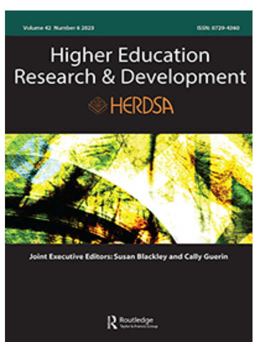

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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'No university without community': engaging the community in social work simulations

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ABSTRACT

Although community engagement is now a widely accepted part of universities' agenda, the evidence of learning environments that allow students to gain new knowledge and skills through authentic partnership and reciprocity with community members remains sporadic. Guided by educational and community engagement scholarship, the study examined the involvement of community members in social work simulations at an Australian university. Based on reflexive thematic analysis of focus groups and interviews with community members and university staff who participated in social work simulations, four qualities of practice learning were identified: (1) the value of lived experience and expertise; (2) the importance of preparation for professional practice; (3) dedication of time and resources; and (4) guided by the impacts for community members. Taking a critical perspective, community-engaged teaching recognizes and values the communal aspects of knowing and learning, understood through an examination of teaching and learning and community engagement theory.

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Community engagement; service user involvement; simulations; social work education; student learning; transformative learning; critical pedagogy

Introduction

This article draws on critical pedagogy, transformative and experiential learning, alongside community-engaged teaching, to investigate the integration of community members into simulation-based education at an Australian social work program. In this article, we aim to bring together and expand the current understandings of simulation-based education, the involvement of service users and carers in social work classrooms, and the concept of community-engaged teaching as a way of reciprocal learning and growth for all parties involved.

Bringing together the community and the university

Universities and communities working together is a global phenomenon (Bartkowiak-Théron & Anderson, 2014; Mbah, 2016), enriching and benefiting both through the

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exchange of knowledge and resources (Boyer, 1990). Community engagement is associated with notions of 'citizenship, participation and involvement' (Renwick et al., 2020, p. 1235), and inherently resists the image of a university as an 'ivory tower' (Bond & Paterson, 2005, p. 331). Community-engaged teaching can therefore be understood as communal practices which enable the creation of environments within which students, educators, and community members together and equally engage in teaching and learning (Boyer, 1996; Mtawa et al., 2016). This integrated concept of community engagement in the educational space gained momentum in the 1990s through Boyer's seminal work (1990, 1996), where he cautioned academics about becoming disconnected from the wider community and encouraged an application of new knowledge to solve real-world problems. Boyer's (1990) model of engaged scholarship has become influential across disciplines, promoting national approaches to benchmarking the way universities engage with their local communities in countries such as Australia (Garlick & Langwothy, 2008).

Transformative learning, as articulated by Mezirow (2000), implies a shift in personal frame of reference into a new worldview to guide future action. Building on Freire and Habermas' critical pedagogy (Kreber, 2022), transformative education is understood as a space of 'emancipatory intent' through an identification of broader social justice issues, linking the personal, the political and the social worlds (Fleming, 2022, p. 4). Through experiential teaching strategies the educator can in turn harness the student learning that comes from life experience, a process whereby the learner is coming into direct contact with the reality of life experience via their bodily senses and situated learning activities (Kolb, 2015, p. xviii). Furthermore, there is an embodied component to experiential learning, serving to enrich practice understandings (Botelho, 2020). In social work education this can be observed primarily in classroom role-plays, through work-integrated learning activities, or simulations (Meredith et al., 2021).

Involvement of service users and carers in social work education

Service user and carer involvement in social work education draws on a long history in the mental health and social care fields (Newman et al., 2019). The representation of lived experience in social work education is seen as important as it challenges the notion of expertise with the voice of experience being central in determining expertise status (Unwin et al., 2018) and challenges the dominant discourse inherent in historical social work and adapted theories that effectively dehumanize and marginalize certain life circumstances (Beresford & Boxall, 2012). In recent years, lived experience in tertiary education has received increased attention in the literature (Duffy et al., 2021; Hitchin, 2016; Laging & Heidenreich, 2017), strengthened by the mandatory inclusion in 2002 of lived experience of service users in social work education in the United Kingdom (McLaughlin et al., 2018). Implicit in this discussion is the benefit to students in having opportunities to practice forming professional relationships, communication skills, linking theory to practice, and reflection (Skoura-Kirk et al., 2020). Other benefits for students are seen as creating safe learning environments, gaining new practice knowledge, developing empathy, making the service user and carer experience real, challenging stigma, and managing discomfort (Unwin et al., 2018). Benefits for the service users and carers in turn have largely been found to be therapeutic and

affirming (Sapouna, 2021), and overall, the shared lived experience of service users and carers in the educational space has been perceived as highly valued by students and educators (Robinson & Webber, 2013).

Nevertheless, practice-oriented social work teaching methods are often not framed within the community-engaged teaching scholarship. The positioning of client as one to be simulated in social work education is not without criticism (Joseph, 2021), with an increased requirement on service users and carers to share their narratives if they want to be involved with social work education (Voronka & Grant, 2022). Even when service users and carers are part of social work teaching, their involvement is often limited and revolves primarily around their specific experience with social services (Irvine et al., 2015), and the impact on the broader community is often overlooked. Moreover, the existing studies on university-community engagement tend to focus on the experiences and perspectives of the academics to examine how they conceptualize their community-engaged activities (Bond & Paterson, 2005; Brown et al., 2016; Renwick et al., 2020).

There are, however, examples in the literature of co-produced curriculum and integrated simulated learning, which successfully challenge notions of privilege, power and voice which is seen as pivotal in student learning and transformation (Moran et al., 2022). Overall, the voice of community members is limited in articulating their perspectives on university-community engagement activities, including student education, and the impact of those activities.

Simulation-Based teaching

Simulations have long been used in a variety of higher education and professional degrees (Barker et al., 2018; Schech et al., 2017), with the aim of representing a real-world event to simulate 'practice, learning, evaluation, testing, or to gain understanding of systems or human actions' (Lopreiato et al., 2016, p. 34). Simulations have been found to improve student communication competencies (Barker et al., 2018), develop practical skills without risk to patients (Piquette & Le Blanc, 2015), foster collaboration with culturally diverse groups (Schech et al., 2017), and provide opportunities for interdisciplinary learning (Nimmagadda & Murphy, 2014).

Social work programs have made use of simulations (Dodds et al., 2018; Roberson, 2021) with benefits identified from the practice orientation and skill and competence enhancement that this strategy can offer (Lee et al., 2020). Effective use of simulation-based learning in social work requires the ability to practice skills, observation of practice, focused feedback, and guided reflections (Kourgiantakis et al., 2019), facilitated by primarily interactions with other students or actors (Bogo & Rawlings, 2016).

As discussed, to date evidence of the benefits of simulation has been largely limited to the perspective of the student or educator, with little attention to participating community members, despite the lingering social justice requirement for authentic representation in university and community partnerships (Voronka & Grant, 2022). Given this gap in the literature, we hope to answer the following research questions: (1) Why and how do social work academics involve community members in their subjects and what has their experience been? (2) Why and how do community members participate in social work teaching and what has their experience been? (3) What is the impact of

these simulations on all parties involved and the broader community? (4) What are the processes and resources necessary for successful community-engaged teaching?

Methods

Study background

The study was conducted at a large regional university in New South Wales, Australia. The university offers a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and a Master of Social Work Qualifying (MSWQ) degrees. The social work team at the university has regarded simulation as a flagship pedagogy of the degree offerings and has actively worked with close to 40 community members in social work simulations since 2016. Community members invited to participate in the simulations are: (1) users of social work – mental health or disability services; (2) carers of social work service users; (3) former refugees; and (4) interpreters. Simulations take place in purpose-built laboratories that are outfitted to resemble clinical interviewing and groupwork spaces. In the simulation laboratories students work with a community member in small groups or one-on-one. The community members are reimbursed for their time, usually in the form of gift vouchers approximately equivalent to academic demonstrator rates.

The teaching and learning that occurs between the student and the community members in the simulation laboratories is multi-layered with lived impact for both parties. In addition, the educators were seen as key knowledge holders in teaching in this experiential modality and so seen to be important participants. Considering this, it was deemed important to embrace a qualitative methodology with a critical theory lens that seeks to disrupt institutional assumptions about the value and role of community members within community-engaged learning and that allowed for a rich discussion of the impact of pedagogy on the person (Curtin & Hall, 2018). To this end, semi-structured interviews and focus groups were utilized to elicit participant experiences. Twenty participants were involved in the study: 10 community members who have participated in the social work simulations and 10 university staff involved in running the simulations. The community members included five service users, two carers of service users with disabilities, one former refugee, and two interpreters. The university staff included current and former coordinators of social work subjects which involve simulations with community members, and social work tutors, demonstrators and a technical officer who facilitate the simulations. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups explored participants' experiences and the benefits, challenges, and areas for improvement for social work simulations with community members. This study was approved by the University of Wollongong Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval Number 2020/277). To protect the confidentiality of the participants, their roles are reported in broad terms.

Data were analyzed using the six phases of the reflexive thematic approach (Braun et al., 2019). Initially the data were familiarized by the first author, identifying minor and major codes and determining the relationships between them. The initial codes were then shared with the research team, developing a richer reading of the data and ensuring multiple interpretations. The data sources were then coded, generating themes which contained central ideas addressing the research question. Further reflexive analysis was then undertaken by the research team to name and refine the

themes. Strategies such as a collaborative and reflexive analytic approach, data triangulation, and member checking were employed to ensure rigour and credibility of the analysis (Houghton et al., 2013), with the research team proactively reflecting on their positionality during the data collection and analysis and collectively correcting for potential biases (Jacobson & Mustafa, 2019).

Findings

Four major qualities of practice learning were identified: (1) the value of lived experience and expertise; (2) the importance of preparation for professional practice; (3) dedication of time and resources; and (4) guided by the impacts for community members.

The value of lived experience and expertise

The participation of community members in the social work simulations was described by the educators as grounded in pedagogy that explicitly framed community members as experts and valued the knowledge gained from lived experience. Community members were positioned as having a valid and in-depth knowledge of mental health symptoms and services, refugee resettlement, social cohesion, and carers support, and they reported willingness to take questions from students and engage in conversation. Described as 'powerful' (01) by an educator, community members' stories often sparked hard questions from the students, but as one of the community members explained: 'When I give a lecture about my life story, I always tell, "Whenever you ask questions, I'm quite an open book"' (13). Another community member elaborated:

> I think they [students] are gaining a lot of education. They literally have the service users and carers there. We volunteered our time (…) to share our wealth of lived experience and information, so it gives them not only the confidence in the future to work as social workers, but also increases their knowledge about the different circumstances people go through and how everyone is different. (18)

This pedagogical approach ensured that students were not learning *about* people with disabilities, for example, but learning *from* and *with* people with disabilities. The staff also believed that it prevented 'othering' and stigmatizing service users. The educators reported that they strived to convey the message that everyone can be a service user or carer at some point and thus students should be cautious not to perceive the community members they work with as the 'other'. In the words of one subject coordinator:

> The other important thing is the absolute belief and knowledge that service users and carers are us, and we are service users and carers. We're all the same, and I really wanted students to understand that we are the people that we work with. (03)

The idea of connectedness between students and the community members was thus emphasized and how the roles of service users and providers inevitably change over time.

Finally, positioning community members as experts required the educators to step away from the traditional academic expectation of expertise. Subject coordinators described needing to relinquish some control and trust the process as it was not up to them to teach all the concepts and skills; indeed, they were positioned as learners

themselves. One subject coordinator explained this modeling of learning from the community members in the following way:

> We wanted to give students the opportunity to see that the rhetoric 'you're the expert on your life' is used a lot in social work but the reality is we don't really let service users and carers be the experts in their own lives, there's a lot of lip service to it. So, it was to get students to appreciate the importance of service users and carers. (04)

Positioning community members as experts not only provided an opportunity to critically examine the way community members are normally represented in university classrooms; it was an embodiment of the social work values of respect, recognition, self-determination, and cultural humility, which the educators were aiming to teach.

The importance of preparation for professional practice

Both the educators and the community members reported that they believed the simulations were an excellent way to prepare students for professional social work practice and serving their communities in the future. Simulations were perceived by the participants as engaging, impactful, often confronting, and transformative for the students. For many students this was their first opportunity to talk to a bereaved parent, a person who had attempted suicide, or someone who had to flee their country because of war. One of the tutors described the transformative quality of these experiences on the students in the following way:

> It's life changing for many students, especially the young ones, the ones who have come out of high school and have a really narrow view of what they think they're gonna hear in these interviews. They're really changed. (06)

Community members described how students would often become deeply moved and cry while listening to their stories. The simulations allowed students to experience 'the affective, emotional, embodied character of social work practice' (01); the subject coordinator elaborated: 'It's very hard to dehumanize a story, it's very hard to take the emotion out of a story … so the emotion and affectivity that comes with the story is allowed to just be' (01). Experiencing these deep emotional responses was another way of preparing students for what social work practice entails. The 'realness', 'genuineness' as well as 'unpredictability' of conducting simulations with community members, as opposed to other students, were described as offering unique learning opportunities to students. Whereas students would often prepare for the role-plays with their classmates, here they had to respond in-the-moment to real-life and sometimes unexpected situations such as a community member or a peer becoming tearful, discussion of uncomfortable topics, or the presence of a guide dog in the room. Accordingly, the learning is multi-sensorial, embodied, and emergent.

Both the community members, and educators believed that the ability to practice the professional social work skills should be an essential aspect of social work classrooms. Traditional forms of 'textbook teaching' and written assessments of student progress were seen as insufficient; as one tutor summarized: 'the profession is about communicating with people, not just in that written form' (08). For example, several participants described the complexities involved in communicating through an interpreter. As one subject coordinator explained:

> We teach how students can communicate with the interpreters but in real practice, that's really hard. Student will always find after the first time that they don't know which one to keep the eye contact with – the service user or the interpreter. Working with the real people, that's a really good opportunity for students to practice the skills rather than, 'I know it, but how can I use it?'. (05)

Simulations that involved community members were thus perceived as a remedy for the limitations of traditional teaching of social work skills, such as peer-to-peer practice. Participants also believed that these types of simulations allow students to put theories into practice immediately, as opposed to having to wait until they are on field placement or even their first professional position. A community member explained the importance of translating theory into practice in the following way:

> I think simulations are probably more practical and realistic ways to provide this opportunity to see, 'Right, this is what I had studied somewhere in the textbook, I don't remember what assessment it was, but this is how it works'. (11)

Another aspect of the simulations which was believed to contribute to student preparation for professional practice was annotations, where both students and educators later watched and commented on the recordings. Educators believed that students developed their reflective skills by watching their videos and annotating what they thought they did well but also what they would change. This reflective process was described by one of the tutors as 'enlightening for the students' and 'an opportunity to change' (06). Student learning was further enhanced by the feedback offered by their peers, the educators, and the community members – immediately following their simulations and subsequently as a summative evaluation.

There were mixed views on the role of the assessment component in the simulations. The educators used simulations as both formative and summative assessments, which they believed created the needed expectations, seriousness, and structure around the student performance during simulations. They found students to be engaged while listening to real stories, which made them concentrate on the actual interaction rather than being assessed. Some community members, however, observed students as constrained in their ability to ask spontaneous and curious questions when the simulations were used as an assessable item.

Dedication of time and resources

Bringing community members into social work classrooms and organizing successful simulations required dedication and time investment from the subject coordinators and resourcing by the university. Building relationships with community organizations, recruiting, and preparing community members for the simulations, and offering debriefing afterwards were some of the steps required of the subject coordinators. Additional requirements were an honorarium paid to community members for their expertise and time and ensuring the availability of appropriate technological and spatial arrangements. The purpose-built simulation laboratories with wall- and ceiling-mounted cameras offer intimate and comfortable consulting spaces.

Accessing local networks and building connections with community organisations were essential for recruiting community members for the simulations. As one subject

coordinator explained: 'you have to have good networks and trusted relationships for it to work well and I think that's a challenge (…) it takes a commitment' (01). Similarly, some community members expressed that they were more likely to participate if there was a prior relationship between them and the educators. The subject coordinators needed to invest time in preparing the community members for the simulations, especially those participating for the first time, including explaining the purpose, expectations, logistics, and plans for the simulation sessions. The community members were often involved in the co-design of the simulations, including decisions-making with subject coordinators about the simulation content. Greatly appreciated by the community members was the hospitable environment beginning with a tour of the simulation labs, the offer of refreshments, and the availability of teaching staff to answer questions and provide support. The final aspect of engagement with the community members was an opportunity for a debrief:

> And then we talk at the end of the day and debrief with the community members. So, we will go and have a coffee, talk about how that went, is there anything they'd like to change, any feedback they'd like to give, how they were feeling. (03)

Time, commitment, and relationships between the educators and the community members were thus essential in creating a space where community members were valued and treated as experts who can enhance student learning.

The broader university values and arrangements were integral to facilitating or hindering this type of learning. The educators described the difficulties and the advocacy required to get the simulations with community members recognized as a valid pedagogy by the university, which was inevitably linked with the necessary resourcing. The social work program succeeded in securing university funding to build simulation laboratories and install the required software. The specialized architectural and pedagogical design of simulation laboratories contribute to teaching and learning opportunities as community members, students and educators move through the spaces. For example, the reception area is where students engage with the community members to create a welcoming space. The smaller consulting rooms offer a different pedagogical space in which the students can create a safe, confidential environment where the conversations between the community members and the students unfold. In the reflection rooms the students and the educators have the opportunity for debriefing in a collegiate environment. In this site, seated in lounge chairs, they reflect upon the conversation with the community members and their experiences of it, how they facilitated the conversation and what they felt while listening to the community members speak. The virtual spaces afforded by the simulation technology enable educators to watch the conversations and provide feedback to the students immediately after the engagement.

The educators pointed out that the technology can be challenging at times and that ongoing technological support allows for an immersive simulation experience: 'Technological support would be great, so students and staff don't have to worry about this and focus on the task at hand' (03). Finally, although not without challenges, the university pays the community members using gift vouchers for contributing to student learning. Both educators and community members spoke passionately about the importance of those payments. In the words of one of the community members:

> I think that would be really unethical not to acknowledge that those stories have a value, especially people with disabilities, but I would say carers, too. We're sick of being told to do all this unpaid labour to get nothing out of it. (16)

Managing the university bureaucracy regarding payments was described as a major challenge by the subject coordinators. Similarly, large class sizes provided a challenge, with subject coordinators pointing out that simulation is much more manageable and effective in smaller groups.

Guided by the impacts for community members

In addition to identifying the benefits for the students, community members also described the positive impact this experience had on them. They talked about how the simulations provided an opportunity for sharing their own story, such as living with a mental health diagnosis or disability, asylum-seeking or migration experiences, and the challenges of navigating diverse health and social service systems. They believed the ability to talk to students was an opportunity for reassurance, validation, and growth. For example, some participants described feeling nervous about speaking in front of others or not knowing how others will react to them and their stories. One former refugee described her experience:

> In the beginning, I was worried to talk about my culture because I was thinking, 'They will not like my culture … they will not like me' (…). Feeling of shame was controlling me, 'I can't talk about this, I can't say this' and they said to me, 'That's fine. Just tell us,' which was good. It was amazing experience. And I feel relieved in the end (…) I get a bit of depression, so I find talking with students and have a conversation did help me a lot. (12)

Similarly, other community members described their experience of talking to students as 'therapeutic', 'liberating' and 'empowering'. Being able to overcome potential nervousness and doubts built new confidence and faith in themselves. This was especially important for community members who were service users and depended on others for support; it was empowering to have their experience valued as a source of knowledge useful in training future social workers. Contributing to the learning of others, they were seen as a valuable asset and received gratitude for their time and genuineness.

Community members wanted to contribute to student learning and perceived they were having an input into the education of future social workers and spreading an awareness on issues that were important to them. Some community members had experienced negative interactions with social services and saw the simulations as an opportunity to contribute to improving the services by educating a new generation of social workers. One community member reported that for him the simulations were an extension of the community work he was already doing educating the public and creating an awareness about the issues and policies impacting refugees in Australia and globally. Some viewed it simply as an opportunity to give back to the community: 'if I can have a connection with someone and if that benefits them and benefits me, for me it's something giving back something for the community or helping out. So that's good. It's a win-win' (10). Community members also appreciated the connections these simulations created between the university and community. As one community member expressed: 'it would definitely diversify the types of voices that are being heard at the uni' (20).

Although there were certain challenges from participating in the simulations, all community members interviewed believed that the benefits significantly outweighed them. For example, there was a level of vulnerability involved in sharing one's life story. Some participants pointed out the potential mental exhaustion that can result from 're-visiting the past' (11) and re-telling a difficult story. A community member described this tension in the following way: 'Overall, it's a very positive experience. It's a very triggering experience and exhausting for me; my story is quite intense but not ever have I regretted doing it. It's always worth any of the mental exhaustion' (14). Although they found it worthwhile, some community members pointed out they would not recommend it to someone who has had recent traumatic experiences and/or has not had an opportunity to heal, which was also a major consideration in the recruitment process according to the subject coordinators. Some community members expressed an occasional impatience with students for not listening carefully or asking irrelevant questions. Nevertheless, they did not take these experiences personally and they preferred for students to make those mistakes in a simulated setting. These challenges, however, did not change the community members' overall satisfaction with and support for these types of interactions with students. Most of them had participated in the simulations more than once, and when asked whether they would be willing to do it again, they unanimously agreed. In the words of one of the community members who participated in the simulations for three years:

> I loved participating and sharing my knowledge with everybody … I'm supporting the development of future social workers who will be working with vulnerable people like me … (18)

Although the motivations, benefits, and challenges the community members experienced while taking part in the social work simulations varied, they all wanted to contribute to student learning, they all found the experience rewarding. As one community member summarized: 'It's a two-way street – we get so much out of it. It's a pleasure to meet the students' (14).

Discussion and implications

The underlying values with which the community-engaged simulations were designed included the belief that community members are experts on their lives and have valuable knowledge that makes a significant contribution to student learning. By involving community members, the educators created experiential and transformative learning experiences which aimed to prepare students for professional social work practice and ultimately for better serving their communities. Hearing real people's stories, having deep emotional responses, and being transformed through these experiences was viewed as a more effective way of preparing students for what social work practice entails than traditional pedagogies. This teaching approach, however, required particular spaces and resources, e.g., simulation laboratories, budget allocations to pay the community members, and the time of subject coordinators to organize the simulations. This was experienced as an obstacle to overcome by the educators, a barrier to upholding the principle of lived experience representation. Despite this hurdle, the community members reinforced the perspective that they prized contributing to

student learning, for the resulting sense of reward, validation, and sense of empowerment.

Community-engaged teaching can be of benefit to everyone involved but only if community members are valued for their agency that can shift what is learnt and how as opposed to being treated as merely functional tools of higher education. For this to take place, however, community-engaged teaching must be conceptualized and designed in a way that is authentically reciprocal and where 'community and university are equal partners in a community of learners' (Weerts & Sandmann, 2008, p. 80). The educators thus need to ensure this equal and active participation of all parties involved and embrace fluidity in roles (Brown et al., 2016), remaining open to the possibility that community members may provide a perspective that may be different from, or may challenge, dominant scholarly or professional narratives in their discipline. Ultimately, community-engaged teaching should be viewed as an opportunity for critical thinking and life-long learning for all parties involved (Boyer, 1990).

Engaging community members in university teaching is especially important in communities that have historically been silenced and marginalized, such as refugees, people with disabilities, or those struggling with mental illness. As Renwick et al. (2020) state, 'the notion of connectedness that lies at the heart of community work and the centrality of "interrupting injustice" and to providing "space for tiny voices to get bigger" (p. 1242). Creating simulation spaces to share stories and teach from lived experience allowed the community members in this study, who have often been perceived by others (and themselves) as a burden, to have their voices heard and gain a sense of empowerment. As a core component to their role in society, universities should play a central role in overcoming exclusion and marginalization (Laging & Heidenreich, 2019). Without this education becomes a contested space, with students unable to connect theory to practice and the classroom serving to disempower (Meredith et al., 2021). Community-engaged teaching with marginalized groups thus allows educators across the disciplines to communicate and enact a message of equity, inclusion, and self-determination. For social work educators this speaks to a core social justice imperative, consistent with the critical pedagogy and empowerment perspective (Laging & Heidenreich, 2019).

Community-engaged teaching cannot take place without supportive university infrastructure. Ultimately, the values of the university are enacted through their allocation of resources (Mtawa et al., 2016), and universities need to ensure faculty incentives for community engagement, and sufficient budget and workload allocations, to effectively translate the discourse of university-community engagement into practice. As important pedagogical spaces, the simulation laboratories are locations for community-engaged, embodied, affective, learning by doing. The nature of the knowing and learning differs as the students, community members and educators move through the different simulation spaces. Careful planning is therefore essential in designing the layout of the simulation laboratories and the technology utilized.

Limitations

Limitations in this study include the small sample size and participants coming from one university in Australia, leading to a diminished transferability of the findings to other communities and teaching teams. The study took place during the COVID-19 pandemic

with the result that face-to-face simulations with community members had to be postponed. The conclusions drawn in this study would have been enhanced had observation of the simulations been possible. Finally, this article focuses on the perspectives and experiences of community members and university staff only, with findings related to the student experience forthcoming.

Conclusion

Community-engaged teaching recognizes and values the communal aspect of knowing and learning and is grounded in critical educational theory such as transformative and experiential learning. In embracing a critical perspective, tertiary education providers and educators can move beyond a dichotomous view of theory and practice and the belief that knowledge is transmitted only from the university to the field. Rather, learning can be viewed as an interactive and embodied process that takes place with real people in realistic situations. Community-engaged teaching recognizes the value of examining knowledge-use by learning from and analyzing real practice to create knowledge that is contextually located and enfolded with the realities of practice. This type of learning, from dialogue, stories and lived experiences of community members, provides context as students develop and extend their awareness, knowledge, and skills. The recognition of the expertise and experience of service users and carers anchors the community-engaged teaching. As one of the community members in our study concluded 'There is no university without community.'

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