Community University Partnership Research
Steps towards a negotiated social justice

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If we leave our institutional or community-based learning sites, do we have to leave our context-embedded knowledge behind?

Ethical space
(Roger Poole, 1972)

Working in the space between two knowledge systems

A space that no one owns, where engagement involves openness and mutual learning.

“It’s a gift to walk in two worlds, but also a responsibility. Ethical space does not exist unless you look at it, affirm it.” Willie Ermine, 2006

Can we have a symphony of sounds, or must we all sing out of the same page in the song book?

A project can bring together many disparate actors and objectives.
- Different people may want different things from the same project.
- Different parties bring different resources and constraints.
- Different time points will bring different opportunities, challenges, learning points and accomplishments.
  - Anticipate these variabilities.
  - Acknowledge them in periodic process reviews.
  - Make adjustments to accommodate emerging opportunities and challenges.

Can we create a movement, with different constituencies, sensitivities, needs and goals, but with a shared agenda for knowledge creation, mobilization and social change?

How to orchestrate diverse players and parts
- Clear, uncluttered vision of main project goals
- Selective inclusion of players: keen, independent and collaborative
- Effective co-leadership (community/university)
- Responsive co-management (community/university)
- Clear structure for independent and for collective aspects of the project
- Memoranda of agreement pre-establishing ownership of outputs.

Memoranda of agreement
A tool for good process and protection for all parties to a project
Who will do what, why, when, how, and with which resources

6 degrees of mutual interdependence

Purpose: perspectives on why the project is being done.
Plan: approach, research sites, project phases, timelines
People: differentiated roles, distributed division of labour
Procedures: methods, activities, analysis of data
Products: outputs, outcomes, consequences
Possession: of data, responsibility, outputs, dissemination

Collective, periodic reviews of the Memoranda of Agreement reinforces understandings and supports revisions as needed.

Promising principles

1. Publically funded research should benefit the public (directly or indirectly, immediately or eventually). Investigators in communities and universities are accountable to the public.

2. People who will be most affected by the conduct and the consequences of a project should have more influence over project decisions.

3. Equitable practice does not mean equal division of resources or responsibilities. Negotiated agreements may distribute funds, labour, and control based on a consensus about what is likely to work best.

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