Community-based Learning: Rethinking the relationship between formal education and non-formal education for sustainability

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PRESENTATION ARGUMENTS

- **BE CONFIDENT** about what we can share to others
- **ESTABLISH** reciprocal LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS
- **EMBED** schools within the CONTEXTS of the COMMUNITY
- **EXPAND** the ‘Community’ we LEARN AND ACT WITH
- **DISCOVERING** and **DEVELOPING** ESD in our own CONTEXTS
If Community-based learning works…
why argue for the need to re-conceptualise school-community partnership practice?
Because often these partnerships are geared towards …

Student well-being and learning and employment outcomes

Community strengthening or contributing to building social capital
Models of School-Community Relationships
(Uzzell, 1999)

- School as isolated from community

- School as guest of the community

- School invites the community as resource persons

- School as social agent
Level of Maturity School-Community Partnerships
(Kilpatrick et al 2003)

All groups within the community view the school as a learning centre.
More than learning outcomes for the school …

The essence is that both the school and the community “share the belief that education is the responsibility of the whole community and [they are able to] work together, drawing on skills and knowledge of the community as a whole [and] experience benefits that extend beyond producing a well-educated group of young people” (Kilpatrick 2002:4).
I argue that instead of viewing formal and non-formal education as two distinct categories of education provision...

...we need to view the formal educational institutions as being embedded within the broader contexts that non-formal education arises from.
International Studies and Sustainability

- A set of graduate capabilities for the BA International Studies (but not explicitly mentioning sustainability)

- Core courses develop the capacity for students to think across different disciplinary boundaries.

- Students are able to take a specialisation stream in Sustainability with 6 courses
Classroom in the local community

Students listen to Aboriginal stories

Local community in the Classroom

Aboriginal dreamtime stories are shared creatively in the classroom
Learning through Action Research

We **PREPARE** our students to be able to

- **PLAN** for internships in global contexts
- **ACT** by searching, applying, securing and conducting the internship
- **OBSERVE** their own experiences in the contexts (national and organisational) they find themselves in
- **REFLECT** on these experiences, **RE-EXAMINE** and **REVISE** their previous understandings of these situations,
- **PLAN** how to apply this new understanding
- **ACT** based on this new knowledge/ action into similar or new contexts.

![Motivation Diagram]

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A more GLOBAL community

Internships overseas (Karla during her internship with a grassroots group in India)

Internships in Melbourne with International NGOs like OXFAM.
Locally relevant …

Contextualised learning is about linking the topic to the students’ daily realities for them to appreciate the importance and relevance of the lesson.

My confidence comes from a deep passion for locally relevant learning, but also from an understanding of a key ecological principle – that everything is connected or interrelated – and as an educator, my challenge is to help students make these connections.
The Challenge

Paulo Freire called it the “here and now” or “the situation within which [people] are submerged, from which they emerge, and in which they intervene.”

As the principles of ESD emphasise, **ESD should encompass the broader contexts** of socio-economic and socio-political issues the surround equity, poverty, democracy and the quality of life.