Enacting Social Responsibility: Navigating the Wild Waters of Working Together with Diverse Partners & Communities

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Mapping the Course

Purpose of Universities?

Critical, Indigenous & Transformative Pedagogies

Collaborative, Critical & Indigenous Research

Enacting Social Responsibility:

➢ Energy Efficiency Project
➢ Taiwan-Australian Indigenous Exchange Initiative
What is the purpose of universities?
➢ public commons – belonged to & benefited all common people collectively

➢ gaining an understanding of how the universe works & what creates health and wellbeing → to pass on these knowledges

➢ social mandate → contributing to the health & wellbeing of humans & nature by ensuring harmony/balance
Are universities fulfilling this mandate?
Global Challenges: Suffering & Surviving

- disease & violence
- climate change & environmental destruction
- extreme natural events & disasters
What are the reasons for universities failing to fulfil their social mandate?
Contemporary Western Universities: Disempowering to Maintain Rule of the Few

➢ based on Western totalitarian, mechanistic, positivistic & rational worldview

➢ creating, perpetuating & spreading this Western worldview & cultural practices → capitalism & competition

➢ operating in service of economy

➢ creating capable workers

➢ become business itself
Universities contribute $66.4 billion to Australian economy...

https://www.uq.edu.au › news › article › 2018/08 › universities-contribute-...

Aug 14, 2018 - Eight Australian universities, including The University of Queensland, contribute about $66.4 billion per year to the national economy, a new report has found. ... The report found that Go8 research activity contributed $24.5 billion to the economy each year – the equivalent of $1000 for every Australian.

Australia's international education exports grew by 22% in 2017

https://monitor.icef.com › 2018/04 › australias-international-education-exp...

Apr 17, 2018 - Education is now Australia's third-largest export sector and the country's leading ... Economic contribution growing faster than enrolments ... enrolled in Australia grew by 13% over the year before, reaching a high of 624,000.
weakening & oppressing citizens by treating them as lacking knowledge & needing to be educated rather than acknowledging & drawing out their innate embodied knowledges (Freire, 2017)

disempowering scholars & students to keep them manageable

research increasingly addresses the concerns & interests of businesses --> social sciences, arts & humanities oppressed
How can we turn the tide & be socially responsible by fulfilling our social mandate?
Critical, Indigenous & Transformative Pedagogies

Collaborative, Critical & Indigenous Research
Research in partnership with communities, government, NGO & industry to increase social impact


Participatory Action Research

Critical Indigenous Methodologies
Indigenist Research
(Denzin, Lincoln & Smith, 2008; Kovach, 2010; Smith, 1999, 2018; Wilson, 2008)

Researchers conducting research in collaboration with diverse consortia to address real world challenges
Indigenous methodologies

✓ research by, with & for Indigenous peoples
✓ exposes colonisation practices
✓ using methods drawn from Indigenous traditions & knowledges

Critical methodologies

✓ emancipatory, empowering values of critical pedagogy
✓ scholarship done for explicit political, utopian purposes
✓ engages in politics of liberation
✓ reflective → searching for open-ended, subversive, multi-voiced, participatory perspectives

creates knowledges & practices that:
✓ disrupt Western ways of knowing, capitalism & colonisation
✓ create social transformation, justice & equity
How could enacting collaborative, critical, Indigenous & transformative pedagogies & research look like?
Enacting Social Responsibility: Working Together
$ 12 mill over 3 years
6 remote Indigenous Australian communities in Northern Australia

• trialing energy & water efficiency education & technologies
• identify barriers & solutions to using energy wisely
• develop a best practice engagement model
• fulfilled all KPIs
• received several national awards
Consortia \(\rightarrow\) pooling important resources

Innovative & Worked well
Employed & educated 81 Yolŋu in Yolŋu languages in energy efficiency

Educated Yolŋu community members in Yolŋu languages worked as teams

84% of households participated
Many households got retrofits

- solar hot water systems
- heat pump hot water systems
- ceiling insulation installs

✓ improved quality of life
✓ reduced energy usage

BUT → many challenges...
➢ consortia partners had their ideas, interests & expectations → $

➢ Indigenous people not involved in project creation

➢ did not find out about Indigenous views:
  • what knowledges & perspectives they hold
  • how they use power
  • what works & what doesn’t
  • their solutions & needs
➢ reinforced colonisation
➢ excluded, disrespected & invalidated Indigenous knowledges & cultural practices
➢ undermined governance & authority of elders
➢ reinforced feeling controlled & dump, low confidence & learned helplessness
➢ largely ineffective education
✓ genuine working together with communities → co-design
✓ building relationships esp elders
✓ longer at start but faster implementation
✓ working with local teams in local languages → building capacity in communities
✓ two-way exchange - dialogue to learning from community
✓ using qualitative Indigenist research
✓ education → co-creating & building upon existing knowledges & culture
✓ ongoing co-evaluation

• reciprocity
• includes & validates
• projects, findings, policies & services more effective
Short-term & rigid milestones

- insufficient time to learn & apply
  - set them up for failure
  - got up hope, income, authority, skills, confidence, pride
  - lifted up & let fall
  - heartbreaking
  - reduces willingness to participate

- project ineffective - changes not sustained
- many unforeseen challenges → conflicts with milestones

✓ long-term
✓ flexible milestones
Quantitative Research Issues

- Consortia partners little understanding of research
- Perception that only quantitative data is robust high-quality research evidence
- Little knowledge of qualitative & Indigenous research

- Teamed up with natural scientists
- Quantitative research design
- Controlled experimental designs
Numbers don’t capture what is going on & disguise what is really going on

Western surveys:
- language & cultural issues
- imposing Western view & suppressing Indigenous perspectives

only some received intervention:
- division & conflicts
- “something wrong with me”
- “are others more deserving”
- “I am still waiting”

no employment & capacity building
Joint qualitative Indigenist research
✓ co-designed research with A/Prof Lawurrpa Maypilama
✓ employed & educated local Indigenous co-researchers in their languages in each community
✓ enabled Indigenous peoples to tell their stories authentically
✓ got picture what is happening & how we can work together to strengthen what is working & address what is not working
Local Indigenous co-researcher teams

✓ local knowledges & languages
✓ kinship relationships & authority

→

✓ high participation
✓ high quality data = true & deep story
✓ built capacity & created income for individuals & communities
✓ opportunities beyond project
Working together two-way = challenging

✓ many misunderstandings & arguments
✓ always came back to each other & worked out issues
  • authenticity & integrity
  • responsibility
  • impact on community → making a difference
✓ humble
✓ giving up power
✓ open & willing to learn &
  change → interest & curiosity
✓ deeply listening
✓ generous & patient
High complexity & change → uncertainty

- diverse worldviews & cultural practices
- community & organizational contexts
- individual personalities
- lots of changes happening & fast
- much unknown & uncertain → emerging

✓ anticipating but often fast response required
✓ being sensitive - deep listening & own experience
✓ sufficiently deep relationships
✓ asking experienced colleagues, local co-researchers & cultural advisors
✓ co-creating & co-implementing

THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE SENSE OUT OF CHANGE IS TO PLUNGE INTO IT, MOVE WITH IT, AND JOIN THE DANCE. - ALAN WATTS
How could we fulfil our social responsibility better?
Taiwan–Australian Indigenous Exchange Initiative

Indigenous ecological-cultural exchange & arts
to validate & revitalise Indigenous knowledges & practices
to transform & heal, (re)build adaptive capacity & reduce the risk of disasters
Connecting Indigenous peoples

Arts sharing-making & (re)connecting with nature

Indigenous & non-Indigenous working together
2017 → Building relationships, creating team & co-creating project

- 2017 - Seed Funding - $10,000
- 2018 - Proof-of-concept - $75,000
2018 June - Exchange in Taiwan
2018 August - Exchange in Australia
2019 April
Researcher Exchange & Community Visits in Taiwan
2019 July - Taiwan-Australian Indigenous Knowledges Exchange Symposium

UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA

Kaohsiung Medical University

[Images of group photos and activities related to the symposium]
2019 August - Exchange in Tiwi Island
Trails & Tribulations

- diversity → greatest asset AND challenge
- remote communities & international → distance & lack of lived experiences in respective cultures
- long-term & slow → creating & sustaining commitment
  - emerging → balancing with funding commitments
  - adding & integrating partners throughout → new knowledges & resources but also changes
  - larger teams → workable governance
- ethics does not perceive relationships building & co-creating as project → no ethics clearance
Learnings → Process

- diversity & conflict = rich points → learning & innovation
- authentic & ongoing communication via ZOOM
- respecting & addressing needs of each partner = reciprocity
- creating & refining collaboration & IP agreement
- new members → testing expertise/resources & right personality (uncertainty, team player, holistic perspective)
- governance system → nature based → e.g., deep democracy/sociocracy
Take Home Messages

Potential pathways for universities to enhance social responsibility & contribute again to the betterment of humanity:

✓ utilizing critical, Indigenous & transformative pedagogies
✓ employing collaborative, critical & Indigenous research, especially participatory action research
Working Together - Key: Relationships

✓ long-term, emergent & adaptive
✓ holistic - ecological Indigenous worldview & approach
  ✓ co-design, co-implementation & co-evaluation
✓ governance & agreements based on nature principles
  ✓ authenticity, humility & deep listening
✓ two-way learning & benefits (reciprocity)
✓ conflicts & mistakes = rich points