
Working Together

A methodological case study of 'engaged scholarship'

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This article is written in response to the emerging interest around 'engaged scholarship'. The particular focus here is on the use of participatory action research (PAR) at the University of Queensland's Boilerhouse Community Engagement Centre (UQ Boilerhouse), which will serve as a case study for engaged scholarship in practice. It describes in detail the methodological framework developed at the centre – a methodology specifically relevant to the author, who has been using this approach to research for 13 years.

This article also seeks to use this case study as a means to shed light on the broader context underpinning discussions on 'engaged scholarship'. First, that the role of universities as 'expert' producers of knowledge must be re-evaluated. As Gibbons, Limoges, Nowotny, Schwartzman, Scott and Trow (1994, p. 11) suggest, it is perhaps inevitable that universities have come to acknowledge that they are only one player, 'albeit still a major one, in a vastly expanded knowledge production process'. And second, that any focus on engaged scholarship is part of a wider discussion about democracy and citizen participation that extends over nearly 2300 years.

From a contemporary perspective, the effectiveness of a primarily representative democracy is increasingly being challenged. Assumptions of representative democracy may have been more meaningful in smaller communities faced with relatively slow change and less complexity. In such instances commonality of religion, politics and ethnicity in a place or nation could be counted on to 'represent, more or less, the views of many' (Caragata 1999, p. 283). It is increasingly apparent that there is now a need to include a diverse range of citizen knowledge and experience in democratic decision making. In such a democracy citizens are seen to be active, informed and engaged in local issues rather than passive, withdrawn and apathetic (Putnam 1993). Balancing a citizen's right to participate is the acknowledgement

1 For the purpose of this article stakeholders are broadly defined as individuals or groups who potentially have an interest in or may be impacted by an issue.

of citizen responsibility relating to ‘the equal importance of others and their claims’, and the concept of a common good (Caragata 1999, p. 283; Jordan 1989).

In today’s complex society, this situation is reflected in calls for a more participatory democracy that embraces a collaborative approach between diverse stakeholders¹ to achieve these common good outcomes. While responses in this area are often viewed primarily as a role for governments, there is also an increasing call for higher education institutions to contribute by ‘... connecting the rich resources of the university to our most pressing social, civic and ethical problems’ (Boyer 1996, p. 21). Until quite recently in Australia, the potential for universities to contribute in this way had not been widely discussed.

The concept of ‘engaged scholarship’ provides an opportunity for exploring practical responses by universities in their quest to achieve this potential (Global University Network for Innovation 2008). Holland (2005, p. 11) describes how engaged scholarship is increasingly being embraced by universities around the world, both ‘... as an expression of contemporary research methods and as a reinterpretation of the role of higher education in creating public good’.

By providing a case study of engaged scholarship in practice this article presents:

- a methodological framework for engaged scholarship as implemented through UQ Boilerhouse participatory research projects
- discussion on how PAR can contribute to greater participatory democracy, and therefore the potential for universities to contribute to the ‘common good’
- reflections on some of the tensions and difficulties in implementing such work.

ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP: THE CONTEXT FOR PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

The concept of ‘engaged scholarship’, as an example of contemporary research methods, draws largely from the description by Gibbons et al. (1994) of the Mode 2 approach to knowledge production as being applied, transdisciplinary, participatory, reflexive, and directed towards achieving ‘common good’ outcomes while maintaining high-quality research standards.

There is a certain familiarity associated with many of the suggested attributes of such an approach; a general feeling that what’s old is new again. This is evidenced through a diverse range of theoretical, disciplinary and practice avenues through which engaged scholarship might be explored, for example:

- action research (Carr & Kemmis 1986; Lewin 1948; Zuber-Skerrit 1991)

- participatory evaluation (Chambers 1994; Estrella & Gaventa 1998; Guba & Lincoln 1990; Office of Evaluation and Strategic Planning 1997)
- participatory governance (Arnstein 1969; Gaventa 2001; de Tocqueville 1969)
- community-based participatory research (Minkler & Wallerstein 2003; Israel et al. 2005)
- participatory development (Eade 1997; Institute of Development Studies 1996; Leal & Opp 1998; United Nations Development Program 1997).

Each of these approaches is intrinsically linked from both an ethical and methodological basis (Strand et al. 2003) and has influenced the development of UQ Boilerhouse engagement initiatives. Readers are invited to explore more detailed description of these approaches through the literature. The following discussion will focus on participatory action research (PAR), an approach that has provided a clear methodological foundation for engaged scholarship at the UQ Boilerhouse.

Three key concepts underpin participatory action research. First, that all citizens, including the poor and oppressed, are capable of undertaking ‘their own investigations, analysis and planning’. Second, ‘that outsiders have roles as convenors, catalysts and facilitators’. Third, ‘that the weak and marginalised can and should be empowered’ (Chambers 1994, p. 954). Implementation of these three concepts directly addresses power-laden considerations of ‘whose knowledge counts?’, providing a strong social justice focus for PAR. Working from this philosophical platform, PAR encourages and facilitates participatory and empowering processes for diverse stakeholders, thus moving away from the ‘expert’ delivery of knowledge from academics to the people, to a co-production of new knowledge and shared understandings as a basis for collaborative local action (Cuthill 2003; Rahman 1993).

As a collaborative research approach, PAR is founded on trusting and respectful relationships between stakeholders. It seeks to build the knowledge, skills and abilities of participants, and to facilitate informed and collaborative responses for the common good. PAR links academic theory to practice through an iterative process of reflective learning involving diverse stakeholders (Boyer 1996; Habermas 1989). In doing so it combines the three interrelated aspects of research, education and socio-political action into a process for restructuring existing power into a more equitable arrangement (Fals-Borda & Rahman 1991). As part of a new paradigm of social science it acknowledges ‘... a world of multiple and competing versions of truth and reality’ (Wadsworth 1998, p. 8).

Such an approach implicitly suggests that theory and practice are both interdependent and complementary, and each should inform and strengthen the other. In a self-reinforcing

process, practice would inform theory and theory would inform practice. This theory/practice nexus is a central theme within all UQ Boilerhouse research.

PAR is a process-orientated research approach which acknowledges that, 'how you do things is as important as what you do'. The research expertise, in facilitating an informed, high-quality and inclusive research process, is of key importance. This is a significant departure from the traditional research role; a move away from the academic as the 'expert' holder of knowledge, to a role where the academic is a facilitator of collaborative knowledge creation processes. Proportionally few academics appear to be aware of either the practice or potential of participatory research. A better understanding and clearer articulation of this approach and its impact is required – outcomes to which this article hopes to contribute.

PAR IN PRACTICE: A CASE STUDY OF THE UQ BOILERHOUSE METHODOLOGY

The UQ Boilerhouse Community Engagement Centre provides a methodological case study of engaged scholarship implemented at a research centre level.

Launched in 1999 on the new University of Queensland campus at Ipswich, the then-named Community Service Research Centre was established to build links between the campus and the West Moreton region in South East Queensland. This was one of the first research centres established in an Australian 'sandstone' university to explicitly articulate a desire to 'engage' with its community to collaboratively address local issues (Muirhead & Woolcock 2008). (The University of Queensland is recognised as one of Australia's leading universities. It is a member of the Group of 8 Australian 'sandstone' universities, consistently ranks among the top 100 universities in the world, and is acknowledged as one of the top three research universities in Australia [University of Queensland 2008, p. 4]. In 2007, there were over 5300 staff and approximately 40 000 students.)

In February 2005 a new director was appointed and assigned the task of developing the centre to play a leadership role in university engagement policy, planning and practice in Australia through a focus on engaged scholarship. The centre was subsequently renamed the UQ Boilerhouse Community Engagement Centre and a three-year strategic plan was developed to clearly articulate the centre's vision, mission, principles and objectives (UQ Boilerhouse 2006). That mission is '... to facilitate just and sustainable community outcomes'.

The mission is underpinned by four principles that provide clear direction for all centre engagement initiatives. They include a commitment to:

- collaborative responses to local issues
- active citizenship
- personal relationships as a basis for collaboration

—sustainable development – incorporating a balance between social justice; economic stability and equity; environmental protection; and participatory governance.

Working from the mission statement and principles, much of the centre’s work now focuses on ‘engaged scholarship’. Over the past four years the centre has implemented 18 major projects with over \$3.5 million of operational and project funding. Project and centre level evaluation frameworks have been developed and are starting to provide early assessment of the impact from this work (for example, see Cuthill, Wilson & Nielson 2008; Hudson & Cuthill 2006; Scull & Cuthill 2007, 2008; Warburton et al. 2008).

The UQ Boilerhouse acts as a facilitating agent, bringing together diverse public, private and community sector stakeholders to develop informed and collaborative responses to both existing and emerging local issues or opportunities (UQ Boilerhouse 2006). A participatory research approach opens up new possibilities for innovation where:

- responsibility is shared
- diverse perspectives are heard
- understanding, ownership and commitment for collaborative actions are enhanced
- resources can be used most effectively (Cuthill & Fien 2005).

The iterative process of PAR means that research will be both responsive and flexible, facilitating ongoing opportunities for stakeholders to be involved in all stages of a project, collaboratively refocusing the activities, and pursuing new leads and directions as the research develops. This methodology is implemented at the UQ Boilerhouse through three defined but interrelated stages:

- project development and design
- data collection and analysis
- reporting and project evaluation.

While the following description provides discussion around these three stages, it should be remembered that each research project has its own specific context relating to, for example, funding, timeframes, political environment and stakeholder outcomes. As such, what follows should be read as a broad description of this methodology, and viewed as an ‘ideal’ model. In practice, each of the PAR projects facilitated through the UQ Boilerhouse is much more ‘messy’ than the following description might suggest. This is typical of the PAR methodology.

Stage 1: Project Development and Design

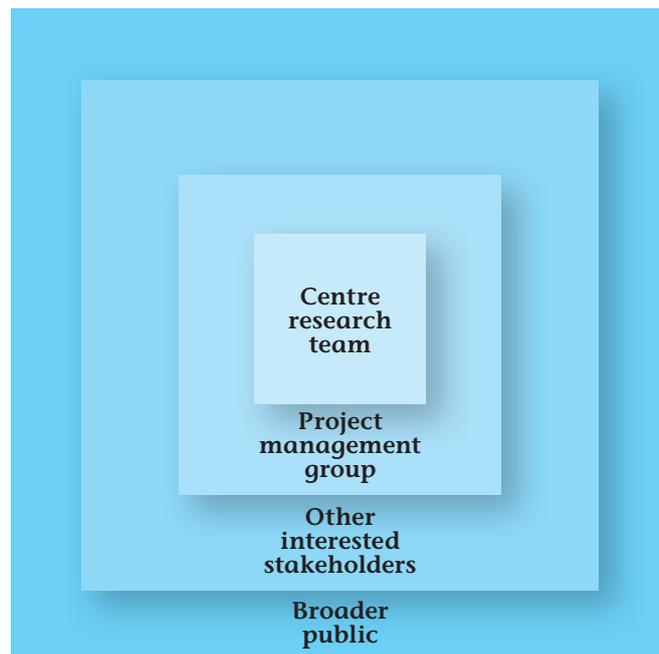
Appropriate project development provides a solid foundation for research that directly contributes to the centre’s mission, and complies with centre principles. Initially, a local issue and/or opportunity is identified by stakeholders, and a small project team, comprising centre staff and self-selected stakeholders, do a preliminary scan around the ‘topic of interest’. This scan involves identifying and having informal discussions with other (obvious) stakeholders, and starting a literature search. If there appears to be a clear need, identified both in the literature and ‘on the ground’,

to develop an informed and collaborative response, a formal research process is instigated.

This can be a difficult period of the PAR process as there is usually little funding available to support development of the research. As such, projects often only get up and running due to the generous efforts from committed stakeholders. Initial project meetings focus on articulating research questions, developing a common language, starting the stakeholder analysis, and identifying funding sources to implement the research. These meetings provide an opportunity for people to get to know each other, and thereby help establish a respectful working relationship among the oftentimes disparate stakeholders.

The stakeholder analysis is undertaken to identify people and/or agencies who have an interest in or may be impacted by the acknowledged issue. This identification is typically problematic in that, no matter how much effort is put into the analysis, as the project progresses there always seems to be someone else 'who should have been invited'. Projects leave open the opportunity for new stakeholders to join in at any stage, with their level of participation negotiated through project 'governance' procedures.

Diagram 1: Stakeholders are broadly categorised in four groups



The centre research team initially comprises a Boilerhouse researcher and interested academic staff from either UQ or other universities. A partisan approach to research is encouraged. When project funding is secured research staff are employed and join the research team to implement field research. The research team has core responsibilities relating to accountability for research funds, research quality, provision of a secretariat to the project management group and compliance with institutional procedures.

An interim project management group guides the initial stages of research development until funding is achieved. People identified through the stakeholder analysis are invited to an initial project workshop which:

- provides description of the context for the issue of concern
- indicates the intent of the interim project management group to undertake a PAR project, and provides information on what this will entail
- invites those who are interested to be involved.

Stakeholders who wish to be actively involved in the project management group self-identify, while others who are not able to actively participate can maintain a lower level of involvement as an interested stakeholder.

It is also acknowledged that the broader public might have some interest in the project, and information processes for this group are addressed in a communication and engagement plan. This plan is developed to ensure that an appropriate level of engagement is facilitated for each of the four stakeholder categories identified in Diagram 1. The actual level of engagement in the PAR project is determined by the individual, the rationale being that people will choose their level of involvement according to both their interest in the issue and their ability to contribute. It has long been acknowledged that participation ‘... cannot be conjured up or created artificially’; rather, it is more of a feeling expressed by the individual that they want to be part of the project, that they consider its aims to be worthwhile and they choose to commit to the work (Lawrence 1954, p. 51).

The different levels of stakeholder engagement might range from being kept informed or being consulted, through to full participation in the research (Arnstein 1969) – see Table 1.

Table 1: Levels of, and methods for, engagement

Levels of engagement	Methods of engagement
Stakeholders are informed	Media or public reports
	Academic articles
	Conference presentations
	Project stakeholder email list
	Project newsletters
Stakeholders are consulted	Presentations to stakeholder groups
	Website discussion forums
	Stakeholder interviews, workshops and/or surveys
Stakeholders participate	Review of project design, reports and/or publications
	Research team and project management group meetings

The project management group is now boosted with new members emerging from the initial project workshop. Governance procedures are articulated as a first priority. Some groups have decided that a formal ‘memorandum of understanding’ is appropriate while others have opted for a less formal group consensus approach to decision making. Two recent projects have also established a ‘critical friends group’ comprising both national and international experts in the area of research focus. This group

provides an independent and informed voice to guide/review the research. Other tasks completed during the development and design stage include a detailed research design, project evaluation framework, ethics approval and a funding application.

The funding application often involves a 'wait' of anywhere from 3 to 12 months. This lull in research activity can be problematic in regard to maintaining enthusiasm and momentum among the project management group. A short-term solution for some projects has been to seek 'bridging' funds from project partners and/or external sources. This usually involves relatively small amounts of funding, which are used to employ a research officer to work approximately two days a week until full funding is achieved. If split among three to six project partners the cost is quite small. Most UQ Boilerhouse projects look for funding of three years, which provides a reasonable length of time to implement a genuine participatory research process.

Stage 2: Data Collection and Analysis

Appropriate data collection methods are selected from a suite of six potential data sources:

- literature review
- observational data
- stakeholder interviews
- participatory processes
- stakeholder surveys
- project evaluation.

The literature review includes academic literature; consideration of relevant policies, strategies, plans, case studies and/or reports; census data; and any other relevant secondary data. While the bulk of the review is completed during the developmental stage, additional information is collected as the project progresses.

To date, observational data (for example, from public meetings and project management group meetings) has played a minor role in informing centre projects. However, in several recent projects extensive filming of project meetings and workshops has been conducted, although to date this data has not been systematically analysed. In a process orientated methodology, it is expected that there is much to be learnt from how the process is implemented. The usefulness of this method is being examined both in terms of the quality of data and how it can be analysed, and with regards to resource considerations. There is an ethical requirement to have the consent of any individuals being filmed or recorded.

During the developmental stage, an oftentimes extensive series of informal discussions with diverse stakeholders is conducted. These one-on-one discussions have the aims of establishing initial contacts with stakeholders, field testing emerging concepts relating to the topic of research interest and identifying other potential stakeholders (Neuman 1994). Field notes are written up by the research officer after each meeting/workshop.

Semi-structured or structured interviews are a common data collection method for centre projects. Interviews are taped, transcribed, then thematically coded and returned to participants for editing or further elaboration. However, this is a time-consuming and costly process with 100–150 hours of interviews recorded and transcribed each year. The centre is exploring the use of new technologies such as voice recognition software to offset this cost.

Participatory processes, based on concepts of ‘collective reasoning and deliberation’ provide a key source of data for centre projects (Carson & Gelber 2001, p. 11). These processes include, for example, project management group meetings, stakeholder workshops and focus group sessions. They facilitate multiple outcomes including data collection, building common understanding from diverse perspectives and establishing stakeholder networks. Arguably, the development of informed and collaborative responses heavily relies on these group processes as a facilitated pathway towards such responses. These participatory processes have involved groups of between 3 and 80 people in sessions ranging from one hour to two days.

Data from participatory processes is collected through a variety of methods including participants recording their ideas on butchers paper, minutes from meetings, electronic whiteboards, and small breakout sessions with summary overheads used to present back to other participants. It is considered essential to use experienced facilitators to plan and deliver participatory processes. This role is filled by experienced centre staff when possible, but external facilitators are used, especially for larger and/or more complicated workshops. Hoatson and Egan (2001, p. 11) argue that the value of an independent facilitator is evidenced in ‘... their ability to be seen as working for that partnership, rather than for any individual interest’. This is particularly relevant during the developmental phase of research when the group is in its formative stages.

Qualitative methods such as interviews and participatory processes form a core focus for data collection during Boilerhouse PAR projects. However, surveys are an important tool for some data collection processes, for example, if responses from a large population are required to inform a project (Neuman 1994).

Generally, projects use a mix of two or more data collection methods. Data is generally processed through use of discourse analysis, thematic coding or statistical analysis. Results from the various individual data sources are then triangulated and examined to determine similarities and differences.

Stage 3: Reporting and Project Evaluation

Following the data analysis, a first draft research report is developed by the research team and reviewed by project management group members. When a ‘final’ draft is agreed on, this is distributed to all stakeholders on the project email list for comment. In some projects stakeholder workshops are also run to

facilitate detailed discussion and review of the draft report, and also to communicate project outcomes to interested audiences. Once the review processes are completed the research report is used as the basis for academic publications, conference presentations, stakeholder policy, planning and/or training responses. All publications are available for free download on the centre's website (subject to copyright requirements).

A project evaluation framework has been developed as a guide for all centre projects (Table 2). The framework incorporates five key areas for evaluation, which include both the tangible and less tangible project outputs (Kuruvilla et al. 2006).

Table 2: Project evaluation framework

Evaluation criteria	Examples of indicators/methods
1 Project outputs (e.g. reports, training, plans, guidelines etc.)	Project deliverables submitted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on time, and/or • as outlined in funding agreement
2 Efficient and accountable budget	Project completed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • within budget, and/or • in accordance with funding agreement
3 Research quality	Research reporting endorsed through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the project management group, and/or • peer-reviewed academic publications, and/or • peer-reviewed conference presentations
4 Effective communication and engagement processes	Positive responses from project evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • survey, and/or • stakeholder reflective workshops, and/or • participant interviews
5 Enhanced human and social capital (capacity building, e.g. trust, skills, networks, collaboration)	Positive responses from project evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • survey, and/or • stakeholder reflective workshops, and/or • participant interviews

Working from this framework, a project evaluation plan is developed during the first stage of research. This plan is then used as a touchstone throughout the project to ensure appropriate progress is being made towards achieving project objectives. The final stage of the research incorporates a summative evaluation, which is included in the project report.

The PAR methodology has proven incredibly successful over the 13 years it has been used by this author, and more recently across a diverse range of UQ Boilerhouse projects. Previous discussion has focused on how the research process operates, now we focus on a number of reflections that might be useful if considering such an approach. Discussion briefly focuses on

why PAR might be useful in helping build just and sustainable communities, and reflects on some of the areas of tension and difficulty experienced by the centre in implementing its work.

ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP: ENHANCING HUMAN CAPITAL AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

Arguably, in our modern technological society, a rapid accumulation of knowledge and wealth has not yet been accompanied by equivalent 'advances in ethical thinking' (McIntyre 1996, p. 15). Calhoun (1995, p. 9) emphasises the importance of citizens understanding the 'underlying pattern of causes and constraints, not merely the more contingent surface pattern of actual occurrences'. If people are not able to critically perceive the reality of their lives, they are simply swept along with the tides of change, for good or bad (Fals-Borda & Rahman 1991; Freire 1970). By adopting a social learning and action approach PAR seeks to develop a 'critical consciousness' relating to a citizen's ethical responsibility to take informed action for the 'common good' (Freire 1973).

As such, the concept of PAR seeks to involve 'disfranchised people in pursuit of answers to the questions of their daily struggle and survival' (Sohng 1995, p. 1). This approach focuses on people in a local setting and recognises 'the importance of social and collective processes'; in essence, it encompasses a dialogue that facilitates a shared understanding of issues and acceptance of responsibility and promotes informed action (Wadsworth 1998, p. 12). Personal empowerment is evidenced in the attainment of knowledge, skills and abilities through participation (Lyons, Smuts & Stephens 2001). Development of local leadership and attainment of new skills and information facilitates the ongoing cyclical process of social learning and collaborative action (Cuthill & Fien 2005). As a result, local communities have an opportunity to empower themselves to play a key role in local development.

The collaborative nature of the UQ Boilerhouse methodology looks to facilitate these processes and outcomes, and is at the core of the centre's philosophy and operations. Yet its implementation has and continues to be a learning process for centre staff. As with any collaboration, there is a possibility of tensions surfacing, particularly in relation to issues of power, representation and cultural dynamics (Wallerstein & Duran 2006).

For example, a recent centre project involved working with Pacific Island communities, education providers and service agencies to support young people from these communities in accessing higher education opportunities. During this project two key areas for negotiation arose (Scull & Cuthill 2008).

First, research fatigue due to previous negative experiences of research participation was evident, with Pacific Island community representatives initially reluctant to become involved in what was seen as 'yet another research project'. Second, there was a

challenge in securing reliable participation from Pacific Island participants, partly due to differences in cultural norms between the Anglo-Australian research team and these participants. Adaptation, flexibility and negotiation were required from both cultural groups to overcome these issues.

While shared collaboration and shared decision making among participants is both a necessary and an admirable goal, it should be noted that ‘collaboration’ is an imperfect science. It depends on and revolves around contextual factors such as the available time, abilities, commitment and intention of participants. As experienced with the Pacific Islander project, these influencing ‘contexts’ form the basis of ongoing negotiation within each collaboration (Gray 1989; Himmelman 1995).

Negotiations for the Pacific Islander project were facilitated through a series of workshops involving community leaders, two Pacific Island community liaison officers employed by the project and project research officers. These workshops were very different in their implementation to the structured workshops normally facilitated by centre staff. For example, the Islanders have a very strong Christian faith and they start and end all gatherings with prayers. They also requested regular breaks during the workshops to allow them to converse in their native language to ensure that the preceding discussion had been clearly understood by all participants. As a response to a previous (negative) research experience, the Pacific Islanders asked the university to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU), which outlined the roles and responsibilities of all participants. The MOU provided a focus for negotiation for both parties and an agreement was reached after much discussion.

Our experiences suggest it is important that the practical realities of achieving ‘negotiated’ equality within participatory research be addressed during the early developmental stage of a project. Topics such as implementation timeframes, project language, intellectual property, funding arrangements, governance and delivery of ‘useful’ outcomes for all stakeholders must be openly discussed and agreed upon. This dialogue should look for a shared understanding of project goals, management and outcomes, and of participant roles and responsibilities. Potential issues should be flagged at a time when they can easily be discussed and managed.

From a research manager’s perspective, it is worth noting that while negotiation among participants is presented as a key requirement for participatory action research at the centre, three issues are not open for negotiation. First, most UQ Boilerhouse projects are publicly funded, through national competitive grant schemes, with the centre listed as the administering agency. As such the centre has legal accountability to ensure funding is used appropriately. Second, UQ Boilerhouse researchers accept responsibility that all centre research projects are conducted to peer review quality standards. Third, all UQ research projects undergo

a strict ethics approval process before implementation. As part of ethics approval, all UQ Boilerhouse staff, and by association all project participants, are obliged to adhere to stipulated ethics procedures and requirements.

MAKING THE CASE FOR PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

As stated, negotiation constitutes a first step in the iterative research process. This process can be quite disconcerting for stakeholders who might be more familiar with the more common linear, positivist approach to research. Indeed, broadly speaking, there appears to be a general lack of understanding of participatory approaches both in public agencies and in many of the more traditional academic ‘silos’ in Australian universities. However, it is clear from the UQ Boilerhouse experience that public, private and community sector agencies, and academics, once they are familiar with the PAR approach, endorse and support what they describe as a ‘common sense’ research approach that looks to address real world issues and needs. As such, ‘quality’ within PAR strives to be both socially accountable and academically defined (Gibbons et al. 1994). The academic rigour associated with the centre’s work, along with the reputation of a ‘sandstone’ university provides a strong incentive for partnership building.

For example, the UQ Boilerhouse has been approached by private sector agencies such as urban development companies and major consulting firms to work together in developing community engagement processes or social impact assessment studies for major infrastructure projects. These agencies see the strength of the centre as a neutral party, situated within a major Australian research university. This provides them with the credibility to argue their project outcomes to both their clients and the development regulators. During project negotiations the Boilerhouse looks for a guarantee to protect the independent nature of the research being implemented. Interestingly, these agencies generally seem to be more conversant with and accepting of participatory approaches than government agencies.

One of the key constraints impeding a more ready acceptance of PAR is a lack of empirical evidence, specifically with regards to the quality and impact of PAR, but more generally in relation to engaged scholarship. While much is claimed of this approach (including what is reported in this article), the evidence to support these claims is thinly distributed across a multitude of diverse disciplinary journals and reports (Seifer & Carriere 2003). As noted previously, in response to this situation, the UQ Boilerhouse is implementing project evaluations for all centre projects. Evaluation fulfils multiple purposes, including that it:

- supports continuous learning through reflective practice
- provides evidence of accountability to the Centre Strategic Plan
- directs future planning for both the centre and its projects.

From an institutional perspective, there is a valid question as to how engaged scholarship fits into the traditional academic setting (Commission on Community-Engaged Scholarship in the Health Professions 2005). Perhaps the logical starting point for such a conversation around this issue is the key requirement for academics to publish in highly rated peer-reviewed journals. Such publications directly relate to opportunities for tenure, career advancement and academic promotion. However, this route is problematic with regards PAR as, historically, journals have predominately focused on publishing research from mainstream research paradigms. As a result, reporting of participatory research has not been highly visible. A recent suite of academic journals, more willing to report outcomes from engaged scholarship, provides increased opportunity for academics to publish their participatory research.

Further confounding the publication issue is a common philosophical commitment from academics undertaking engaged scholarship to widely share the knowledge gained through such research. In response to this commitment, their research reporting is directed to publication outlets that are broadly available to the most relevant audience, not hidden away in academic journals accessed by the privileged few. Clearly, there is an inherent tension between publishing in high-quality peer-reviewed journals for career advancement, and providing accessible information to a broader audience. This tension could be addressed through appropriate institutional recognition of and support for engaged scholarship that might not meet standard promotion criteria, but does contribute to the 'common good'. As noted earlier, measures of research 'impact' are narrowly defined in Australian universities and research is required to enhance understanding of the costs, benefits and impacts of engaged scholarship.

CONCLUSION

The work of the UQ Boilerhouse over the past 10 years has undoubtedly influenced the way engaged scholarship is viewed within the University of Queensland. The centre now has 'runs on the board' in relation to participatory research. For example, every dollar invested in the centre over the past three years has returned \$3 in project funding, and substantial in-kind support. In addition, the centre has produced academic outcomes, developed strong regional partnerships, and provided direction to institutional policy and operations in this area (Cuthill 2009).

For example, a recent report sponsored by the Vice-Chancellor, outlines recommendations for institutional responses relating to broad concepts of university engagement. In particular, Recommendation 8 identifies the need to 'Develop institutional responses to recognise and support the scholarship of engagement' (Cuthill & Dowd 2008, p. iv). Discussions are underway with regards to implementing this recommendation

through development of a participatory research mentoring and support program for early career researchers and higher research degree students.

This article has presented discussion relating to engaged scholarship, and a methodological case study focusing on PAR as an example of engaged scholarship. Ongoing discussion and debate on the different applications of engaged scholarship will help engender a more ready understanding of participatory research as a valid and valuable methodology within the academy (Gibbons et al. 1994). It is my belief that in time engaged scholarship will become more broadly accepted as one way of 'doing business' in Australian universities. As Boyer (1996, p. 18) suggests, we might once again become more '... vigorously engaged in the issues of our day ...'; engaged scholars working towards the philosophical concept of a 'common good'.

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