadvantages they stack against" urban programming *(De Ciantis, 2009, p. 6)*, educators are integrating programs into urban communities and engaging youth, families, and stakeholders.

"Why do urban educators receive the same training as other educators in the state but fail to produce thriving programs?" The assumptions of organization leaders and the structure of the organization's professional development efforts inspired this study, which was designed to illuminate the innovative boundary-spanning behaviors of expert performing (one showing significant desired program impacts) urban youth educators in response to the

"one size fits all" professional and program development training expected to prepare rural and urban youth educators to meet the needs of their distinctly different audiences.

Research Method

This multiple case study action research dissertation explored how managers of outlying audiences span the boundaries between sponsoring institutions and the audiences they serve. Specifically, it identified behaviors that urban youth educators use to navigate resistance from the rural-oriented Cooperative Extension education system (sponsoring organization) and the urban community (outlying audience). To meet the study's objective, urban 4-H youth educators in eight urban cities participated in group meetings and individual critical incident interviews to reflect on the critical link between their concrete experiences, their judgments about their experiences, what meaning they attributed to their experiences, their resulting actions, and the implications for their programs *(Yin, 2009)*. This resulted in qualitative data, which is considered the most appropriate choice when little knowledge exists about a phenomenon *(Merriam, 2009)*. These data were used to identify strategies and behaviors that were applied for two purposes: (1) bridging learning and support gaps often invisible to Cooperative Extension organization leaders and (2) navigating resistances faced when serving nontraditional, outlying urban audiences.

Conceptual Framework

An investigation into the behavior of expert performing urban youth educators and the outcomes of their efforts required consideration of the influence of associated factors. Three primary factors influenced the results of the study: programming behaviors of educators, the urban setting, and resistances experienced. The study was designed based on a linear conceptual framework (see Figure 1) that explored the combination of these factors and the resulting outcome for urban educators' practice. Developing this approach helped in identifying and isolating boundary-spanning behaviors found to be useful for reaching outlying urban clients and communicating experiential knowledge gained at the individual and organization levels within Cooperative Extension.

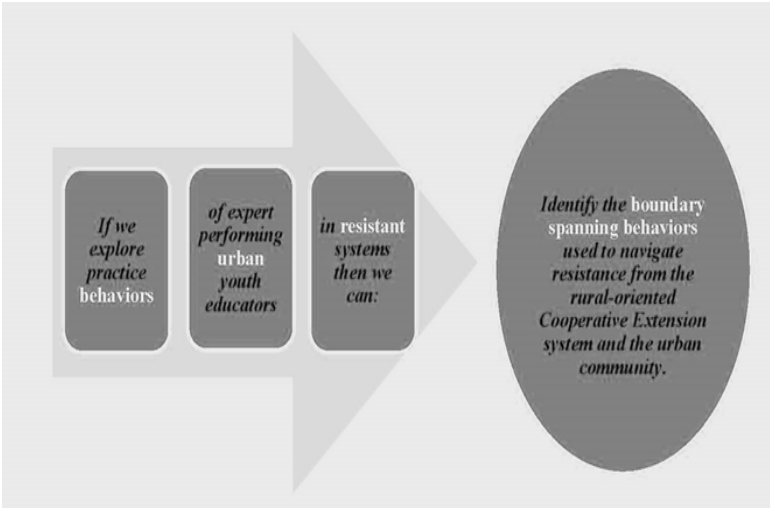

Figure 1. Depiction of the conceptual framework guiding the study including the study's purpose statement.

Theoretical Framework and Key Literature

Prior to this study, representative data on the relevant conceptual framework did not exist. The fundamental principles of each of the factors within the conceptual framework have been scantly covered in the literature, and the literature does not address the fusion of these factors into a focused study of the behaviors employed by Cooperative Extension urban youth educators to navigate resistance. Following a review of the multidisciplinary and multicontextual literature on boundary-spanning theory, a focus on boundary spanning for the purposes of community outreach and engagement was chosen.

Weerts and Sandmann's *(2010)* study exploring the roles of boundary spanners in university–community engagement considered actors' level of social concern and resulted in the suggestion of four distinct roles of spanners and a university–community engagement boundary-spanning roles model (see Figure 2) that classified boundary spanners in four roles based on their practices: community-based problem solvers, engagement champions, technical experts, and internal engagement advocates. Because boundary-spanning educators stand in the gap between the learning organization and the communities they serve, their capacity to accept,

process, and act on the needs of the internal and external environments is key to producing quality Cooperative Extension youth development programming. In an effort to provide such quality programming, boundary-spanning actors search for and retrieve new information across organizational boundaries—information which is then applied to task knowledge and diffused throughout the organization to enhance programming *(Richardson & Lissack, 2001)*.

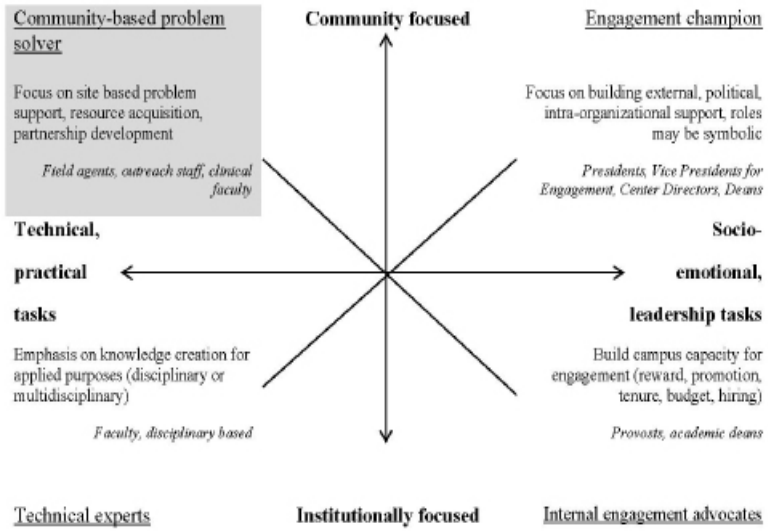

Figure 2. University–community engagement boundary-spanning roles at public research universities *(Weerts & Sandmann, 2010)*.

Little attention has been given to the role of boundary spanners within higher education. However, within an open system like Cooperative Extension, boundary-spanning behaviors are crucial in maintaining two-way communication between an organization's leaders and its dispersed, ancillary unit personnel, such as contingent faculty and staff at branch campuses or Cooperative Extension educators working at community-based locations *(Skolaski, 2012)*.

Research Findings

This study based on three research questions yielded three primary findings related to the boundary-spanning behaviors used by urban 4-H youth educators. (1) What strategies do urban 4-H youth educators use to navigate resistance from both the urban community and the rural-oriented Cooperative Extension system?

Knowledge and information gathered by boundary spanners engaging with outlying communities to structure relationships, initiatives, programs, and collaborations illuminated the complexity of communication between organizations and external clients. This study demonstrates how this subculture of self-directing urban youth educators uses informal learning to manage internal and external resistance individually and within self-formed communities of practice or interest groups. (2) What behaviors do urban 4-H youth educators use to span boundaries for the Cooperative Extension system and for working within the system? Demands on mature organizations require the development of competencies among boundary-spanning actors to successfully convey information and resources to and receive them from external environments *(Scott, 1998)*. Four boundary-spanning behaviors—assessing, engaging, reformulating, and advocating—were categorized in the David adaptation of the community-based problem solver quadrant of the Weerts and Sandmann *(2010)* university–community engagement model (see Figure 3). These behaviors link the sponsoring organization and the outlying audience. Study findings showed that outlying boundary-spanning actors successfully used strategies to receive information that informed their practice as urban youth educators and to act on behalf of the Cooperative Extension system. (3) What is the impact at the individual, organizational, and national policy levels of action research related to boundary-spanning behaviors of community-based, urban 4-H youth educators? Identification and acknowledgment of boundary-spanning behaviors used by urban 4-H youth educators hold potential for learning at individual, organizational, and national policy levels. This study also found that boundary-spanning behaviors can inform policies related to program development, staff development, hiring procedures, and performance evaluation procedures and that reflective practice serves as individual professional development and potential organizational learning.

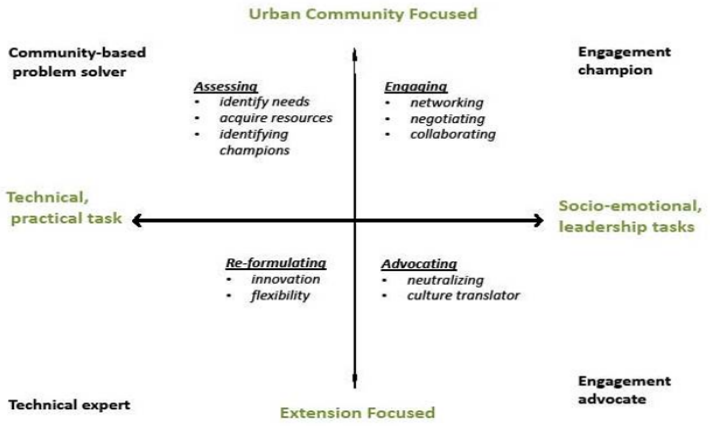

Figure 3. Outlying youth educators as community-based problem solvers. David adaptation of Weerts and Sandmann (*2001*) University–Community Engagement Boundary-Spanning Roles at Public Research Universities model.

Research Significance

"There are no cows in the city." "City kids think eggs come from the back of the grocery store." "4-H is about cows and cookin'." "The only cows in the city are on the Chick-fil-A billboards." These remarks made by opponents of urban programming are meant to imply that organizational resources should not be wasted on urban youth. Ironically, such comments from opponents make the case for including urban youth in the programming circle to advance awareness of the state's agriculture, agricultural industries, and food sources.

This study exposes the results of the failure to take into account fundamental programming differences despite the organization's rich history of program development and delivery. The traditional delivery model of Cooperative Extension and the land-grant system is facing both external and internal pressure to develop tailored programs and delivery modes consistent with audience needs. Conversely, there are also counter pressures from Cooperative Extension constituents who argue that in an era of limited economic resources, the organization should remain focused on its core agricultural development and delivery modes.

This study yielded a profile of current community engagement boundary spanners, particularly in urban contexts, and an analysis of their characteristics and practices. It identified boundary-spanning strengths and weaknesses within an organization. This

information is valuable for informing state and national organizational policy regarding the selection, support, and professional development of boundary spanners as community engagement actors. More broadly, it provides insights into effectively leading, institutionalizing, and sustaining engagement. Further, it informs the literature on boundary spanning, agency, and innovation and change models and theories in higher education.

Overall, this study demonstrates the need for future studies that not only explore behaviors but also investigate more deeply the level of acceptance/adaptability—or lack thereof—at the organizational level and the impact of characterizing boundary-spanning behaviors on improving practice in urban communities, contributing useful data to the existing knowledge base on organizational learning.

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The Engaged Community College: Supporting the Institutionalization of Engagement Through Collaborative Action Inquiry

Jennifer W. Purcell

Abstract

The purpose of this action research study was to explore how community colleges increase their capacity for community engagement. Faculty and staff members who were identified as community engagement leaders within a public community college participated in a series of interventions to improve community engagement practices within the college. The study produced 4 significant findings for community engagement practices. First, distributed leadership to advance community engagement is derived from college employees' and community partners' boundary-spanning behaviors. Second, the creation and extension of communication channels among multiple stakeholder groups for community engagement parallels the advancement of an institution's community engagement agenda. Third, authentic engagement exists in various degrees throughout distinct stages of institutionalization, reflecting the unique contexts and stakeholder interests involved. Fourth, collaborative action inquiry as a method of professional and organizational development utilizes existing expertise among college employees, strengthens internal networks, and supports the institutionalization of engagement. These findings substantiate the necessary integration of theory and practice in community engagement in higher education.

Conceptual Framework

In order to effect change at the organizational level, individual and group-level learning is necessary *(Watkins, 2000)*. Through interventions cocreated by the researcher and the study stakeholders at the college, participants engaged in double-loop learning that created conditions for second-order change within the college *(Argyris, 1997; Burke, 2008; Torbert, 2004)*. Argyris and Schon *(1978)* suggested that organizational learning occurs in modes influenced by underlying assumptions of the learner. As a method of organizational learning, Coghlan *(2006)* argued that action research supports development of individual learning and practice throughout an organization.

This study was designed to impact first-, second-, and third-person practice through action research and collaborative action inquiry. First-person inquiry-practice enabled participants in the collaborative action inquiry group to engage in self-reflection that yielded self-learning in action as it related to their community engagement practice. The college's organizational structures and activities that emerged from the collaborative action inquiry represent third-person knowledge generated through the collaborative action inquiry. This knowledge generation in the first, second, and third person ultimately results in organization-level change through advancements in the college's pursuit of the institutionalization of engagement.

Kimberly and Nielsen *(1975)* suggested that such change occurs in three orders: first order, second order, and third order. First-order change involves a targeted subunit of the organization. Second-order change has a broader impact beyond the initial target but remains within the subunit. Third-order change occurs when the success of an intervention specific to the initial target within the subunit has organization-wide influence. In this study, second-order change was evidenced by enhanced infrastructure to support the institutionalization of engagement.

Methodology

The action research methodology for this research study created an opportunity to examine how an organization responds to external and internal forces while attempting to enhance its learning related to a specific topic *(Coghlan & Brannick, 2010)*. In this case, the college sought to institutionalize community engagement, which necessitates organizational knowledge of community engagement *(Driscoll, 2008)*. Inherent to the institutionalization process is individual and organizational learning necessary to develop the capacity for community engagement. This study examined organizational learning during a change process including targeted learning interventions to facilitate and guide the direction of change within the organization. These interventions are informed by the continuous action research cycles included in the design of the study. Based on preliminary data collection within the college and a review of the literature, the study's research questions were defined as follows:

- What are the characteristics of leadership for community engagement within the community college?

- Who informs decision making regarding community engagement with the community college?
- How does the community partner voice inform decision making among community engagement leaders?
- How does the informal service leader voice inform decision making among senior leaders at the college?
- What impact does collaborative action inquiry have on individual and organizational change and the community college's learning for engagement?

Findings and Analysis

Data were collected via interviews with community engagement leaders, college leaders, and community partners. Field notes, researcher memos, and document review were also sources of data.

Leadership for Community Engagement

Four themes related to the characteristics of leaders for community engagement within the college were identified through data analysis. First, leadership is distributed throughout the college and has historically been isolated within informal groups and individuals. Second, these isolated pockets of leadership exhibited boundary-spanning characteristics that included individual expertise related to community engagement as well as personal commitment to community engagement. Third, changes in senior leadership at the college occur regularly, which requires that remaining leaders be adaptive to these changes. Finally, community engagement leaders at the college share views on an optimal leadership model for community engagement that is representative, has a centralized structure, and includes formal channels of communication.

Decision Making for Community Engagement

The study revealed that decision making for community engagement includes numerous stakeholders' voices and occurs through an informal decision-making process. Community engagement leaders and community partners inform decisions for community engagement; however, their inclusion had been inconsistent because the channels of communication for these voices in the decision-making process are informal. As the study progressed, decision making for engagement became a collaborative, proactive process among community engagement leaders.

Collaborative Action Inquiry's Impact on Organizational Learning for Community Engagement

The action research study produced two significant impacts on the college. First, it facilitated the development of a community of practice around community engagement. Community engagement and its leadership existed in isolated, informal pockets throughout the college, and the collaborative action inquiry intervention brought these dispersed leaders together to define a common mission and set of goals for community engagement at the college. Second, action research methodology provided a process by which the community engagement leaders and college leaders could recognize and respond to opportunities for organizational growth for community engagement with formal communication channels.

Significance to the Field

This study produced four significant conclusions on capacity building for community engagement. First, distributed leadership to advance community engagement is derived from college employees' and community partners' boundary-spanning behaviors. Leadership for community engagement is not encapsulated in a single individual or office. Instead, leadership is distributed throughout the organization and within the community through community partners. Further, this distributed leadership leverages boundary-spanning traits including enhanced communication skills, individuals' connections to multiple contexts internal and external to their institution, and serving as an information gatekeeper between two contexts *(Tushman & Scanlan, 1981).* Second, the creation and extension of communication channels among multiple stakeholder groups for community engagement parallels the advancement of an institution's community engagement agenda. Colleges and universities are complex organizations that require extensive communication channels internal and external to the institution in order to advance an organization-wide agenda.

Third, authentic engagement exists in various degrees throughout distinct stages of institutionalization, reflecting the unique contexts and stakeholder interests involved. Best practices for authentic community engagement may be reflected at varying levels throughout the institutionalization process depending on unique organizational context and situational factors. Such seemingly inconsistent indicators are learning opportunities for enhanced organizational awareness and capacity building. Fourth,

collaborative action inquiry as a method of professional and organizational development utilizes existing expertise among college employees, strengthens internal networks, and supports the institutionalization of engagement. The process, though not a panacea for organizational change, is a proven effective means by which colleges and universities can build capacity for sustained change.

Figure 1 illustrates the introduction of a learning intervention to support the advancement of community engagement when distributed leadership is apparent within the college. This learning model for distributed leadership shows how learning and change are connected in relation to cycles of developing leadership behaviors and structures that emerge through collaborative action inquiry. The model builds upon Coghlan's *(2006)* model of first-, second-, and third-person learning. Multiple cycles of inquiry and action are represented in the model in addition to the progression of learning for the first, second, and third person. The model illustrates the influence of individual, group, and organization on organizational change. The model also illustrates the influence of organizational change on learning within an organization. Through iterative cycles of action inquiry, leadership behaviors are honed; thus, service engagement leaders have a stronger influence on the institutionalization of engagement.

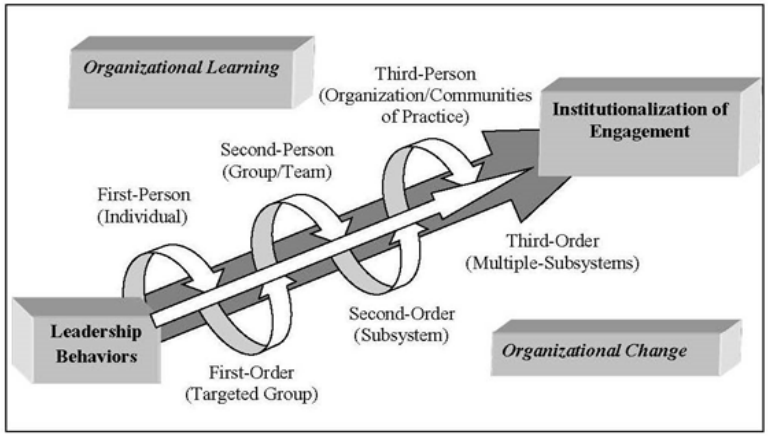

Figure 1. Learning model for distributed leadership of community engagement.

Conclusion

The study illustrated how collaborative action inquiry supports organization-wide change and leverages existing resources within community colleges. The study also identified leadership characteristics needed to support community engagement. The case explored channels of communication within and external to the community college that influenced decision making related to community engagement. Furthermore, this study documented the real-world response to such interventions and offered recommendations for practice and for further research based on the learning that emerged through the action research cycles in the study. In addition to providing documentation of a real-world case of the institutionalization of engagement, this study provided evidence of applied theory in the community college environment. The case illustrated how individual and group learning support organization change related to community engagement. In sum, this research study yielded findings on practice and theory and provided a basis for further research on the institutionalization of community engagement within the community college sector.

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The Exploration of Community Boundary Spanners in University–Community Partnerships

Katherine Rose Adams

Abstract

In university–community partnerships, boundary spanners can flexibly traverse historically divided lines to increase access to resources and build upon reciprocal partnerships. Previous research has examined the roles of boundary spanners but only from the perspectives of the institutional partners. The purpose of this dissertation study was to examine the characteristics, roles, and motivations of community boundary spanners in university–community partnerships. A qualitative instrumental multiple case study was conducted with community partners of a university–community partnership. Findings led to a community boundary spanning adaptation of the Weerts and Sandmann (*2010*) institutional model. The Framework for Community Boundary Spanners in Engaged Partnerships identifies four distinct roles community boundary spanners may play. This study provides institutional partners with the tools and techniques to better locate and engage community boundary spanners through partner identification and development.

Introduction

Boundary spanners are leaders who are able to bring people together across traditional boundaries to work toward a common goal. In university–community partnerships, boundary spanners can flexibly traverse historically divided lines to increase access to resources to solve problems and to build upon reciprocal partnerships *(Miller, 2008; Sandmann & Fear, 2001–2002; Weerts & Sandmann, 2008)*. Previous research has examined the roles of boundary spanners; however, it has done so primarily from the perspectives of the institutional or university partners *(Weerts & Sandmann, 2010)*. But what about the roles of community members engaged in university–community partnerships, especially those actively engaged in boundary spanning behaviors? Given community-engaged scholarship's disproportionate focus on the institutional or university partner, this study was performed to examine the characteristics, roles, and motivations of community boundary spanners in university–community partnerships.

The Research Design

Friedman and Podolny *(1992)*, early researchers of the topic, noted two main functions of boundary spanning. The first was the ability to convey influence between constituents and partners through negotiating power and balance between the institution and community partners working toward mutual objectives. The second function was to best represent the perceptions, expectations, and ideas of each side to the other through educational functions to promote mutual understanding among partners. From Friedman and Podolny's concepts of differentiation of roles, Weerts and Sandmann *(2010)* developed a conceptual framework of boundary spanning, examining characteristics of task orientation and social closeness. Although the Weerts and Sandmann framework identified characteristics of boundary spanners affiliated with the institutional partner, their framework guided this research to help identify salient qualities of the community boundary spanners in an attempt to create a similar framework focused on the boundary spanning roles in the community. Toward that end, the study was guided by the following research questions: (1) What are the characteristics of community members actively engaged in university–community partnerships? (2) What roles do community members play as boundary spanners in university–community partnerships? (3) What are the motivations of community boundary spanners? (4) What is the relationship between the phases of partnership and the characteristics, roles, and motivations of community partners in university–community partnerships?

This qualitative research study utilized a multiple case study approach *(Stake, 2006)*. Ten community boundary spanners were identified by institutional partners from three county sites of a statewide university–community partnership called the Archway Partnership *(http://www.archwaypartnership.uga.edu)*. The three counties chosen represented diverse phases as an alumnus, evolving, or new Archway Partnership site. The identified individuals were reviewed as individual cases, and the characteristics, roles, and motivations of the participant engaged in the partnership were investigated for each case. Data were collected through individual interviews with these community boundary spanners, as well as through two institutional stakeholder partner focus groups made up of Archway administrators and programmers. A review of relevant documents, such as Archway publications and meeting minutes, was employed to provide context and shared public knowledge. The descriptions of the Archway

Partnership and the three counties selected for this study provided context to the sites of each case.

Interview and focus group data were analyzed using a framework-specific coding scheme based on the Weerts and Sandmann (*2010*) framework as well as using constant comparison analysis (*Glaser & Strauss, 1987*). Initially, interview transcripts were reviewed for indicators of task orientation and social closeness. In a second round of analysis, the coding utilized research question responses in which data collection reflected characteristics, roles, and motivations of the cases. Phase of partnership and its impact on boundary spanners' capabilities was also examined.

Findings

Characteristics, Roles, and Motivations

The multiple case study analysis found that community boundary spanners, most prominently, were communicative, sought and understood multiple perspectives, and possessed a visionary quality. Their ability to communicate reflected well-developed listening and language skills that helped community boundary spanners gain trust and credibility. Seeking out, understanding, and representing multiple viewpoints gave spanners empathy and informed their decisions for allocating strengths into projects. Being able to consider a broad perspective and being forward-thinking were noted visionary characteristics of community boundary spanners. Common characteristics of community boundary spanners demonstrated the ability to advocate for cohesion and to plan for the future.

Membership, formal positions, and roles in professional and civic organizations gave community boundary spanners visibility. According to Archway staff, they had located their early collaborators within the community partnerships through such roles. Community boundary spanners typically held senior or executive-level roles in organizations or boards and consequently were in positions of influence over change and resources. Professional titles and responsibilities created roles for spanners that were transportable to multiple arenas. Other roles were imparted by the community or personally. Participants aware of their positionality ascribed to themselves overarching roles such as resource broker, relationship builder, or community leader.

Although characteristics or roles might be externally identifiable by institutional partners, motivations were more difficult to

assess. Community boundary spanners' motivations ranged from personal motives to community-focused intentions. Personal and professional motivations to engage in community boundary spanning behaviors included enhancing business relationships, increasing connections to resources, and engaging the competition. Examples of more community-oriented motivations included sense of service or generationality.

Finally, it was found that phase of partnership had no bearing on the boundary spanners' characteristics, roles, and motivation. It can be conjectured that these boundary spanners' roles and characteristics existed before the county Archway boards were composed. In essence, these elements were stable through the duration of the partnerships.

Framework for Community Boundary Spanners in Engaged Partnerships

These findings were mapped into a Framework for Community Boundary Spanners in Engaged Partnerships (Figure 1).

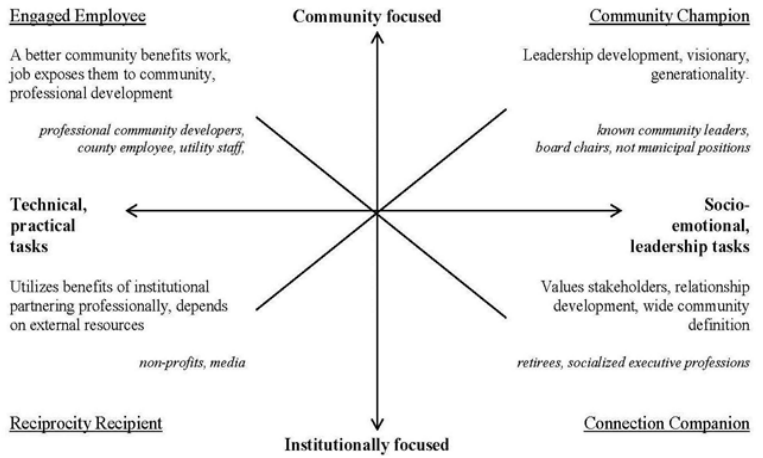

Figure 1. The framework for community boundary spanners in engaged partnerships.

This framework expands the Weerts and Sandmann model *(2010)* by recognizing boundary spanners in the community. It identifies four distinct roles community boundary spanners may play: engaged employee, reciprocity recipient, connection companion, and community champion. The engaged employee is closely aligned in their community as a function of their professional responsibilities, which also relates to a more technical task orientation. Close proximity to external partners offers the

reciprocity recipient increased access to resources and a greater likelihood of being recognized and credited for their practical task abilities. The connection companion is aligned with the institutional vertices of the framework because of the increased connections that they are able to make by also being open to relationship building in systems outside the community. Community champions are community-focused and are engaged in the most diverse involvements as a result of being proud of their surroundings.

Conclusion

The overarching analysis of this research yielded three conclusions. First, boundary spanning capacities of community partners were derived from motivations regarding roles as previously highlighted in the Weerts and Sandmann *(2010)* boundary spanning model. Second, from the community perspective, the institution was represented by the institutional boundary spanner. Finally, those identified as boundary spanners came to the partnership with developed boundary spanning capacities; participation was not a boundary spanning development effort.

This study holds implications for those in adult education; community outreach and, in particular, higher education partners. Through the use of the boundary spanning frameworks for assessment and through development of skills distinct to the Framework for Community Boundary Spanners in Engaged Partnerships' quadrants, this study provides institutional partners with tools and techniques to better locate and engage community boundary spanners through partner identification and development. A striking arena needing further investigation is the lack of diversity in community boundary spanners and the implications for their identification and broader base of participation.

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The Tie That Binds: Leadership and Liberal Arts Institutions' Civic Engagement Commitment in Rural Communities

Hunter Phillips Goodman

Abstract

Community boundary spanners create ties that bind the campus and its surrounding region for reciprocal relationships. Using community boundary spanning literature as a conceptual framework, this study went beyond existing research on public and 4-year comprehensive universities to examine how university leadership at rural, private liberal arts institutions can more deeply integrate civic engagement into institutional priorities and be more responsive to community needs. A qualitative multicase study was conducted to explore how leaders of rural, private liberal arts institutions and their community partners view civic engagement relative to the college's mission. The study examined university leaders' and community stakeholders' perceptions of civic engagement at 5 liberal arts institutions in the Bonner Scholars Program network. The conceptual framework in Weerts *(2005)* and Weerts and Sandmann *(2010)* was developed into a foundation for university leaders at liberal arts institutions to embed and develop community engagement into their institutions' culture and ethos.

Introduction

In private liberal arts institutions, leaders who can connect and unite campus with community to strengthen the surrounding area are community boundary spanners. Boundary spanners navigate poverty and local challenges to strengthen quality of life, improve access to resources, and build upon reciprocal partnerships (*Weerts & Sandmann, 2008*). Previous research has examined the roles of boundary spanners; however, it has done so from the perspectives of the institutional roles or university partners *(Weerts, 2005; Weerts & Sandmann, 2010)*. Weerts and Sandmann's *(2010)* conceptual framework of community boundary spanners focused on individuals within the institution who played key connecting roles for its community outreach. The themes in this study expanded the conceptual framework beyond individuals to include the college as a boundary spanner within its community. This study looked at private liberal arts colleges as institutional boundary spanners that

connect their campuses and communities through partnerships, resources, and quality of life.

The Research Design

The study was guided by five research questions focused on mission, action, and motivation: (1) How does institutional leadership inform community partners' perceptions about institutional commitment to civic engagement? In turn, how do the community partners' perceptions of community needs inform institutional leadership in civic engagement? (2) How does the university's leadership keep the college involved through civic engagement? (3) How has including community engagement in the strategic documents helped the institution? (4) How does university leadership utilize community engagement as a leadership strategy? (5) What motivates university leaders to integrate civic engagement into their leadership?

Through qualitative case study research, a "bounded system" was explored by involving multiple forms of content *(Creswell, 1998, p. 61)*. In this study, the Bonner Foundation network of schools was selected because these colleges and universities had a willingness and capacity to implement community engagement; in addition, as an aspect of participation in the Bonner Scholars Program, their campuses had a civically driven leadership development model. To explore how university leaders and their community partners perceived civic engagement and how institutional artifacts related to such perceptions, interviews were conducted, and various university documents were analyzed. From each of the five universities, three leaders at each institution (n = 15) and two of each institution's community partners (n = 10) were interviewed for a total of 25 interviews. To gain a deeper understanding of the leaders' perception of civic engagement, the strategic plan, mission, vision, and financial documents of their institutions were analyzed. This use of multiple sources in the case study enabled triangulation and further validation of the data explored (*Yin, 2009*).

Findings

This research study provided three primary findings about the role of liberal arts colleges as community boundary spanners through engagement for their surrounding rural communities. First, the college's leadership for civic engagement was evident in the strategic documents and actions of college leaders. However, it was not evident through the overall financial budget documents.

The leaders' personal motivations along with institutional mission affected the college's role as a community boundary spanner. Second, the college as a resource for its surrounding community served an important boundary spanning role for building partnerships. Finally, the college's leadership as a cultural and educational venue added to the quality of life in its surrounding rural community.

Private liberal arts institutions have a unique opportunity for engaged leadership that collectively strengthens campus and community and develops students as global, civically invested citizens. Three thematic findings emerged from the data: college leadership for civic engagement, college as community resource, and college leadership for community quality of life. These themes capture the role an institution and its leadership play in civic engagement.

College Leadership for Civic Engagement

In Weerts (*2005*), Weerts and Sandmann *(2010)*, and this study, civic engagement is defined by relevance not to the college's mission but to partnership with the community that strengthens it equally with the college. In other words, the benefit is not slanted toward the campus or improving students but toward uplifting the community as well. In the cases studied, community partners all saw the colleges and their leaders as positively impacting their community. In every case, the students were the tangible example of the college's commitment, though community partners gave examples of presidents' personal investment of time locally through their presence. Liberal arts institutions must clearly define their own brand of education that prepares students to be responsible, successful citizens in a larger education landscape. The change in the financial landscape has also led to a need for innovative leadership, planning, and action. Each president asked why civic engagement should be a top priority amidst competing needs. They emphasized how critical the "why civic engagement?" question is rather than "how is civic engagement institutionalized?" for presidents today who must decide where their institution invests its financial, strategic, and political capital. This research provides five examples of engagement in a rural liberal arts setting. It highlights the unique challenges for rural communities.

College as Community Resource

The colleges were an inherent resource to the community, giving access to financial and human capacity. There was aware-

ness for both local residents and university leaders that community challenges existed. For community members, the college was a local resource for addressing these issues. One community partner described the institution's "willingness to have folks get out in the community and experience the community—that mindset . . . [as] a big plus for the community." Community partners articulated the college's role as collaborative partner, instigator, facilitator, and champion. There was clear appreciation for this role. Another community partner described "a mentoring program, tutoring program, teen program. . . . When I think of the college, I see it as a collaborative effort of education."

However, the institutions were not always seen positively as instigators of change. In two of the five cases, community partners described ways the perception of campus and community partnerships could be improved. One partner noted the tension between college students' interest in changing the community and its desire to make community-owned decisions. One community member described students' desire to make immediate changes in the community before it was ready; another member described the disparity between the campus and community. She acknowledged that despite the college's efforts, some members would always see the college as "different than" the community or as "unapproachable." However, students' service by providing on-campus programming for the community had broken down many of those barriers.

This study expands Weerts's *(2005)* framework by looking at the role of community as resource. Weerts and Sandmann's *(2010)* research looked at the role of university leaders and internal champions as community boundary spanners. This research expands the study to look at the college's role as boundary spanner and resource for economic and community growth in a rural context.

College Leadership for Community Quality of Life

Community partners and university leaders emphasized the role of the college as a venue for arts, culture, and enhanced community of life. The colleges' offerings of entertainment, education, and arts not accessible through other venues in the rural area strengthened quality of life. Though this topic was not inherent in the research questions, the colleges' role in community life was evident. This was an unexpected discovery given the research questions' focus toward civic engagement. The colleges provided access to cultural events and attracted students who brought differing

opinions and championed conversations about community change. For community partners, this access was a form of civic engagement and partnership between campus and community. One of the five cases focused its role on engagement through enhancing community quality of life. The college saw its role as a convener and connector of resources to enhance the surrounding downtown. This particular example linked to the president's leadership through his passion for urban design, community walkability, and locally driven quality of life. In that case, college leadership and community quality of life were intertwined. The college's strategic plan supported this linkage through an emphasis on developing the community around the college. The case raised questions about who benefits from the community development. Those interviewed spoke of the dual benefit of downtown development, though the strategic planning document emphasized its relation to the college's growth. Community quality of life builds on Weerts's *(2005)* and Weerts and Sandmann's *(2010)* frameworks given their emphasis on institutional leadership. This research expanded their studies by viewing civic engagement as community quality of life. It found connectivity between the rural placements of the communities studied and their proximity to liberal arts institutions.

Additionally, the study raised an important question about civic engagement for college presidents. The fourth question asked leaders to define their approach to civic engagement as a leadership strategy. This provided the most interesting dialogue in the interviews, for it led to a greater question for presidents and leaders. If presidents use civic engagement as a leadership strategy, they must ask why civic engagement is important. They must wrestle with why civic engagement deserves political and financial capital over other institutional priorities. Presidents and their institutions must define how civic engagement distinguishes their liberal arts curriculum from career-based preparation at 4-year public institutions. For some of the cases, engagement provided a tangible way liberal arts institutions could survive in an existing career-based higher education climate. This perspective shaped the vision for the college and its leadership strategy for continued growth.

Conclusion

Rural communities and their corresponding higher education institutions have a unique tie that binds their sustainability and growth. When the institution thrives, the community benefits and when the community thrives, the university and its students, faculty, and staff benefit. It is true that institutions cannot altruistically

support their communities without attention to their own survival and growth. Private liberal arts institutions are businesses that must sustain and increase their revenue in the face of competitive factors in the higher education marketplace. They must compete for students, faculty, and resources in an arena focused on career-driven preparation and readiness. However, case studies of private and public higher education institutions provide examples of win-win scenarios of the institution as a boundary spanner with its community through its role as college as leadership, college as community resource, and college leadership for community quality of life. The institution's leadership in the community, as carried out by the president, can serve as a collegewide boundary spanner when linked with the institutional mission and strategic direction.

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PRACTICE STORIES

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A Tale of Two Countries

Susan Malone Back, Steven Rogers, and Jiaqi Li

Abstract

A model is presented for coordinated community planning to address multiple service needs in two countries. Two communities, one in western Texas and one in the United Kingdom, found that despite the considerable efforts of multiple organizations, the local social, educational, and health services remained uncoordinated. Furthermore, there was no unified data collection to enable determination of which efforts or which combination of efforts was successful. In each community concerned individuals concluded that residents would have to take an active role in identifying needs and solutions in order for the community to revitalize itself. Both communities made use of a theoretical model based on community action/participatory research to develop a new structure to implement coordinated programs. The article includes planning templates that provide a structure for communities to develop their own coordinated response to local needs.

Introduction

Tale of Two Countries was a participatory workshop describing how two communities used community action/participatory research to address health and social services. In the process of comparing the United Kingdom (U.K.) "Localisation" initiative and the United States Department of Education "Promise Neighborhood" initiative, the authors encouraged workshop participants to generate their own community approaches with the aid of workshop handouts. In this article we describe the two community projects and reproduce the templates used by workshop attendees.

Thus, the present article serves two purposes:

a. comparison of the processes in the two original communities and

b. presentation of planning templates that can be modified to accommodate individual community characteristics.

According to the U.S. Department of Education *(2012),* a Promise Neighborhood is both a place and a strategy. It is first and foremost a defined community with needs, but also with the poten-

tial to meet those needs. It is also a strategy that brings together resources from within the neighborhood as well as from other sources. A Promise Neighborhood strategy facilitates the active participation of neighborhood residents in community capacity-building and coordinated service delivery.

The tale of Lubbock, Texas and Norfolk, U.K. is one of two communities in two countries that differ in geography and culture. Each community, however, could be considered a Promise Neighborhood. Lubbock, in rural west Texas, is largely isolated, located within one of the world's leading cotton-growing areas. The county of Norfolk consists of its capital, Norwich, and a number of small market towns distributed across the area. In both communities, circumstances ultimately resulted in responsibility for services being focused at a local level while becoming more coordinated and effective. Service providers once operating in isolation stepped out of their respective comfort zones and engaged in collaboration across disciplines.

The work in Norfolk has been directed at addressing the challenges faced by adults with a learning disability—that is, those with an Intelligence Quotient (IQ) below 70—and helping them to be included as part of their community so they can enjoy the same freedoms and rights as others in their society. The focus in west Texas has been on schools as the center of community revitalization.

Lubbock, Texas

Lubbock, a community of 233,740, although the most populous city in northwest Texas, is surrounded by hundreds of miles of cotton fields and ranchland. Although the presence of several colleges and universities contributes to a robust economy, the neighborhood known as "East Lubbock" has not fully realized the area's economic growth. As a result of the mechanization of the cotton industry many years ago, a large number of African Americans looking for work migrated to Lubbock where, by city ordinance, they were required to reside within certain boundaries (*Amin, 1989*). Elementary and secondary schools were segregated. Today the area includes more Hispanic (49.2%) than African American (28.5%) residents, and both groups have developed strong cultural traditions and supports in the form of churches, community organizations, school alumni groups, and volunteer work.

Norfolk County, U.K.

Norfolk in the East of England has a population of 862,000. Its capital city, Norwich, has a population of 120,000. Norfolk's ethnic makeup is predominantly White British or White Irish (91.2%). From 2004 to 2009, people from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups increased from 4.9% (39,800 people) of the Norfolk population to 8.8% (74,900 people). Norfolk's land area is approximately 95% rural, including smaller towns and their fringes, villages, and hamlets, with these areas including a little over half its population. Thus, although most of Norfolk looks rural, nearly half its residents live in an environment that can be classified as urban. Almost 47,400 Norfolk residents live in areas classified as among the 10% most deprived in England. However, for most people, Norfolk is very safe. It has one of the lowest crime rates in England *(Norfolk County Council, 2012)*.

Despite its past stable demographics, Norfolk is experiencing several new trends that pose challenges and increase costs: (a) an increasing client load, (b) an aging population, and (c) an influx of legal European Union immigrants with different cultures and languages.

New Opportunities

Although both communities recognized the need for coordination of services and for community involvement in decision making, the impetus for change differed. Texas Tech University received a $24.5 million grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Education to implement a revitalization program in East Lubbock with schools at the center of the effort. In the United Kingdom, a national "Localisation" initiative encouraged communities to review existing services and involve residents in improving services for the purpose of serving adults with developmental disabilities.

Previous segregation in Lubbock had left its mark: poor school performance, inadequate housing, lack of stores and businesses, poor health, crime, and drugs. Nevertheless, the community has many strengths: church life, community organizations, and schools as a resource for family needs. Documentation of these strengths and challenges qualified East Lubbock for receipt of a Promise Neighborhood grant.

In the case of the Norfolk initiative, changes in demographics coupled with cutbacks in government spending provided the impetus for the community collaboration. An aging population

and immigration from European Union countries called for an increase in potentially costly services.

The Norfolk community determined that there was a need for capacity building, beginning with an understanding of the community resources that already existed and a strategy for enabling the community to support itself. In East Lubbock, project staff decided to attend meetings of local groups and conduct an inventory of community needs as well as strengths and resources that would contribute to neighborhood revitalization.

Theoretical Model

A theoretical model based on community action/participatory research was used in each community. Mills *(2005)* noted that many community revitalization projects tend to focus on a specific shortcoming in the community. Residents come together, motivated by anger about the issue. Such an oppositional attitude about a single issue makes it difficult for groups to collaborate in a sustained effort for an integrated approach to change. An alternative method is to work on building the capacity of local residents to take a stronger leadership role in collaborative community development. Likewise, Stagner and Duran *(1997)* emphasized capacity building in comprehensive community initiatives that encompass a variety of programs, including health care, social services, education, and housing.

In addition to the need to build capacity, it is also important to focus on coordination of services for revitalization to be successful. Gray *(1989)* defined collaboration as a process in which those with different points of view can explore their differences constructively and seek solutions that supersede their individual perspectives. Amirkhanian and Ahibiby *(2003)* stressed the importance of having each stakeholder take an active role in the process and of encouraging community dialogue in seeking solutions. This emphasis on process has also been noted by Thomson and Perry (2006), who called for involvement of a broad base of constituents and development of a long-range vision. Focusing on outcome-based advocacy has also been cited as a factor in successful community collaboration *(Alexander et al., 2003)*.

Both the East Lubbock and Norfolk approaches required sensitivity to change management principles *(Prochaska, Norcross, & DiClemente, 1994*) whereby new procedures would have to become accepted and incorporated into existing service delivery venues. In addition, both projects required a new structure to implement

the coordinated programs. In each case, the adoption of a localized approach was seen as central to building commitment to integrated service delivery among all potential partners. This course of action involved spanning traditional disciplinary boundaries.

Each community began by identifying available services and resources. The services are here depicted in "King Arthur's Round Table" diagrams in which all partners are seen as valuable contributors. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the Round Tables for the East Lubbock Promise Neighborhood and Norfolk, respectively.

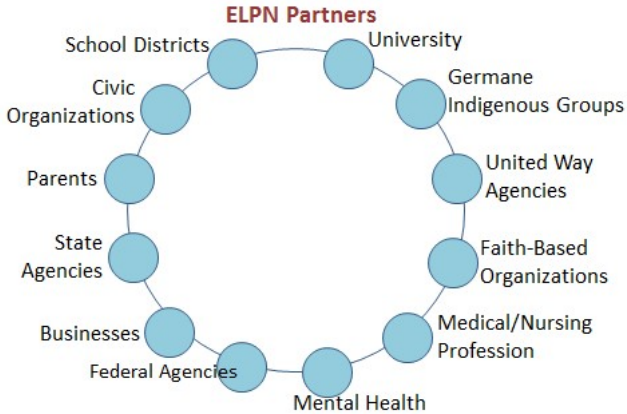

Figure 1. East Lubbock Promise Neighborhood "Round Table" of partners.

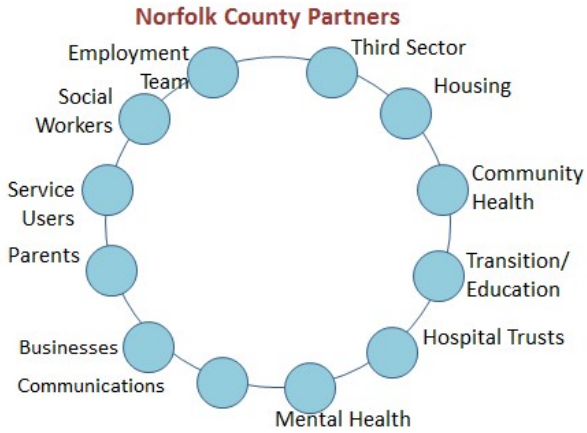

Figure 2. Norfolk County, U.K., "Round Table" of partners.

Workshop participants were invited to enter their own Round Table partners into the template that appears in Figure 3.

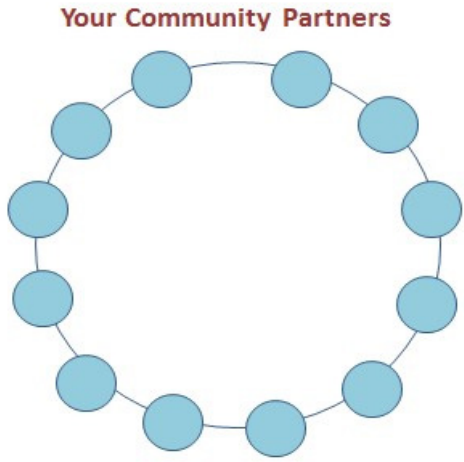

Figure 3. "Round Table" template for workshop participants.

Community Decision-Making Structures and Processes

As a result of the community action/participatory research approach, each community developed decision-making processes and structures that were responsive to local needs and contributed to community capacity-building. Norfolk established a county partnership board, and East Lubbock created a community advisory board.

Norfolk County began by developing five locality groups that reported to a Partnership Board comprising a wide variety of stakeholders, including representatives of adults with a learning disability as well as parent caretakers. The approach was based on the U.K. "Valuing People Now" policy and an agenda that facilitated communities' taking the lead in finding local solutions in coordination with the Norfolk Clinical Commissioning Group (NCCG) and the National Health Service (NHS). This coordinated framework enabled service recipients to take an active role in planning their services *(Norfolk County Council, 2013).*

In East Lubbock, university administration of the project was mediated by (a) an executive governing board coordinated by Texas Tech University, consisting of administrators from businesses and the local school district, and (b) a community advisory board consisting of residents, parents, pastors, and local community leaders. The latter board meets monthly, makes suggestions, has approval power for all potential services, reviews results, and sets new directions when necessary. Management for each of the components of the project—health, early learning, family and community services, academics, and service-learning—is shared by a Texas Tech University designee and a community volunteer.

The resulting process in Norfolk included an overarching partnership board of key stakeholders meeting four times a year to oversee strategy and unblock problems. Four subgroups of the partnership board also meet specifically to examine health, housing, employment, and "Our Lives" (the development of community services to enhance day-to-day living, ensure personal budgets and self-directed works, reduce hate crime, and improve local community facilities). The county is divided into five geographic localities, and each locality group meets to discuss local issues and to plan the development of services with local stakeholders. Examples of good progress being made and the problems that need to be overcome are shared at the partnership board meetings. All meetings include people with a learning disability who use services, and advocacy support is provided to enable active participation. Family caretakers are also present at each meeting to ensure their views are represented.

In both communities, the overarching goals of the programs were generated by national government funding sources. The means by which those goals were to be met were decided at the local level. Promise Neighborhood objectives nationwide focused on a broad range of outcomes, including

- medical home for children;
- children enrolled in early learning programs;
- child development;
- school performance, graduation, and postsecondary education completion;
- family involvement in children's learning; and
- school safety.

The Norfolk outcomes focused on

- independent living,
- housing and employment opportunities,
- advocacy for legal and civil rights,
- education for youth over 16 years of age,
- decreased admissions to health and mental health facilities, and
- responsive public transport.

Both the East Lubbock and Norfolk communities made use of data collected on effectiveness of services in an ongoing process of improving coordination and service delivery. Progress in Norfolk is monitored through focus groups, use of a "Performance Dashboard," and quarterly meetings of the County Partnership Board. Progress in East Lubbock is monitored by Texas Tech University via project management software, creation of software that merges databases from differing sources (school, health, community services), and regular reporting to a community advisory board.

Workshop participants were shown a diagram of the Norfolk structure within which this process takes place (see Figure 4) and then invited to design a corresponding structure for their community (see Figure 5).

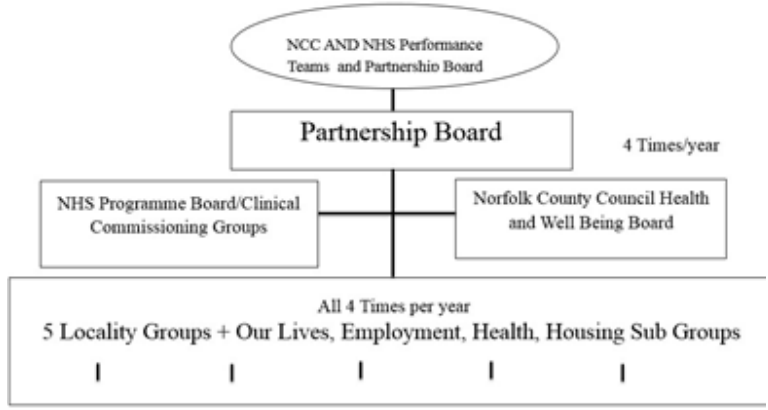

Figure 4. Norfolk structure for community decision-making.

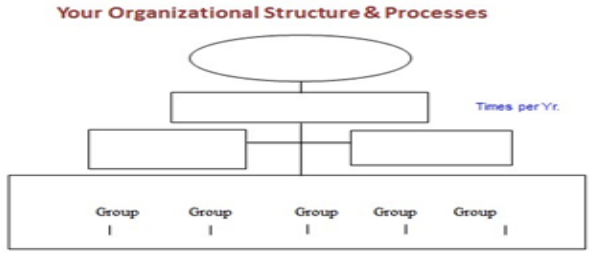

Figure 5. Community decision-making template for workshop participants.

Coordination of Services

The Lubbock approach has resulted in coordination among numerous participants: public and private health care institutions, volunteer mentors, mental health service providers, a local supermarket chain, churches, libraries, and Texas Tech University students and faculty (e.g., nutritionists, exercise specialists, visual and performing artists, the School of Nursing). An example of health care service coordination is the extending of public and private clinic hours to evenings and weekends.

The Norfolk approach resulted in a coordinated response among the following: caretakers; social services; health care services; mental health services; local employers, including hospitals and a supermarket chain; advocates; and public transportation. As an example of coordination, a local public transport agency invited clients to help train bus drivers to understand and accommodate those with special needs. Local businesses increased their employment of individuals with disabilities.

Discussion

The "Tale of Two Countries" workshop focused on maximizing results through coordination of services. Both the East Lubbock and Norfolk communities are in the process of demonstrating that when services are coordinated and measured, the whole adds up to more than the sum of its parts. Quality of services is going up while duplication and waste are being minimized. Norfolk has also documented that costs were reduced while quality was improved.

Workshop participants actively engaged in completing templates for their communities, then began to discuss existing and potential interdisciplinary partnerships among themselves. A key theme for all was the need to involve community members

and organizations in the planning process. Participants indicated the templates would be helpful in conceptualizing the process of building comprehensive approaches to service delivery.

Coordinated, community-based efforts involving stakeholders from multiple disciplines and perspectives are an important component of improved services across the spectrum of client groups, cultural regions, and geographic boundaries. In both the United States and the United Kingdom, coordination of services and active participation of community members, including those who receive services, is creating a path to improved services as well as enhanced opportunities for individual growth.

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BOOK REVIEWS

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Whitchurch, C. (2013). *Reconstructing identities in higher education: The rise of third space professionals* (Research Into Higher Education, Society for Research Into Higher Education). London, England: Routledge. 184 pp.

Review by Jeri L. Childers

Reconstructing Identities in Higher Education explores the roles and the identities of professionals in higher education operating in the *third space*, or on the boundaries of traditional areas of professional practices. The third space in our institutions is defined as areas like student life, learning support, and institutional research as well as the areas of research, business, and community partnerships. These roles are increasingly important as universities seek to differentiate themselves in how they create a valuable student experience; ensure student outcomes; and positively impact their local, regional, and global communities and economies through research and engagement.

Whitchurch's research has implications for our understanding of professionals in higher education and organizational structures in modern higher education institutions. She frames professional roles according to four "dispositions"—bounded professionals, cross-boundary professionals, unbounded professionals, and blended professionals—that can be distinguished by their degree of agency within their organizational structure and their affinity to their associated spaces, knowledges, relationships, and legitimacies. The resulting typology forms 16 unique identity categories that can help us understand the context, motivations, and operational behaviors of professionals in complex organizations.

The professionals in the third space are also characterized by their affinity to organizational identity, change, innovation, collaborative skills, and client-centered or partnership-centered approaches to the provision of value within and across the boundaries of organizations. Whitchurch evolves our ways of knowing professional identities from what might have been formerly described as "fringe specialisms" to a spectrum of identities that provide specialist contributions on topics ranging from governance, intellectual property, and commercialization to just-in-time academic support or donor or partner relationship management. By comparing the responses of third space professionals in a variety of case study institutions across Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, Whitchurch found that these new roles and

identities are not necessarily recognized, rewarded, or leveraged appropriately or comparatively across organizations.

In Chapters 1 and 2, Whitchurch explores the third space context, the "insider and outsider voices" *(p. 21)*, the significance of their "in-between spaces" *(p. 21)*, and how these professionals view themselves as managers and leaders. In the study and analysis of the workspace, three types of space emerged: integrated, semi-autonomous, and independent space, each exemplifying various characteristics, individual responses, and institutional activity. The distinctions of the types of spaces illustrates various environments and individual responses to these environments. Interesting was her data analysis contrasting the types of workspace across the Australian, U.K., and U.S. contexts and her hypotheses for variations in individual and organizational behaviors. As I have recently transplanted myself from the United States to Australia, I can testify that these contrasts are evident, and her explanations seem plausible and worth more study.

Any analysis of individuals and work contexts and their related rewards, challenges, and opportunities must include an exploration of career trajectories and career development/management strategies. Whitchurch explores these in Chapter 3 and reveals a list of skills for success in the third space. In Chapter 4, Whitchurch turns to the paradoxes and dilemmas central to the role and identity of third space professionals.

Third space professionals operate in unique and often ambiguous and evolving organizational structures and contexts. In Chapter 5, Whitchurch outlines the connections between professionals and their organizations through the lens of structure and agency *(Giddens, 1991)*. The ability to navigate these contexts with the intention of making a career in higher education was explored in a further typology distinguishing dedicated and portfolio professionals. Dedicated professionals are defined by their devotion to and continuity of careers in higher education; in contrast, portfolio professionals keep career options open and often move in and out of the higher education sector. Whitchurch explores organizational structures, rewards, incentives, professional development, and career paths of these professionals and their workspaces. Whitchurch touches briefly on the trend toward the increasing importance of the third space and the lack of positional power held by professionals in this space, which is relevant for many professionals, particularly in research intensive institutions in the United States and other countries. The changing organizational structures, varying degrees of role legitimization within and across institu-

tions, and trends like the corporatization of higher education will challenge professionals in the third space throughout their careers. Kezar *(2004)* describes these challenges and the corporatization of the management of higher education and its focus on increasing efficiencies, cost effectiveness, and the creation of unilateral change management strategies that lead to the decline of faculty and staff motivation.

Although there are reasons for optimism about the creative space called the third space, there are also associated challenges. Resistance to change is intense. Additionally, the market forces for change are dynamic and can be career changers for third space professionals. Change agents in the third space must be prepared to withstand the challenges facing higher education. In Australian universities, the federal government's tightening of controls over academic activities has simplified and standardized funding allocations almost to the point of leaving innovation in the third space on the sidelines. This corporatization overly focuses on key indicators (i.e., research publications and funding of postgraduate research degree completions) in a way that further marginalizes professionals in the third space by narrowing professional activity into discrete categories and moving to create a tiered system of either "research" or "teaching" institutions *(Neumann & Guthrie, 2002)*. This bifurcation is antithetical to the vision of the university as a fully engaged partner in communities and regions, committed to solving local and global challenges, and runs counter to higher education's traditional public role of contributing to the public good *(Kezar, 2004)*. Whitchurch does not fully address the dynamics of the larger context of higher education for third space professionals.

In Chapter 6, Whitchurch reflects on possible futures of careers and organizational structures in higher education and describes the third space as moving from being considered a territory for fringe groups to being seen as a space to be leveraged for its added value and contributions to experimentation and innovation. That is, it will be viewed as an institutional "yeast" required in the best recipes for the future in higher education.

Although the themes of the book are thoughtfully presented and have the potential to connect to the work of scholars to that of practitioners in the outreach and engagement fields, Whitchurch's framework would be enhanced by situating the concepts of dispositions, typologies, and related career and organizational dynamics within a contemporary view of the community-engaged institution, thus connecting to the work of Weerts and Sandmann *(Sandmann & Weerts, 2008; Weerts & Sandmann, 2010)* and other scholars exploring

the implications of boundary spanning, organizational dynamics and change, and leadership and organizational development in higher education.

The strength of this book is the robust nature of the framework presented and its links to both individual and organizational development at a time when our institutions are changing dramatically. Whitchurch offers a contrasting view on defining professionalism that has implications for the preparation of professionals in higher education and for building innovation and resilience in organizational structures.

The third space is a valuable space for institutional change agents and for nurturing institutional capacity for change. Professionals in the third space are cultural integrators and boundary spanners and bring great value to their networks, projects, and stakeholders. The third space is a test bed for institutional innovation, and institutions will need to attract, retain, reward, manage, and motivate these professionals. Creating intentional strategies for talent management will be important in the future, and more research is required to guide practice and strategy building. Are we preparing third space professionals and the next generation of leaders in higher education to withstand the challenges and to define the future of higher education?

The third space should be invested in and leveraged appropriately as a resource for responsiveness and resilience in our institutions. Understanding this space and maximizing its potential will be a crucial strategy for leaders in higher education. At a time when we are seeing an erosion of academic leadership within our institutions and rapid corporatization the academy, it will be even more important to invest in the third space and thus in a new vision of higher education that balances demands from market forces and the need for serving the public good. This will call for a new form of leadership and organizational structure; clear vision of the future of our institutions; and commitment to diverse student, staff, and faculty to be community-engaged and industry-engaged and for change agents and leaders in higher education to leverage the third space. I have navigated in the third space my entire career, never embracing the mantle of being on the "fringe" and constantly "surfing the waves" of change in institutions and higher education. The professionals that surrounded me were and are doing the important work of the institution. Many of those roles, best practices, and standards of our professionalizing area of the higher education are now considered the core work of the modern university. Whitchurch's work adds to the growing body of knowledge

about the importance of boundary spanning and the impact that is created by the professionals in the third space.

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Langan-Fox, J., & Cooper, C. L. (Eds.). (2014). *Boundary-Spanning in organizations: Network, influence, and conflict.* New York, NY: Routledge. 366 pp.

Review by Miles McNall

This special issue of the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* highlights the importance of boundary spanning to university–community engagement (henceforth "engagement"). No concept could be more central to engagement than boundary spanning as engagement requires the successful spanning of several kinds of boundaries including the horizontal boundaries that separate the knowledge bases of disciplines, professions, and communities; the vertical boundaries formed by organizational and institutional hierarchies; and the boundaries created by differences in race, gender, culture, and power.

Janice Langan-Fox and Cary L. Cooper's book *Boundary-Spanning in Organizations: Network, Influence, and Conflict*, although not written with engagement in mind, contains a wealth of theoretical frameworks, concepts, and practices related to boundary spanning. Anyone concerned with engagement would do well to familiarize themselves with them. Because the book was written largely for a business management audience, many of the frameworks, concepts, and practices will need some degree of translation and elaboration to be more directly applicable to the engagement context. The book consists of 15 chapters, each focused on a different aspect of boundary spanning in organizations with theoretical concepts clearly illustrated through compelling case studies on topics ranging from the experiences of teachers who cross boundaries by teaching "out-of-field" subjects to infection control in hospitals.

This review highlights five key concepts in the book that are likely to be of interest to those concerned with engagement: boundary spanning, boundaries, boundary objects, boundary spanners, and conditions and practices that support boundary spanning.

First, what is boundary spanning? In his chapter, David Wilemon defines boundary spanning as "the process of working across various organizational lines or boundaries to garner support, resources, or information needed to complete assigned tasks" *(p. 230)*. From the perspective of boundary spanning in organizations, this definition is undoubtedly suitable. However, from the

perspective of university–community engagement, it requires some elaboration. Although university–community engagement does frequently involve the completion of tasks, it also involves developing ongoing partnerships to achieve more general aims and establishing the infrastructure, resources, and trusting relationships necessary to achieve those aims. An expanded definition of boundary spanning for engagement might be "the process of working across boundaries within and between universities and community-based agencies, organizations, and groups to garner support, resources, and information and to establish the relationships, infrastructure, and processes necessary to achieve mutually agreed-upon goals."

According to contributors Anit Somech and Anat Drach-Zahavy, boundary spanning activities can be classified by type, target, and valence. In terms of type, boundary spanning activities include scouting, coordination, buffering, and bringing up the borders. Scouting refers to actions taken to find and acquire information, resources, and support in the environment. Coordination refers to actions taken to achieve interdependence among teams through various forms of coordination and collaboration. Buffering refers to efforts to insulate teams from unwanted or disruptive exposure to the environment. Bringing up the borders refers to activities undertaken to secure the commitment of team members to pursue a common goal. Regarding targets, lateral boundary activities are aimed at units at comparable levels of hierarchy; vertical boundary activities are those aimed at units at different levels of hierarchy. Valence refers to the emotional content, positive or negative, of boundary activities.

Second, what kinds of boundaries are spanned in boundary spanning? In their chapter, Charles Palus, Donna Chrobot-Mason, and Kristin Cullen offer the following typology of boundaries: (a) vertical (hierarchical), (b) horizontal (cross-unit), (c) stakeholder (external), (d) demographic (e.g., race, class, and gender), and (e) geographic. A majority of chapters in this volume are devoted to various forms of intraorganizational or interorganizational vertical or horizontal boundary spanning. From the perspective of engagement, a limitation of this volume is the paucity of attention paid to crossing stakeholder, demographic, or geographic boundaries, all of which are of critical importance to engagement. The typology above also misses an important boundary that appears throughout the book, namely the boundary that separates distinct areas of knowledge and practice. For example, Linda Hobbs discusses the "discontinuities" experienced by schoolteachers who cross bound-

aries of knowledge and teaching practice when they teach "out-of-field" subjects (i.e., subjects for which they hold no special qualification to teach). Preeta Banerjee and Rafael Corredoira explore how the evolution of technology is driven by the boundary crossing that occurs when new patents recombine existing areas of knowledge that have not been combined in prior patents. Drawing on Bourdieu's practice theory *(Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992)*, Natalia Levina and Emmanuelle Vaast explore the dynamics of transactive and transformative boundary spanning within shared fields of practice. In the former, existing relationships within fields of knowledge and practice are reproduced; in the latter, they are transformed, creating new joint fields of practice. From the perspective of engagement, attention to boundaries around areas of knowledge and practice is critical, as engagement involves crossing a number of such boundaries within and between universities and communities. Within universities there are boundaries that divide areas of knowledge into disciplines, departments, and units. Within communities there are boundaries that divide the knowledge of the professional practitioner or expert from the lay knowledge of community members. And finally, there is the boundary that separates discipline-based university-generated knowledge from community-generated local and indigenous knowledge.

Third, what are boundary objects, and what is their role in boundary spanning? According to contributor Jacob Vakkayil, boundary objects are artifacts that serve as carriers of knowledge and expertise across the boundaries of communities. Most authors in this volume who discuss boundary objects draw on Star and Griesemer's *(1989)* definition, which holds that boundary objects are "objects which are both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and the constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites" *(p. 393)*. Vakkayil identifies three ways in which boundary objects facilitate boundary spanning. First, they serve as tools of coordination. For example, blueprints serve as boundary objects around which the different trades involved in building construction can coordinate their activities. Second, boundary objects can facilitate the transfer of knowledge across communities. For example, the Mayo Clinic website is a boundary object that allows for the transfer of medical knowledge to the general public. Third, boundary objects can serve to facilitate collaboration across significant differences by enabling multiple interpretations of how superordinate goals are defined. In the context of community-engaged research, boundary objects

might include grant proposals, logic models or theories of change, memoranda of understanding, or shared measurement systems.

Fourth, what are boundary spanners, and what role do they play in boundary spanning? In their chapter, Natalia Levina and Emmanuelle Vaast define boundary spanners as "people who have been designated and/or who de facto reach beyond group boundaries in order to build common ground between separated parties" *(p. 294)*. Boundary spanners play multiple roles in and between organizations including representative, gatekeeper, advice or trust broker, scout, or ambassador. Contributor Fiona Buick argues that the core competencies of boundary spanners include managing complexity and interdependencies; building sustainable relationships and networking; communication and information sharing; managing through influence and negotiation; and managing roles, accountabilities, and motivations. The ability of boundary spanners to manage complex interdependencies across teams and organizations rests on their prior interorganizational experience, their transdisciplinary knowledge, and their cognitive capability. In other words, to be an effective boundary spanner requires a diverse set of advanced interpersonal, organizational, and cognitive skills as well as relevant experience. This is a tall order indeed and given the centrality of boundary spanners to engagement, it suggests that hiring and training qualified boundary spanners, as well as establishing supportive environments in which they play their boundary spanning roles, will be essential steps for universities to take in supporting engagement.

Finally, what are the conditions and practices that support boundary spanning? In his chapter, David Wilemon makes the case that these factors facilitate boundary spanning: (a) credibility of both the boundary spanner and the boundary spanning task; (b) accessibility of senior management and others who support the project; (c) priority of the project to relevant stakeholders; (d) visibility of the project to potentially interested parties; (e) the interpersonal skills of boundary spanners including listening skills, communication skills, empathy, and ability to manage conflicts; and (f) an organizational culture that is sufficiently open and flexible to support boundary spanning projects.

Establishing trust across boundaries is another essential condition for effective boundary spanning work. Contributors Frens Kroeger and Reinhard Bachmann discuss how "transitory boundary systems" operate to convert interpersonal to organizational trust, enabling the building of trust across organizational boundaries. Transitory boundary systems consist of the interac-

tions among boundary spanners which create "a new institutional context that differs from either organization" *(p. 254)*. It is within this transitory boundary system that boundary spanners engage in the symbolic exchanges and interpersonal "facework" that builds trust.

Given the importance to university-community engagement of boundary spanners, their boundary spanning activities, and the infrastructure necessary to support their work, further elaboration of the frameworks, concepts, and practices discussed in *Boundary-Spanning in Organizations: Network, Influence, and Conflict* for the engagement context is essential. This book is a good place to begin that work.

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ENGAGEMENT SCHOLARSHIP CORTISUM POSTER AWARDS

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Engaging Local Community Members to Improve Residential Storm Water Management in Nags Head, North Carolina

Christine B. Avenarius and Jessica R. Handloff

To view the poster: http://www.engagementscholarship.org/upload/PosterAwards/2013/HandloffStormWaterManagement2013.pdf

In recent years, heavy rainfalls have occasionally brought several days of standing water to some of the driveways, yards, swales, and roads in the Nags Head Acres subdivision in Nags Head, Dare County, North Carolina. As a result, specific street sections have become temporarily impassable. In most incidents, the water receded after a few days. However, the higher frequency of standing water events and the larger volume of water caused many residents to wonder if the conditions have reached a breaking point that calls for modification of established residential practices in respect to storm water management. Residents have asked themselves, their neighbors, and the town manager and town planner what can be done to remedy events of standing water and prevent an escalation of similar water events in the future.

A team of three students led by Dr. Christine Avenarius, associate professor of anthropology at East Carolina University, talked to residents of Nags Head Acres, the town planner, and the town engineer about storm water management practices. Our research design was informed by the recent literature on the challenges of engaging local residents in conversations about the possible effects of climate change on their daily lives *(Akerlof & Maibach, 2011; Groffman et al., 2010; Kuh, 2009; Lazo, Kinnell, & Fisher, 2000; McKinstry, 2004; Poulter et al., 2009)*. We asked a series of open-ended questions to collect experiences, observations, concerns, and suggestions *(Bernard, 2006; Johnson & Weller, 2002)*. A third of all households, 30 families, participated.

Although we found few differences in opinion by gender or age, variances existed between residents who grew up or spent more than half their lifetime in Dare County and residents who had moved to Dare County after living and working elsewhere in the United States. More than 80% of participating neighbors voiced concern about increased mosquito populations and diseases that the children who play nearby might contract. In addition, many

residents wondered about the relationship between standing water and septic tank management in light of the higher water table and an increase in population density throughout most neighborhoods of Nags Head. All residents of the neighborhood received a report about the distribution of findings that included pictures, graphics, representative quotes, and a list of suggested remedies. The outline and communication style of our report followed best practices for information dissemination found in publications on climate change adaptation planning *(Nisbet, Hixon, Moore, & Nelson, 2002; Villar & Krosnick, 2011).*

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Implementing Service-Learning: Best Practices from Agricultral Leadership Education

Courtney Meyers, Laura Lemons, and Gaea Hock

To view the poster: http://www.engagementscholarship.org/upload/PosterAwards/2013/LemonsImplementingServiceLearning2013.pdf

Abstract

Service-learning has been identified as a high impact educational practice with many benefits for all parties involved. A service-learning component was integrated into the agricultural leadership curriculum at two different universities. The courses focused on the application of team leadership knowledge and skills. Students were assigned to teams and then chose a community partner. The teams worked with their community partners to identify a project and had to serve a minimum of 8 hours with their team members. As a tangible assessment piece, teams created a project portfolio documenting the stages of their service-learning project. At the conclusion of the semester, teams developed and delivered a presentation about their service-learning project. Students completed reflection assignments at the mid-point of the service-learning project and at the end of the project. Students evaluated their own performance and the performance of their teammates.

The service-learning design of this project has several advantages. First, it is a pedagogy linking meaningful community service with instruction and reflection of course objectives. It also creates solutions for the community organization and enriches students' learning experience by engaging them in the community. The emphasis on civic responsibility while teaching critical thinking is an added benefit to this pedagogy. In addition to the course objectives, students are also able to learn from community agencies' expertise. The broader benefits include building partnerships between the university and community organizations and enhancing university engagement in community issues.

Several lessons emerged while facilitating students' service-learning projects and related assignments. Instructors need to identify their goals and motives for implementing a service-learning

project in a course. What knowledge, skills, and competencies should students gain through this experience?

Specific objectives should be developed for service-learning experiences and communicated to students and community partners. Instructors can facilitate the successful selection of a community partner by preparing a list of potential community partners. The list is by no means comprehensive, but it will provide guidance as to who is an acceptable community partner. Students crave structure and will appreciate a list of previous successful projects.

The relationship between the teacher and the community partner should be fostered. It is critical that all parties are satisfied with the experience. One way to help establish and maintain expectations is to create a written agreement with each community partner that all parties must sign (i.e., teacher, community partner, and students). This will help maintain the high meaningfulness of the project. Once the projects have been approved, it is important to monitor service-learning groups' progress and completion of their project. Teachers also need to guide students' reflection to ensure connection of service-learning activity and course content.

Once the project has been completed, it is good practice to celebrate and publicize student teams' service-learning projects and thank the community partners. This can be done in a variety of ways including newspaper articles, features on university websites, and handwritten notes.

Finally, with any good learning activity it is important to evaluate your outcomes and make any needed modifications before the next group of students begin their service-learning projects.

Even with ample preparation, there is still potential for things to not go as planned. Several of the more common issues we have encountered include student teams choosing community partners unprepared to work with a team, not enough instructor contact with community partners, and students selecting projects that did not meet the minimum time requirement. Awareness of these potentials pitfalls before the projects begin will hopefully help limit negative experiences.

Service-learning is a great educational teaching strategy which has benefits far exceeding the challenges.

About the Authors

Courtney Meyers is an associate professor of agricultural communications at Texas Tech University. She has utilized service-learning to teach agricultural communications courses and is an

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#OKSTATEHASANAPP4THAT: Engaging Students, Community, and Enterprise

Blayne Mayfield, David W. Davis, Penny Thompson, Steve Ruby, and Yoonjung Cho

To view poster: http://www.engagementscholarship.org/upload/PosterAwards/2013/OKSTATEHASANAPP4THAT Poster2013.pdf

#OKSTATEHASANAPP4THAT is an interdisciplinary alliance of educators determined to bring the latest in technology and dynamic teaching to students at Oklahoma State University (OSU). Additionally, this team of investigators is committed to understanding the impact of their teaching styles on students and stakeholders by investigating relevant research questions and testing existing theories. Using Project-Based Learning (PjBL) and Service-Learning (SL), students from two academic programs will be engaged in evaluating, communicating, creating, enhancing, and implementing mobile applications designed for the hospitality industry. This ambitious series of exercises is specifically designed to give students the opportunity to engage in work as leaders, researchers, communicators, entrepreneurs, consultants, and innovators. Through active guidance and generous partnerships, #OKSTATEHASANAPP4THAT will foster learning environments designed for the next generation... today!

#OKSTATEHASANAPP4THAT has developed a PjBL experience that generates collaboration in teaching, market research, and student learning to ensure that future leaders are prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the "uncharted waters" that lie before them. PjBL is built upon authentic learning activities that engage students' interest and motivation. The activities are designed to solve a problem or answer a question and reflect the activities and exploration of work people do everyday outside of the classroom.The PjBL adventure being undertaken simultaneously serves a real world need and satisfies the demand for a skilled technological workforce.

The nexus of this collaboration is in how the students in the School of Hotel & Restaurant Administration (HRAD) act as clients to the students in Computer Sciences (CS), who act as contractors. The final product is a "beta" version of a mobile application.

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Documenting Our Neighborhood: Paintings/ Stories from the Eastside

Ed Check, Future Akins-Tillett, and Shannon Walton

To view poster: http://www.engagementscholarship.org/upload/PosterAwards/2013/DocumentingOurNeighborhoodESCPoster-final-35in.pdf

Visual studies (VS) at Texas Tech University (TTU) uses outreach as a fundamental teaching tool for our social theories programming *(Bigelow, Harvey, Karp, & Miller, 2001)*. We embrace contemporary antibias and autobiographical methods whereby both students and instructors critically self-examine our privileges and motives as educators/cultural workers and the impacts we can have on ourselves, our students, and our communities. We are there to make art, to make a difference and promote/create positive social change, actively rethinking how our roles and how the arts are vital to community memory and change. We invariably confront stereotypes in the forms of racisms, misogynies, homophobias, and biases regarding social class and size (*Ladson-Billings, 1994; Perr, 1988; Yeh, 2011*).

This poster documents one outreach collaboration between two VS program professors, undergraduate visual studies students, a high school art teacher, and one class of Art I students at a generational poverty and historic lower performing high school in Lubbock, Texas, during spring semester 2012. Preservice VS students worked with Art I students for 6 weeks. VS students mentored Art I students who developed/created paintings based on what they "liked" about their eastside neighborhood. Art I students were also asked to create an accompanying essay that described/explained their paintings. Many of the paintings and essays addressed stereotypes and biases the students experienced. Seven representative student paintings and essays are included in the poster. Also included are testimonies/essays written by the two professors, the art teacher, and a former student teacher that give context to the visual studies program's focus on social justice outreach programming and the possibilities for personal and professional transformations *(Ayers, 2003; Nokes & Jasper, 2007; Walljasper, 2007)*.

What happens when high school and university students get heard and teachers/professors listen? What happens when instruc-

tors write about their doubts and fears (*Christensen, 2001*)? When student teachers voice sexual identity concerns and find comfort in the lives and experiences of the students they teach? It is in these very social challenges that answers lie in our stories in terms of forging new communities and social commitments *(Burnham & Durland, 1998; Elizabeth & Young, 2006; Ringgold, 1991)*. Our outreach experience raises awareness for privileged TTU students who have been sheltered from working poor and poverty living conditions. We hope that rather than be surprised or shocked only, our preservice students take their sheltered ignorances as starting points and calls to action as we prepare them to become cultural workers for social change.

In several high school art student visual and printed narratives, you can see and read about real issues that impact these students' daily lives—art students sharing what art teacher Shannon Walton describes as "beautiful, funny, heartbreaking, and even terrifying stories." Stories include a variety of topics: thanking a grocery store for not leaving the neighborhood, a story of Child Protective Services intervention and losing a friend, stories of role models and faith, and stories of staying sane and not losing one's mind. Instructors refer to each other as friends—friends talking about crossing race and social class lines; talking about how to challenge stereotypes, hate, and fear; and how best to position ourselves as cultural workers using art to save lives and foster creative social and positive change *(Chapadjiev, 2008; Hooks, 1995; Park, 2009)*.

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Feasibility and Efficacy of ¡Cuídate!: A Sexual Risk Reduction Program for Mexican and Central American Youth

Kim L. Larson, Sharon M. Ballard, and Brenda J. Nuncio

To view poster: http://www.engagementscholarship.org/upload/PosterAwards/2013/LarsonFeasibilityEfficacy2013.pdf

Poverty, isolation from health services, and conservative attitudes of sexual issues characterize much of rural eastern North Carolina. The region is home to an increasing Latino immigrant population *(Brown & Lopez, 2013)*. Latino adolescents in this region experience disproportionately high rates of sexually transmitted infections and early, unintended pregnancy. Community and societal level factors that influence these sexually-related health disparities include social policies, migration burden, and cultural norms *(Larson, 2009; Larson, Sandelowski, & McQuiston, 2012)*. ¡Cuídate! –Take Care of Yourself – is the only evidence-based sexual risk reduction program for Latino youth supported by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. ¡Cuídate! had been validated in the U.S. with urban-dwelling Puerto Rican adolescents *(Villarruel, Gal, Eakin, Wilkes, & Herbst, 2010; Villarruel, Jemmott, & Jemmott, 2006)*, but it had not been tested with adolescents from Mexico and Central America living in the rural South. The aims of this project were to examine: (a) the extent of feasibility of ¡Cuídate! with Mexican and Central American youth in a rural context using a community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach; (b) the impact of ¡Cuídate! on sexual knowledge, skills, and attitudes; and (c) the cultural relevance and applicability of program content.

A CBPR team comprised of a Latina community leader, two school nurses, and two university faculty received training in and delivered the ÍCuídate! program between January and June, 2013. The setting was two rural school-based health centers serving the largest Latino population in eastern North Carolina. This descriptive study used pre-test and post-test assessments as well as post-program focus groups to determine the project aims. Key findings were that early adolescent boys and girls (ages 13-15) made the greatest gains in knowledge and self-efficacy and condom skills-building provided a context for shared partner responsibility. These findings support the need for community-based interventions that

ensure cultural respect and a safe environment in which to discuss sexual issues.

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University–National Laboratory Service-Learning Partnership: Intern Team Saves Energy and Money

Paulette R. Hebert

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This service-learning internship project was planned and proposed by university faculty and students located in the south central United States and was accepted by a U.S. national laboratory in the midwestern U.S. The team's participation was funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), and a U.S. national laboratory through a competitive national program. Interior design/facility management students earned the 4 hours credit required by their college's summer internship course, and both students and faculty were paid summer salaries and travel expenses.

The faculty and student internship team lived for 10 weeks on or near the national laboratory campus. The team worked in the lab's Facility Services Department, where they collaborated with facility managers, engineers, laboratory scientists, and support staff to survey existing lighting systems and make recommendations. The internship team benefited the laboratory community and served their country. The students applied skills learned in previous courses to real-world laboratory lighting problems. Faculty applied approach-avoidance theory, compared field-measured light levels to Illuminating Engineering Society industry standards, and calculated anticipated energy and dollar savings for delamping fixtures and installing occupancy sensors.

Students reflected on their experiences in their internship course-required diaries and communicated their reflections and findings via a verbal and visual presentation at the national lab and a research poster required by NSF. Students, faculty, and lab community attended an end-of-internship celebration dinner and enjoyed their success. Students and faculty evaluated their service-learning experiences by responding to college and laboratory questionnaires. Students' supervisors also evaluated their contributions and provided feedback. Findings from the project were published in a peer-reviewed facility management journal.

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Paulette R. Hebert is a professor at Oklahoma State University. Her research interests include lighting design, facility management and design, and sustainability. She earned her bachelor of interior design, M.S., and Ph.D. from Louisiana State University.

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MU's School and Community Gardening Program Within SNAP-Ed and EFNEP

Jo Britt-Rankin, Candance Gabel, Larry Roberts, and Becky Mott

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The Eating from the Garden program helps kids improve their diet and food choices by providing them the skills to grow, harvest, and prepare healthy food options. With help from area partners and volunteers, the program promotes healthier food choices, gardening skills, and physical activity. The program goal is to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables by youths through nutrition education, food preparation, and gardening activities.

Why Gardening?

Gardening is a popular pastime for people of all ages. Children and their families can often enjoy this creative and fun activity in their own backyard. Growing fruits and vegetables in a home or a school garden provides an environment where nutrition and plant science skills can be taught. The Eating from the Garden curriculum provides hands-on activities to reinforce these lessons and skills.

Results

Gardening allows both youth and adults to take great pride in their efforts and to give back to the community. Participants at each garden site determined how the excess produce would be distributed following the food tastings and demonstrations. Some sites chose to send the produce home with the children or families so that they could replicate the recipes tried during the program. Other sites donated the produce to food pantries within the community. One school incorporated the produce into the school lunch program. On days when the produce was served, Eating from the Garden signs were placed on the salad bars so children would know they had produced some of the foods being served.

The data below reflects the produce harvested from spring plantings at 20 sites from which we collected data. Many of these gardens will be replanted for fall crops.

Total yield: 921 lbs.
Total input costs: $121.46
Total retail value: $3,248.87
Total cost savings: $3,126.61

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Jo Britt-Rankin serves as associate dean/program director–Human Environmental Sciences Extension, University of Missouri, and holds the rank of Extension professor in the Department of Nutrition & Exercise Physiology. She earned her doctorate in nutrition in 2000 from the University of Missouri.

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Larry Roberts serves as a nutrition program associate and has statewide responsibilities for implementation of gardening programs within SNAP-Ed and EFNEP for the state of Missouri.

Becky Mott is a graduate student in agricultural education with an emphasis on youth development. She is focused on the implications of food insecurity among youth populations. She earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Missouri.

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