From Inreach to Outreach: Innovations in Higher Education
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Abstract

The author describes his transformation from campus-based research (inreach) to community-based research (outreach) and the organization of the Applied Developmental Science Interdepartmental Graduate Specializations at Michigan State University. He argues that the same criteria for evaluating faculty performance can apply regardless of where research takes place.

Applied developmental science (ADS) at Michigan State University is an approach to outreach scholarship that has three broad objectives: (1) to facilitate university-community partnerships and interdisciplinary affiliations; (2) to emphasize the integration of theory, research, policy, and practice; and (3) to address issues of concern to the community that simultaneously enhance university research and instructional programs. In this essay I comment on the relationship between ADS and the university's land-grant mission and infrastructure support and the benefits and barriers related to faculty involvement in outreach. My comments are based on my own experiences and must be evaluated within that context. Finally, I freely refer to the individuals and events that influenced my research career, particularly those that helped shape my transition from inreach research to outreach research and that helped fashion the ADS model as it has emerged at Michigan State University.

Applied Developmental Science:
An Outreach Model for Community Partnerships

ADS is an interdisciplinary approach to solution-focused university-community research/evaluation partnerships *(Fisher et al. 1993; Groark and McCall 1996; Lerner and Fisher 1994)*, and to impact-focused instructional programs at both the graduate and continuing education levels *(Fitzgerald, Abrams, Andrews et al. 1999)*. ADS exists primarily as a virtual organization that facilitates partnerships between faculty and community colleagues in order to enhance outreach scholarship *(Fitzgerald, Abrams, Church et al. 1996)*. Currently, ADS outreach community partnerships and programs fit one of two interlocking domains. The first of these focuses on community collaborations that stress research and evaluation the second focuses on instructional programs designed to transfer knowledge to the community in order to enhance self-sufficiency

in outcome-based evaluation and community asset development. These domains are interlocking because all ADS-community partnerships have empowerment components designed to transfer skills and knowledge to community colleagues.

Applied Developmental Science at Michigan State University

The ADS approach to outreach reflects the scholarship of application *(Boyer 1990)*, embedded within the scholarship of discovery, teaching, and integration *(Boyer 1990, 1994; Coye 1997; Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff 1997; Provost's Committee on University Outreach 1993; Votruba 1992)*. The goals of ADS blend easily with land-grant institutions because of their historical commitment to knowledge generation and dissemination *(see Bates, Luster, Massie, and Key 1999)*, and they are especially consistent with MSU's definition of outreach: "Outreach is a form of scholarship that cuts across teaching, research, and service. It involves generating, transmitting, applying, and preserving knowledge for the direct benefit of external audiences in ways that are consistent with university and unit missions" *(Provost Committee on University Outreach 1993, 1)*.

I like to distinguish between outreach research and instruction and inreach research and instruction because this distinction places emphasis on where such activities take place. Emphasizing community-based research (outreach) or campus-based research (inreach) minimizes the friction produced by more common dichotomies such as basic and applied research, hard and soft science. Moreover, it allows for easy application of performance evaluation standards that are applicable to research, teaching, and service, regardless of where a given function takes place and the discipline involved *(Sandman 1997)*.

Transitions: From Inreach to Outreach Research

When I arrived at MSU in 1967, application of knowledge was not part of my research agenda, nor was it ever raised as an issue in my annual performance evaluations. I was a developmental psychophysiologist with a strong Pavlovian orientation, and my research program was tightly bound to the study of nervous system differentiation during the first six postnatal months of human development *(Fitzgerald and Brackbill 1976)*. In retrospect, however, my pathway to outreach research was evident as early as 1969 when Robert Boger, director of the Institute for Child and Family, persuaded me to establish a demonstration day care unit for the birth-to-three

age group *(Stevenson and Fitzgerald 1972; Ledesma, Fitzgerald, and McGreal 1980)*. Although this was a campus-based inreach demonstration project, it provided a context for observing infant development radically different from that available in the infant psychophysiology laboratory.

With the support of a Fulbright Fellowship I spent the 1973–74 academic year at the Institute for Psychophysiological and Speech Disorders in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, ostensibly to conduct psychophysiology studies of attentional processes during early development. In fact, I was in an outpatient clinic for individuals with developmental disabilities who were being exposed to behavioral modification routines designed to reorganize cerebral lateral specialization of function. I became intrigued by the neuropsychological model of cerebral specialization, particularly as it was applied to stutterers *(Brajovic, Fitzgerald, and Djurdjic 1978)*, and I was astounded by the time and effort that parents expended serving as therapists for their children *(Fitzgerald 1977)*. When I returned to campus, I immediately sought out colleagues in other departments to test nascent hypotheses related to each of these issues. Paul Cook (Audiology and Speech Sciences) and I began a series of experiments designed to test the hypothesis that stuttering was related to problems with interhemispheric integration *(Fitzgerald, Cooke, and Greiner 1984)*. At the same time I teamed with Nancy Carlson to seek funding for studies assessing the impact of mainstreaming (inclusiveness) on preschool-age children's social and cognitive development *(Carlson and Fitzgerald 1977)*.

Studies in the developmental psychophysiology laboratory began to shift from Pavlovian and neurodevelopmental models to those embracing a broader theoretical framework, including ethological and general systems theory *(Hildebrandt and Fitzgerald 1983)*. Moreover, I became involved administratively with scientific associations devoted to clinical studies of the early years of life *(Fitzgerald and Barton 2000)*. Therefore, in 1993 when I was asked to chair an interdisciplinary study group charged to determine whether applied developmental science represented an innovative approach to higher education within the land-grant tradition, I was well primed for the assignment. The committee met with an external consultant, Celia Fisher *(Fisher et al.1993)*, to learn about the emergent interdisciplinary field of applied developmental science. Fisher had been invited to campus by Richard Lerner, who at the time was director of the renamed Institute for Children, Youth, and Families, and was a leading spokesperson for applied developmental science *(Lerner and Fisher 1994)*. After a year of deliberation the committee

advanced three recommendations to Provost Lou Anna K. Simon. The first recommendation was to conduct a survey to determine how many faculty viewed their current work to be consistent with the defining characteristics of applied developmental science *(Fitzgerald, Abrams, Church et al. 1996)*. The survey yielded responses from 173 faculty representing twenty-six administrative units (departments, schools, institutes, centers) who subsequently were included in a brochure describing the collective activities; the brochure was distributed to approximately ten thousand individuals at Michigan State University and in key governmental departments and agencies. The brochure was intended to build an internal network among faculty and staff, and to inform legislators, funding agencies, and the vast network of university extension staff about applied research activities and opportunities at MSU. Institutional support for this effort was provided by the Office of the Vice Provost for University Outreach.

The second recommendation was to establish interdepartmental graduate specializations in ADS. A curriculum was developed and in 1996 the proposal was approved by the academic governance system. Financial support for the graduate specializations was provided by the Provost's Office. Provost Simon provided a five-year commitment for my release time, funds to support graduate students, and public visibility of her support for outreach partnerships *(Lerner and Simon 1998)*. Vice Provost Votruba provided seed money to use as matching grants ($5,000 to $15,000) to facilitate establishment of community partnerships and to support faculty interdisciplinary research teams in their efforts to compete for extramural funding for their research. Institutional support played a key role in the development of most of the outreach partnerships listed in Table 1.

The third recommendation was to administratively locate the ADS specializations in the Office of the Provost rather than in a specific college. This recommendation was not accepted because all programs at MSU are administratively supervised by a lead dean; in this context, ADS was assigned to the Dean of the College of Social Science. In practice, however, ADS has always been more tightly connected to the Office of the Vice Provost for University Outreach and is perceived by university faculty and staff to be on neutral ground, a perception that other ADS researchers have noted to be essential to minimize turf battles between competing colleges and departments *(McCall 1995a,b)*. Because research grants and contracts awarded by interdisciplinary teams that ADS has helped organize are administered by the investigator's disciplinary unit, ADS maintains its credibility as a virtual organization. However,

Table 1. Examples of Research and Instructional Programs Affiliated with ADS Outreach Partnerships. All Sites are in Michigan Unless Otherwise Specified.

Local Site	Community Partner	Programs/Activities	Disciplines	Funding Source
Flint	Mott Children's Health Center	Family Ties Food Ties Child Abuse Prevention	Family & Child Ecology Food Science & Human Nutrition Social Work	Spencer Foundation Outreach Partnerships
Genesee County	Mott Children's Health Center	Ready, Set, Grow Passport	Psychology	Local Organizations C.S. Mott Foundation
Statewide	Girl Scouts of the USA	Foster Girls Demonstration	Family and Child Ecology	C.S. Mott Foundation
Calhoun County	Human Services Council	Strong Families Safe Children	Psychology	Outreach/Community Match
Grand Rapids	Butterworth	MOMS Mother-Advocate Program	Nursing, Epidemiology Psychology, Economics	Maternal & Child Health Bureau
Jackson	Community Action Agency	Early Head Start Local Research EHS National Evaluation HS Fathers Initiative	Nursing Psychology Family & Child Ecology	Administration for Children, Youth and Families, Ford Foundation, NICHD
Battle Creek	SPGB, Inc.	Assets of African American Youth	Psychology Communications	Michigan Office of Minority Health United Way of Battle Creek Community Foundation
Greenville	Eight Cap Inc	Early Head Start Evaluation	Psychology	ACYF
Coldwater	Branch County Intermediate	Success by Six: 0–5	Psychology Political Science Social Work	State of Michigan Michigan State University

this places pressure on ADS to generate its own extramural funds so that it can become self-sufficient and maintain credibility with the university research community. This presents a dilemma for which there is no current solution. ADS must maintain credibility as a virtual organization, but as it generates its own extramural resources, it becomes more similar in character to institutes and centers. The solution we are trying to implement at Michigan State University is to embed the graduate programs in applied developmental science within the more general outreach partnerships administered by the Vice Provost for University Outreach. How well this strategy will protect the virtual organization character of ADS remains to be seen, but initial evaluations are positive.

Why Outreach?

As I reflect on my academic life, the individuals and experiences that influenced me, and the personal decisions that led me increasingly to emphasize community-based research and scholarship, I have identified two key reasons why my research has shifted from inreach to outreach. One reason is science based; the other is phenomenological. The science-based reason stems from the challenges associated with translating the methods of social and behavioral science to community settings, and assessing the applicability of campus-generated theories, methods, and findings in those settings. If social and behavioral science does not generate intervention and prevention models that demonstrate change in individual and group behavior, what justifies soliciting public support for such efforts? Implementing inreach models in outreach settings provides a direct test of knowledge generalization and simultaneously promotes knowledge generation by identifying barriers to program success. Models can then be retested under controlled conditions (inreach) and then field-tested in community settings (outreach). In this way there is a steady flow from community research to campus research, with inreach and outreach becoming the yin and yang of university-community partnerships.

The second reason is phenomenological and ethical, derived from personal life and from the lives of individuals close to me. This of course is the intractable observer bias that enters into all human inquiry. It is ethical because it is related to my conviction that scholars have a moral obligation to help make the human condition better. I do not believe that reduction of antisocial behavior, child abuse, alcoholism, spousal abuse, racial prejudice, sexism, and poverty is the sole responsibility of politicians, preachers, or political activists. These are problems that social and behavioral

scientists study avidly, and I believe that such study engenders a moral obligation to advocate for science-based solutions to social problems. Science is as value laden as religion and politics.

Outreach Research and Tenure

A core requirement in all ADS outreach partnerships is that they must be able to produce scholarship. Although the definition of scholarship that we use is much broader than that typical of the academy, it is consistent with the "effective communication" standard of scholarship espoused by *Scholarship Assessed (Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff 1997)*. Five product domains have been identified with a variety of outcomes possible within each domain: stakeholder needs (research applicable to community settings, policies and funds focused on community needs, evaluation research), capacity building (teaching curricula, training manuals, evaluation reports), knowledge generation (literature reviews, research tools, publications), information dissemination (briefs, reports, presentations, publications), and resource generation (concept papers, presentations to potential

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funding sources, grant proposals). In short, we take the standard of effective communication to intended audiences a step further by advocating dissemination of project findings first to the community stakeholders who identified the focal problem, sought assistance, and entered into partnership in order to solve the problem. Where possible, products also should help build community capacity to foster independence and self-sufficiency *(McCall 1995a,b; McCall, Groark, Strauss, and Johnson 1998)*. Because universities exist to generate and transmit knowledge, scholarship is essential for faculty-staff involvement. In addition to products produced for community partners and policy makers, scholarship also will reflect traditional forms such as literature reviews, new assessment/ measurement tools, and research/evaluation scientific articles. This blending of traditional and nontraditional forms of scholarship challenges the academy's traditional reward structure. How does one's academic unit value outreach research or outreach instruction? Can a faculty member have success (achieve tenure) if his or her

Table 2. Dimensions of Quality Outreach

Dimensions of Quality Outreach

SIGNIFICANCE
Importance of issue/opportunity to be addressed
Goals/objectives of consequence

CONTEXT
Consistency with university values and stakeholder interests
Appropriateness of expertise
Degree of collaboration
Appropriateness of methodological approach
Sufficiency and creative use of resources

SCHOLARSHIP
Knowledge resources
Knowledge application
Knowledge generation
Knowledge utilization

IMPACT
Impact on issues, institutions, and individuals
Sustainability and capacity building
University-community relations
Benefit to the university

Source: Adapted from*,* L. R. Sandmann, ed., 1977, *Points of Distinction: A guidebook for planning and evaluating quality outreach* (© 1996, Board of Trustees, Michigan State University). For information about *Points of Distinction* contact: Lorilee R. Sandmann, Ph.D. Provost Office, Cleveland State University, Cleveland, Ohio.

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research is longitudinal, community anchored, and focused on community problem solving, if such work has no historical tradition within the parent discipline? What other barriers to outreach partnership involvement are created for faculty who want to enjoy the same rewards and benefits their as more traditional colleagues? These issues are being debated throughout the academy, and although no easy solutions have yet emerged, draft guidelines have been developed to assess faculty performance (see Table 2). Because so much of outreach research involves longitudinal research methods and quasi-experimental designs, it may be years before a project yields sufficiently high-quality data to warrant publication in peer-reviewed journals. Therefore, I routinely caution nontenured faculty members to think carefully before becoming deeply involved in community-based research. New approaches for evaluating faculty are more easily brought into being than are innovations in how the academy actually conducts its business.

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