



Community-Campus Partnerships: What have we learned? What's next?

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Why must we strengthen community voice in SL/CE partnerships?

- The quality of Service-Learning and Civic Engagement programs relies on successful partnerships
- The historic pattern of higher education is to see communities as laboratory or subjects or as a site of learning
- Important knowledge and expertise resides outside the academy
- Research shows that much of the impact of service-learning comes from the community's involvement
- Little is known about higher education's impact on community
- Service-Learning and Civic Engagement can create a new mode of healthy town-gown relationships



Community Engagement

- Community Engagement describes the collaboration between higher education institutions 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**. (Carnegie Classification Project, 2005)



Partnerships Enhance Research Quality

- Lived community experience blended with academic expertise; community as “knowers” not subjects
- Objectivity enhanced by exploration of diverse interpretations and explanations
- Builds trust and confidence in researcher intentions; improves data depth and quality
- Speeds dissemination and application
- Increases likelihood that research will be useful to community as well as academia

(Jordan, Gust, and Scheman, 2005)



Partnerships Enhance Service-Learning Outcomes for Students

- Improved acquisition & retention of academic content
- Improved higher order thinking skills; analysis, understanding complex problems
- Civic responsibility, citizenship
- Commitment to service
- Career awareness/skills – awareness of options, clarity of choice, technical skills
- Personal outcomes – self-esteem, empowerment
- Social outcomes – pro-social behaviors, reduction of risky behaviors



CCCPH Partnership Principles

- Agreed-upon mission, values, goals, outcomes
- Trust, respect, commitment
- Focus: strengths, assets, areas for improvement
- Balanced power, shared resources
- Clear, open communication
- Roles, norms, processes (mutually designed)
- Feedback for continuous improvement
- Shared credit and benefits for accomplishments
- Plan to evolve over time

Community-Campus Partnerships for Health. *Principles of Good Community-Campus Partnerships*. Seattle, WA: Author. October 2006.

<http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/principles.html#principles>



Campus Compact Benchmarks for Partnerships

- Shared vision and values
- Benefits and incentives for all partners
- Investment in trust/mutual respect
- Multi-dimensional (reflects nature of issues)
- Clear organization/dynamic leadership
- Linked to mission of partner organizations
- Clear process for communication, decision-making, change
- Evaluation of both methods and outcomes

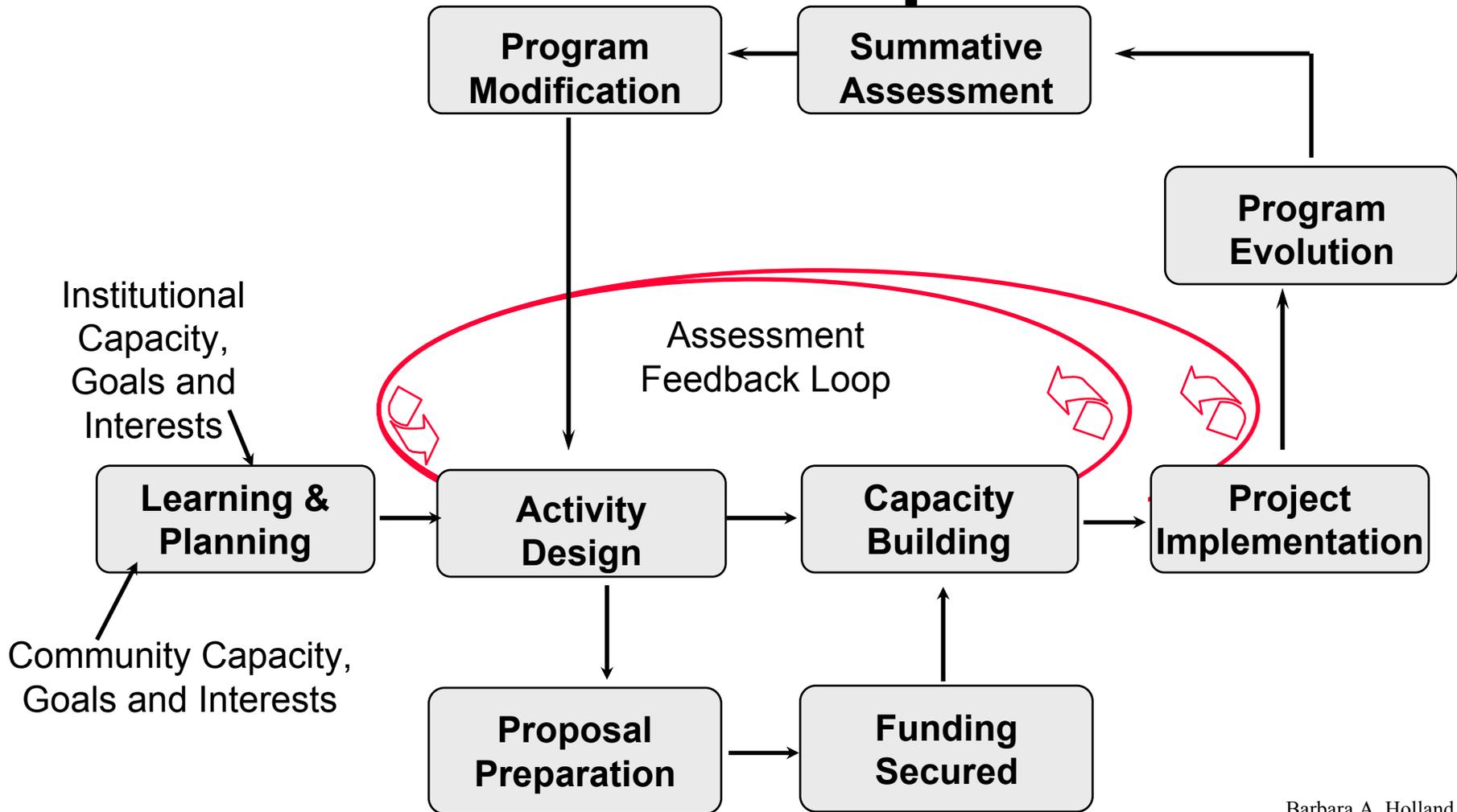


Effective Partnerships (HUD)

- Joint exploration of goals and interests and limitations
- Creation of a mutually rewarding agenda
- Operational design that supports shared leadership, decision-making, conflict resolution, resource management
- Clear benefits and roles for each partner
- Identification of opportunities for early successes for all; shared celebration of progress
- Focus on knowledge exchange, shared learning and capacity-building
- Attention to communications patterns, cultivation of trust
- Commitment to continuous assessment of the partnership itself, as well as outcomes



Higher Ed/Community Partnerships





Learning is the Connection

- Learning:
 - About each other's capacity and limitations
 - About each other's goals, culture, expectations
 - To develop students as active citizens
 - To exchange expertise, ideas, fears, concerns
 - To share control and direction
 - To adapt based on assessment and documentation
 - To experiment; to fail; to try again – To Trust!



Partnership Types

- Service relationship – fixed time, fixed task
- Exchange relationship – exchange info, get access for mutual benefit, specific project
- Cooperative relationship – joint planning and shared responsibilities, long-term, multiple projects
- System and Transformative relationship – shared decision-making/operations/evaluation intended to transform each organization



Assertions

- Research/evaluation-to-date is presenting us with a converging perspective on the characteristics of effective partnerships
 - Largely from the higher ed perspective
- More systematic research is needed to enhance our understanding of HOW to achieve these ideal characteristics or on community perspectives on partnerships
- An important missing link is knowledge of community perspectives on partnerships with academic institutions



Community Partner Summit: April 2006

Wingspread Conference Center, Racine, WI

- Purpose:** To advance authentic community-higher education partnerships by mobilizing a network of experienced community partners
- Sponsors:** Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, WK Kellogg Foundation, Johnson Foundation, Atlantic Philanthropies
- Products:** Executive Summary, Community Case Stories, Poster, Slide Presentations, Journal Articles, Regional Summits
- Outcomes:** Ongoing Network, Policy & Mentoring Workgroups
- Website:** <http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/cps.html>
- Email:** Kristine Wong at kristine@u.washington.edu



Premises

1. Partnerships between communities and higher educational institutions as a strategy for social change are gaining recognition and momentum
2. Despite being formed with the best of intentions, authentic partnerships are very difficult to achieve and are not the norm
3. While academic partners have extensively documented their experiences and lessons learned, the voices of community partners are largely missing
4. If true partnerships are to be achieved, community partners must harness their own experiences, lessons learned, and collective wisdom into an organized effort



Conclusions

1. Community-higher education partnerships are vehicles for social change
2. There can be tangible benefits for all partners involved
3. The predominant partnerships observed are not authentic
4. Relationships between campus & community are rarely equal
5. Relationships are largely based on individuals and are not institutionalized



Conclusions

6. Community capacity building is often not a major priority of community-higher education partnerships
7. Most community-higher education partnership initiatives not designed to equalize power differentials
8. Many communities do not have the time, resources, or access to knowledge about how to participate in these partnerships on their own terms
9. Community partners are learning from each other and becoming more sophisticated, resulting in the increased ability to develop and assert equal partnerships



Recommendations

1. Community partners have the responsibility to share their collective wisdom and knowledge
2. Community involvement and capacity building is needed at the local, regional, and national levels
3. Community partners should develop principles of participation to clarify terms of engagement and expectations
4. Community partners must familiarize themselves with the culture and daily realities of their academic partners, and vice versa



Recommendations

5. Community partners must work together with academic partners/allies to change the culture of higher education into one that values and supports communities as equal partners
6. Community partners must work together with academic partners/allies to elevate credibility and recognition for their life/work experience and context/environment
7. Funding agencies need to reexamine funding priorities, processes and decisions
8. Community partners should form collective body to increase capacity through mentoring, networking and advocacy



Community Voices Across California

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Research Question

What do community partners think about partnering with higher education institutions?

Study goals:

- 1) Identify community partner perspectives regarding the characteristics of effective partnerships.
- 2) Learn about perceived motivations, benefits and impacts of partnering with higher education institutions.
- 3) Identify partner recommendations for ways to transform higher education practice.



Research Participants

- 8 diverse higher education campuses that are members of California Campus Compact
- 99 established or “nurturing stage” (Dorado and Giles, 2004) community partners
- Largest study conducted with community partners on community-campus partnerships

Dorado, S. & Giles, D.E. (2004). Service-learning partnerships: Paths of engagement. *Michigan journal of community service learning*. Fall, 25-37.



Research Methodology

Design Informed by Community-Based Research practices (Stoecker, 2004)

Focus group participants reviewed and approved data at every stage: Transcripts, summaries, draft reports to campuses, academic articles.

Place-based Approach (Grunewald, 2003)

By convening participants all partnering with the same institution participants provided greater detail, interacted with each other, and revealed differences across partner experiences.

-- IRB Approval through San Francisco State University

Grunewald, D. (2003). The best of both worlds: a critical pedagogy of place. *Educational researcher*, 32, 4, 3-12.

Stoecker, R. (2005). *Research methods for community change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications



Research Findings

- Description of Effective Characteristics Defined by Community Partners and Comparison to Lists Created by Higher Education Partners
- Description of Key Benefits and Challenges
- Some Implications for Higher Education Practice



Effective Partnership Characteristics

- Convergence in content with lists created by higher education (Holland, 2005)
- The language used to describe characteristics is different. Bacon, (2002) writes that “differences in language may reveal underlying differences in the group’s values, goals, or beliefs.” (p. 35)

Bacon, N. (2002). Differences in faculty and community partners’ theories of learning. *Michigan journal of service-learning*. Fall, 34-44.

Holland, B (2005). Reflections on Community-Campus Partnerships: What has been learned? What are the next challenges? In P. Pasque et al (Eds.) *Higher Education Collaboratives for Community Engagement & Improvement*. (pp. 10-17). Ann Arbor: National Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good



Comparison List of Characteristics

Community Partners

1. Relationships are Foundational
2. Communication
3. Understanding one another's organizations (Mutual goals)
4. Planning, training, orientation, preparation
5. Shared leadership, accountability
6. Access to and support of higher education
7. Constant evaluation and reflection.
8. Focus on students, placement fit

Higher Education

1. Explore and expand separate and common goals and interests
2. Understand capacity, resources and expectations of all partners
3. Evidence of mutual benefit through careful planning and shared benefit
4. For partnerships to be sustained, the relationship itself is the partnership activity
5. Shared control of directions
6. Continuous assessment of partnership process and outcomes

(adapted from Holland, 2005)



“It’s the Relationship...”

“You can’t assume the partnership will stay what it is. It needs to be fed.”—Community Partner

Flexibility, give and take
recognition

Personal touch, personal connections

Openness, Keep the door open

Responsive, think outside the box

Voluntary passionate commitment
relationship
stagnant

Caring about mutual goals

Partner

Respect

Ability to say no

Trust each other

Symbiotic

Fluid, not



Our Common Ground is Educating College Students

- “I think a great partnership is that you stop saying MY students. They’re OUR students. What are OUR needs? We share these things in common, so let’s go for it.”
- “We are co-educators. That is not our organization’s bottom line, but that’s what we do.”
- Partners demonstrated a strong understanding of service-learning and learning goals.



Many Direct Benefits for Community Partners

- **Direct Need:**
 - Direct impact on client outcomes.
 - Sustaining and enhancing organizational capacity.
- **Organizational Enrichment:**
 - Personal satisfaction by contributing to educating students, the university and making a difference
 - Enthusiastic students are a pleasure
 - Improving organizational development: reflect on practice
 - Access to expertise/resources on campus/learn from students
 - Garnering clout and ability to leverage resources
 - Identifying future employees, volunteers, donors
 - Building social capital among community agencies



Improving Campus Partnerships

- Better personal relationships will improve partnerships.
- Faculty must be directly involved.
- Increase collaboration on curriculum planning, orientation and learning goals.
- Ensure mutual respect, recognition and celebration among partners
- Fairness in accessing higher education assets: reduce “favoritism” in partnerships
- Tracking hours is a waste – partners care more about adequate duration for the learning experience than hours.
- Partners want more involvement in evaluation and access to feedback on student learning
- Academic calendar, additional workload, transportation, and maturity of students were always a challenge.



Structural Implications: Designing Service-Learning Offices

More help is needed in providing equitable access to higher education and helping partners navigate the system. Both new and experienced partners would like service-learning offices to provide additional communication infrastructure to help them gain greater access.

- ***“Partnerships need a face and a heart. The university is a huge, complex and in some cases self-invested system. It has a lot of old dragons in it and it has some wonderful bright stars in it. But the face and the heart help us to navigate that.”***

-- Community Partner



Structural Implications: Expanding Roles for Service-Learning Offices

Can SL offices become gatekeepers?

- Advanced partners say that centers may unintentionally screen them away from faculty.
- Partners want infrastructure to provide access to the university, a connection to faculty, a method of communication, and logistics help (same as faculty).
- Because they take their role as co-educators seriously, they want more opportunities for co-planning with faculty.
- Partners want to be convened more often. ***“I learned about things [from other focus group participants] I have never heard of before today.”***



Structural Implications: Reconsidering the Hours Requirement

While tracking hours has been a favored way for higher education to document accountability and impact, this is often seen as an impediment by community partners.

“I’m very concerned about the students that just want to get their hours done. That’s not service-learning...Some are just doing community service, and that’s defeating the purpose.”



Gathering Together on the Commons

- Value relationships.
- Hold conversations regularly about partnership process and outcomes. Convene partners. Celebrate.
- Involve Faculty Directly!!!! Joint curriculum planning, share syllabi, face-to-face pre-semester meetings and orientations for professors
- Consider ways the academic institution can help build social capital. Design group projects/larger scale community projects
- Balance relationships and fairness and access through campus infrastructure
- Develop other accountability options in place of simple tracking of hours.



New Possibilities through Conversation

7. Drink more coffee.

“ I always tell the students, this is the beginning, this is not the end. This is the beginning of community-building and making things change in our community. Unless there is a growing body of people vested in that idea, we’re not going anywhere. Maybe when they get that job in marketing they’ll use a little bit of their time and talent to make this a better place to live in. That is, for me, what I want them to come away with. It is real hard to get there in a short period of time, but we hope the students will come away with something immediate, and a longer-term goal is that the community will become a better place.”



CVAC Resources

California Campus Compact: “Community Voices Across California”

- Executive Summary of Findings (downloadable)
www.cacampuscompact.org/download/programs/ExecutiveSummary.pdf
- “Different Worlds and Common Ground: Community Partner Perspectives on Campus Community Partnerships.” *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, Fall 2006*. Order at: www.umich.edu/~mjcsl or download the article at: www.cacampuscompact.org/download/programs/Michigan_Journal.pdf



NSLC Resources on Partnerships

- Mihalynuk, Tanis Vye and Seifer, Sarena D., *Partnerships for Higher Education Service Learning*. Scotts Valley, CA: National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2002 (Updated: NSLC Staff, 2004).
<http://servicelearning.org/resources/factsheets/hefacts/partnerships/index.php>
- National Service-Learning Clearinghouse. *Hot Topic: Partnerships*. Scotts Valley, CA: Author, 2006.
http://servicelearning.org/resources/hot_topics/partnerships/index.php
- Points of Light Foundation, *Building Effective Partnerships for Service-Learning*. Scotts Valley, CA: National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2001.
<http://servicelearning.org/filemanager/download/15/EffectivePartnerships2001.pdf>



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