From institution-centred to place-responsive practicums: Reflections from engagement with the Cherbourg Aboriginal community

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ABSTRACT

There has been much attention paid to university-community engagement generally and, in particular, to Work Integrated Learning (WIL) partnerships with agencies for social work and human service students. Since late 2013, the social work and human services program at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) has been working in partnership with the Australian Aboriginal community of Cherbourg on diverse community-initiated projects. The opportunity arose to locate social work and human service students on placement within Cherbourg agencies. From the outset of the partnership, it was important to appreciate that Cherbourg was evidence that processes of exclusion and marginalisation are often produced and reproduced, and that our approach to student placement might add to this if not reflecting principles of respect, decolonisation, and social justice. A range of constraints have been identified which illustrate the importance of high-level institutional support for such an approach to succeed (Cooper & Orrell, 2016). Hence, a reciprocal approach – a theme from research and strategic developments globally – was a requirement. This article outlines a place-responsive approach to field education that has emerged from the experience with the Cherbourg community, one that privileges the interests and strategic goals of the host community, translates these into community-nominated and supported projects, and links students from relevant disciplines in a series of open-ended processes that transcend institutional requirements. Social work and human services students on placement play an important role in enabling a place-responsive approach, though there are key implications for how placements are understood and undertaken to achieve this.

Keywords: *Field education, Social work placement, University community engagement, Place responsive, Indigenous social work*

INTRODUCTION

This article outlines the experience of an engagement by one university, QUT, with an Indigenous community, Cherbourg, over a five-year period and the "place-responsive" approach to social work and human services field education that has emerged. Drawing on Mannion, Fenwick, and Lynch (2013, p. 723), we use the term *place-responsive field education* to mean approaches to field education which make *explicit efforts to collaborate in assembling people, places and purposeful activities together, to produce viable and valuable* educational and community experiences. The character of a place-responsive approach is articulated, and compared with the sometimes complementary, sometimes competing, university, student learning and professional foci. It is argued that this approach to field education requires the loosening of existing institutional requirements and processes, as well as an appreciation and enabling of ongoing relationship building and inquiry at the front line as an essential element of reciprocity. Rather than conceptualising the application of this as specific to Indigenous communities, the authors contend that such a place-responsive approach has broader application to how field education should be undertaken, and the potential for social work and human services students on placement to play a key role in facilitating community-nominated strategies and projects.

About Cherbourg

The context of *place* is central to this article, and warrants outlining in some detail. The Cherbourg Aboriginal Community is approximately 265 kilometres north-east of Brisbane, in Queensland, Australia. Cherbourg is situated on the traditional lands of the Wakka Wakka Aboriginal peoples. While the Wakka Wakka peoples are the Traditional Owners of the land, it is estimated that 44 diverse language groups continue to reside in Cherbourg. Cherbourg, formerly known as the government-run Barambah Aboriginal Reserve until 1932, was established in 1904 under the Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897 (Qld). The Act legislated for the protection of Aboriginal peoples from settlers and Native Police Units in response to massacres that were occurring across the country, and the use of opium, often given to Aboriginal peoples in return for labour. Rather than protection, the Act brought Aboriginal peoples under considerable state control. Government officials were permitted to forcibly remove peoples from their lands, and segregate them from settler society. The local Wakka Wakka peoples were the first inmates of the Reserve until other peoples from Queensland, the Northern Territory and Northern New South Wales were sent to live there (Blake, 2001; Queensland State Library, 2017).

Between 1904 and 1939 there were 2,079 documented removals of Aboriginal people to the Barambah Reserve (Queensland State Library, 2017), making it one of the three largest reserves in Queensland. Forms of control included the restricting of traditional languages and practices, requiring permission to leave the reserve or to marry, and having children removed from families and placed in dormitories. The Reformatory Schools (Industrial) Act 1865 (Qld) gave power to the government to remove "neglected" Aboriginal children from their families and raise them in state-run dormitories. Separate boy and girl dormitories were

built at Barambah and extended to house mothers with young children. By the 1920s, living conditions were crowded and inmates were subjected to harsh discipline and segregation from other residents and family on the reserve (Hegarty, 1999; Mok, 2005).

The residents of the reserve worked for meagre rations and little or no pay (Ration Shed Museum Book Committee, 2013). Rations of sugar, flour, tea, rice, salt, sago, tapioca, molasses, split peas, porridge and meat (though mostly bone) were provided in exchange for work undertaken on the reserve. Barambah was pivotal as a training depot for domestic and labouring workers for white settlers on Queensland pastoral properties and for white families in metropolitan Brisbane. The Barambah Industrial School trained girls and young women in the provision of domestic services and child care, while training in carpentry and farming was developed for boys and young men. With the objective of self-sufficiency, a sawmill, dairy and piggery were built in the 1920s. The saw mill provided timber for the construction of various white officials' houses, the dormitories, a hospital, shop and cottages for inmates, all undertaken by unpaid labour (Ration Shed Museum Book Committee, 2013). Later years saw the development of an emu farm, abattoir, Barambah Pottery, a boomerang factory and workshops producing craft items and souvenirs.

Whilst these industries provided economic development for Cherbourg, most were decimated when Cherbourg became a DOGIT (Deed of Grant in Trust) community in 1985. In the process of passing responsibility for management to the Cherbourg Community, the Queensland government simply removed or sold equipment leaving nothing for the community to sustain the industries and local economy. In 2004, the Local Government (Community Government Areas) Act 2004 (Qld) gave Cherbourg formal legal recognition as a local government. In the early 2000s, community members located and reclaimed the original ration shed and established The Ration Shed Museum. The Ration Shed Museum is an integral part of the Community and shares the Cherbourg Community story with tourists, schools and universities.

Contemporary Cherbourg demonstrates remarkable cultural resilience, community persistence and future orientation despite the realities of mistreatment at the hands of white Australia (Blake, 2001). Manifestations of this include The Ration Shed Museum cited earlier, the building of the Winifred Fisher Indigenous Knowledge Centre, a commitment to school attendance, innovative approaches to community health provision informed by the Cherbourg Health Action Group, a vibrant sporting culture spanning many decades, and the development of quality early years, parenting and family support programs.

However, the history of colonisation continues to permeate the community and impact on individual and community wellbeing. The people continue to deal with intergenerational disadvantage and trauma resulting from the compounding effects of colonisation, forced removal from traditional lands, denial of culture, language and spirit, deliberate dismantling of family, institutionalisation, discrimination and criminalisation (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, 2014). The impact of these is reflected in higher than Australian average levels of unemployment, poverty, and housing stress, adult and youth incarceration and mental health issues, especially youth suicide (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012). These sit alongside the concerning number of children and

families subject to ongoing child protection investigations and interventions (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2017a) often leading to child removal.

How the engagement developed between Cherbourg, and social work and human services QUT

In 2013, the Cherbourg Shire Council invited QUT to collaborate in helping the Community create opportunities. The challenge for the university, academics and students was to do so in a way that was decolonising rather than adding to the Community's experience of oppression, neglect and paternalism. Since then, a range of engagements and projects aimed at fostering positive community outcomes has developed between the Cherbourg Community and university staff and students. The social work and human services program at QUT, in conjunction with the Oodgeroo Unit (Indigenous student support), was central in coordinating this. Over time, the theme of QUT's involvement with Cherbourg has come to be expressed as how university–Indigenous community engagement, teaching, learning and research can link to underpin a sustained and distinctive innovation driven by the Community, and of benefit to all involved (Crane & Brough, 2016).

Initial relationship building with the Community

The importance of developing projects with Indigenous communities through relationship building is well documented (Thompson & Duthie, 2016; Scougall, 2008). Between 2010 and 2012, a QUT lecturer, with Wakka Wakka heritage, developed an Indigenous studies unit aimed at providing knowledge of historical and contemporary issues impacting on Aboriginal peoples for Masters of Social Work (Qualifying) students. This unit, "Socio-cultural Contexts of Professional Practice" included a field trip to Cherbourg, and was designed to debunk stereotypical views of Aboriginal peoples and communities. The Indigenous studies unit also allowed students to appreciate Aboriginal ways of being, knowing and doing, and Aboriginal methods of social work practice (Duthie, King, & Mays, 2013). Negotiations took place with the Cherbourg Deputy Mayor, himself a practising Youth Justice worker, for students to visit social service agencies in Cherbourg. A tour of The Ration Shed Museum provided an in-depth overview of Cherbourg's history and an opportunity to hear Elders talk about their experiences of living under 'the Act' and opportunities for collaboration began to take shape.

Strategic and relational links developed between disciplines at the University

Universities often undertake projects in Indigenous communities. In this instance, it was a project being undertaken in Cherbourg by QUT's Faculty of Law that provided the initial impetus for an inter-disciplinary approach. In 2013, the faculty facilitated a project in conjunction with the Cherbourg *Us Mob* FM radio station and the Barambah Local Justice Group to profile the legal rights and responsibilities of Cherbourg residents. Links were made during this project between law and social work/human service academics, including the Indigenous social work academic above who was now located at the QUT Oodgeroo Indigenous Student Support Unit, and led to an interest in possibilities for other ways students from other faculties could further support the Cherbourg Community.

Location within a university-wide strategy for student interdisciplinary learning
Cooper and Orrell (2016) argue that the development of university–community partnerships should be a process rather than an event, and one which takes time, resources and university-wide endorsement. A critical aspect of the initial development of a sustained, place-based approach to placement in Cherbourg was it becoming located within a university-wide strategy for inter-disciplinary, community-engaged learning. The Community Engaged Learning Lab (CELL) was developed in 2010 at QUT as a mechanism for students from different disciplines to work together for a semester on a project nominated by an agency or community (Crane, Fox, Spencer, Hardy, & Campbell, 2014).

In 2016, this initiative was re-named Community Engaged Learning and Research (CELaR), to reflect how the process of student and staff engagement could platform subsequent research. This course-work initiative is informed by a Participatory Action Research framework (PAR) and service-learning principles which emphasise collaboration, diversity and reciprocity (O'Connor et al., 2013). Projects must have a social justice purpose, the capacity to assist students to develop their understanding of privilege and disadvantage, and build inter-disciplinary and professional capabilities (O'Connor et al., 2013). Students enrol through either a Work Integrated Learning (WIL) unit or through any pre-existing study unit which reflects a plan-do-reflect-synthesise-report pedagogical process and where the university staff coordinator is supportive.

Relevant projects are generated from a university staff's community engagement or from an approach by a prospective host agency. At agency/community invitation, projects may be sustained over numerous semesters, even years, with progress presented back to the host agency/community by the student group and supporting staff at the end of each semester.

In 2014, the law and social work/human service academics, and a local community agency, the Barambah Local Justice Group, gained a QUT Engagement Innovation Grant to conduct an interdisciplinary student project with the Cherbourg Community. The funds from this, and subsequent grants, have since resourced several projects.

Social work and human services students as the key university–community presence
It became apparent that the social work and human service students played a significant role in enabling this inter-disciplinary community–university strategy.

The first Cherbourg Community multi-disciplinary student project, undertaken in 2014, involved students from social work, justice studies, and human services/creative disciplines. The project was in response to community concerns around the over-representation of Cherbourg young people in the youth justice system. A social work student on a 500-hour placement, themselves Indigenous, resided with a relative in Cherbourg during his placement, and provided both a relational bridge from the university into the Community, a coordination role relative to the project and liaison with other students involved. The students from other disciplines continued to reside in Brisbane and periodically travelled to Cherbourg.

The perceived success of this first semester by the Community and university platformed ongoing engagement, with the Community formally inviting the university to continue

to bring students to Community to undertake placements and Community-nominated projects (Yow Yeh, MacNeill, & Lawton, 2014). Over the following three years, 18 social work and human services students, including four Indigenous students, have undertaken field education placements either in Cherbourg, or in agencies which work with Cherbourg families, across six projects. For each CELaR project, a social work or human service student on placement is located at the host organisation and is tasked with bridging between the host agency, the Community and other involved students. All host agencies have been either Aboriginal organisations, or organisations with Aboriginal management and/or substantial Aboriginal staff levels. Students on placement have either stayed with relatives, or have been accommodated rent-free in a rental house funded by the university. In addition to the social work and human services students, 35 students, two of whom are Indigenous, from seven other disciplines have been involved through enrolment in shorter WIL units.

CELaR partnership projects have variously focused on enhancing the engagement with, and the voice of, young people, including a yarning circle program run through an alternative school (Yow Yeh et al., 2014), and developing a Youth Council (Kowald, Bielby, Cart, & Laffoley, 2017); contributing to the establishment and resourcing of the Cherbourg Indigenous Knowledge Centre (IKC) providing a new library, learning and community meeting spaces; the upgrading and development of workplace health and safety training resources for the Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council; and undertaking various creative and design projects which celebrate resilience and promote healing. Students have undertaken research of literature and documented diverse models on Indigenous Youth Councils (nationally and internationally) and workplace health and safety, which then are returned to the Community for discussion and decision-making.

Undertaking social work and human service placements in an Aboriginal community

The Australian Association of Social Work (AASW) states a formal acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (AASW, 2010) and in doing so, provides professional aspiration for the conduct of social work in Indigenous communities. This commitment is reflected in the Australian Community Welfare Association Code of Ethics and practice guidelines (ACWA, 2014).

Even so, the processes of exclusion and marginalisation are perpetuated through educational and institutional practices (Zubrzycki & Crawford, 2012). It was apparent that social work student field education engagement in Cherbourg may well contribute to this. The challenge was in upholding the spirit of the acknowledgment, as it tensioned against establish structural and traditional interests. For example, the need to meet professional accreditation guidelines, University academic standards, timeframes and student expectations.

In Australia, social work field education requirements are set out in the Accreditation Standards (AASW, 2012) and Australian Community Workers Association Field Education practice guidelines (ACWA, 2014), depending on the degree. The standards articulate the accreditation parameters for field-based learning by defining the placement roles and responsibilities of the field educator, the university, the student and agency, along with the appropriate location of placements and assessment criteria.

Field education provides the space for transformational learning beyond the classroom (Giles, Irwin, Lynch, & Waug, 2010). It is acknowledged as essential component in the formation of a student's professional identify and competence as an ethical safe and skilled practitioner (Bogo, 2015; Shulman, 2005; Wayne, Raskin, & Bogo, 2010). The Cherbourg Community were generous in their mentorship of students and saw it as their role to guide them through a transformative cultural placement experience. This community mentorship tensioned against accreditation standards and accepted models of supervision. As a result, the traditional singleton (Harris, Jones, & Coutts, 2010) placement model of one student, one semester, one agency, and one social-work-qualified host agency supervisor did not sit well with principles of respect, decolonisation and social justice. Nor did it take into consideration the breadth of expertise and learning opportunities in the Community, the uniqueness of the student personal cultural journey and a range of the practical issues, such as availability of "qualified" supervisors in agencies, where students might stay, and how students might be adequately supported in their personal and professional challenges whilst on placement.

University requirements locate field education as one form of WIL within tertiary education and has largely been concerned in demonstrating benefits to educational institutions and their students (Crane et al., 2014; Brimble & Freudenberg, 2010; Eyler, 2002), and this is also true of WIL in Australian Indigenous communities (Pearson & Daff, 2011; Stewart, Meadows, Bowman, Van Vuuren, & Mulligan, 2010; Stewart et al., 2012).

Universities are finding it increasingly difficult to locate sufficient placements which fit these requirements (Crisp & Hosken, 2016; Zuchowski, Cleak, Nickson, & Spencer, 2016). The social work/human services field education literature increasingly refers to challenges in securing social work placements in human services. Neoliberal approaches to social policy and service delivery have heavily influenced change (Chenoweth, 2012; Morley & Dunstan, 2013) and have impacted on the capacity and desire of human services agencies to divert their social work resources, assuming suitably qualified social workers are employed, and limited energy and resources to providing quality student placements (Barton, Bell, & Bowles, 2005; Egan, 2005; Ervin, 2015; Healy, 2004; Hill, Egan, Cleak, Laughton, & Ervin, 2015). In this challenging environment, social work/human services programs are needing to rethink how to deliver quality field education (Crisp et al., 2016; Zuchowski, 2016).

Simultaneously, the student experience of limited flexibility in placement arrangements, conditioned by provisions related to undertaking placement as unpaid work, significant costs often associated with placement, as well the need for many to maintain paid work, are affecting their ability to engage in placements as required (Johnstone, Brough, Crane, Marston, & Correa-Velez, 2016), in a way that benefits the Community.

The literature from Indigenous social work academics and researchers argues that, to reclaim and celebrate Indigenous knowledges requires embedding Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing in social work education and practice (Bennett, Zubrzychi, & Bacon, 2011; Bessarab, 2015; Fejo-King, 2013). Indeed, social work/human service placements in Indigenous communities have been referred to as "immersion placements" (Fejo-King, 2013, p. 248), where students benefit from having an opportunity to

experience two worlds: the external environment of social work/human services provision that adheres to western expectations and structures (policy, legislative requirements) and the internal or micro/meso environment that operates from an Indigenous worldview using cultural constructs and practice (Zubrychki et al., 2014).

The "Getting It Right" teaching and learning framework for embedding Indigenous knowledges into social work education and practice calls for consideration to greater flexibility and design of placement – the hours, timing of semesters, access to eligible and accessible social workers to supervise, and the importance of the cultural experiences of placement (Zubrzycki et al. 2013). The relevance of such flexibility has been strongly reinforced through the engagement with Cherbourg. Some examples include: adopting a flexible approach to organising meetings and activities so as to respond to and respect the regular occurrence of "Sorry Business" in the Community; designing the student supervision process in ways that involve and privilege a range of people with cultural standing and knowledge whilst meeting professional requirements; approaching and resourcing student accommodation so that the Community informs and manages the process but where creative and legitimate thinking and argument need to be used to ensure the costs are met by the university.

A decolonialist approach to field education

There has been significant attention paid to the application of decolonising principles in research undertaken within Indigenous contexts, with self-determination being core (Smith, 1999). From this perspective, the role of partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners can be positive if, and only if, self-determination is a goal (Smith 1999, p. 116). Decolonisation has been argued as being a process rather than an attribute, involving a multi-phase movement through rediscovery and recovery, mourning, healing, forgiveness, reclaiming, to dreaming, commitment and action (Muller, 2014, pp. 56–57). At the stage of action, decolonising knowledge is produced through a positive, pro-active, rather than reactive, stance (Muller, 2014). Hence, it is essential and culturally safe that students and universities support a pro-active and positive approach. This can be achieved by asking *how* they can assist, rather than assuming their own constructions of what is helpful, actually is. The essential ingredient in ensuring a decolonised approach is to ensure the research agenda, project or program is identified, supported, directed and owned by Aboriginal families, clans, nations or organisations (Fejo-King 2013, p. 249).

Considerable progress has been made in identifying the broad character of how non-Indigenous institutions and agencies should engage with Indigenous communities. For example, the "Closing the Gap" (2013, p. 1) report, "What works to overcome Indigenous disadvantage: Key learnings and gaps in the evidence" identified the following high-level principles as underpinning successful programs:

- flexibility in design and delivery so that local needs and contexts can be considered;
- Community involvement and engagement in both the development and delivery of programs;
- the importance of building trust and relationships;

- a well-trained and well-resourced workforce, with an emphasis on retention of staff; and
- continuity and coordination of services.

Our experience strongly supports the efficacy of these in respect of Cherbourg and student placements. The frame of "deliberate reciprocity," as suggested by Cooper and Orrell (2016, p. 107) reflects a central characteristic needed in field education. Reciprocity should not be interpreted in a way which assumes an instrumental or transactional character, involving a rational exchange between partners with equal power. Rather, reciprocity needs to be appreciated as privileging power, with relational and temporal dimensions in how the engagement is developed and articulated. Here, the notion of *relational accountability* underpins how additional information and introductions are extended to new people as trust develops over time (Kornelsen, Boyer, Lavoie, & Dwyer, 2016). It became apparent in our engagement with Cherbourg over student placements, that power must be explicitly and regularly "re-minded," as located with the Cherbourg Community and with those they nominate as acting on their behalf (Crane & Brough, 2016). Further, the "integrity of relationship" is demonstrated by sustained engagement over time, rather than being a product of bureaucratic planning and strategic, short-term engagement. Here, the limitations of a high-level, strategic university–Community engagement focus becomes apparent. Rather than paying little attention to the place-based, emergent and developmental over time, and the front-line relational elements between the university institution and professional accreditation bodies, the historically embedded experience and relational accountabilities which characterise a community such as Cherbourg are at the forefront.

Field education, and WIL more broadly, straddles these worlds, and there cannot be reciprocity or partnership without the more powerful of the players (that is, universities) being prepared to re-examine and adjust how they engage, relate, practise and assess. A prioritisation of relational and emergent approaches over the pre-assumed structures and processes (including agreements about clear goals for student learning) of WIL/field education placements, is not only needed for successful engagement, but is a precondition to any claim of respectful engagement. A temporal and relational, rather than a technical and managerial orientation, is imperative. Further, it is horizontal dialogical relationships, rather than vertical ones, that are argued as fundamental to building social work/human services engagement with Indigenous communities (Briskman, 2014, p. 246).

Muller (2014) articulates what she refers to as an "Indigenous Australian Social-Health Theory," derived from her observations of how Indigenous people practise. Intersecting themes include those of inclusion, respect, the involvement of leadership and Elders, seeking consensus, reciprocity, allowing the person to learn rather than teach, using cultural, gender- and age-related, culturally safe practices, remaining grounded, appreciating micro and macro orientations to time, and understanding needed skills for non-Indigenous practice with Indigenous peoples and communities. These have been strongly reinforced in the context of the Cherbourg–QUT engagement (Crane et al., 2016).

From a decolonialist standpoint, the character of field education placements in Indigenous communities should support decolonialisation – this supports the co-production of decolonising knowledge and action for all.

Being place-responsive

This article outlines an alternative, place-responsive student engagement model that has emerged from the Cherbourg experience and our reflection on this, within the broader literature and institutional dialogue about field education. The character of a place-responsive approach privileges the interests and strategic goals of the host community, translates these into projects, and clusters student energy in a series of open-ended processes that transcends institutional requirements.

At the risk of over-simplification, we have found it useful to interrogate possible orientations to field education, each of which foregrounds (Banks, 2010) from a particular vantage point. These are institutional locations, in that they attend to various aspects of field education from a specific social location, each of which has structure and interests – that of the host environment, the university, the profession, and the student. Table 1 summarises what each of these locations prioritises and understands as the purpose of placement, the role of the host, the core relationships involved, the approach to in-field supervision, and the preferred temporal (time).

Table 1. A Typology of Orientations to Field Education

	EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION FOCUS	PROFESSION FOCUS	STUDENT LEARNING FOCUS	PLACE RESPONSIVE FOCUS
Placement purpose	Graduate capabilities; Employability	Development of attributes to meet practice standards; Development of professional identity	Learning through doing; Gain experience	Reciprocal benefits for place and students
Conceptualisation of relationship	As Work Integrated Learning (WIL) within a course of study, administratively & legally contracted between the University and the host agency	As a student-mentor relationship with a supervisor who is profession recognised	As a reflective learner and emerging practitioner in a host agency	As a reciprocal relationship between the host place/ community and the student, with the university somewhat in the background
Role of host	As a free or low-cost host for Work Integrated Learning	As a site for mentoring emerging professionals	As a site for learning that cannot be delivered through university-led curriculum	As a host for reciprocal learning and contribution to community
Approach to in-field supervision	According to degree and professional body requirements. Not of great interest other than cost and risk management.	Via an individual qualified 'supervisor' who certifies	Via a primary supervisor who facilitates access to supportive safe developmentally oriented learning	Supervision is multi-faceted and locally negotiated. May be shared across agencies and legitimate others via relational accountability
Approach to time	Structured within approved degree and semester structures and rules	Specified as placement hours required within an accredited degree	Negotiated within life context and required placement parameters	Prefer longer term and fluid (not bounded) frame. Part of the narrative of students in the Community over time. Relationally based.

In summary, a place-responsive approach to field education/WIL requires explicit discussion of what students could do in the host agency or community that would benefit that place; an explicitly endorsed protocol outlining the respectful and reciprocal nature of

the relationship between the host agency or community and the university; where student supervision arrangements are situationally identified in a way that respects local expertise and seeks context-appropriate (sometimes creative), ways to support student learning and assessment; but which locate particular student placements/WIL experiences within a longer term and developmental commitment to a reciprocal relationship over time.

Accommodating a place-responsive approach within field education does not mean disregarding other orientations. However, it does require loosening the institutional boundaries and habits of how field education is conceptualised and undertaken in social work/human services contexts. Such loosening allows for host agency and community understandings of relationship, meaningfulness and importantly, time, to be appreciated and reflected in placement processes. The key attribute for the character of such an approach is reciprocity.

Inviting and exploring host nominated needs

In respect of Cherbourg, a PAR framework (Crane & O'Regan, 2010) has been used to underpin a process of negotiating needs and issues of significance to the Community. This, in turn, has required the development of sufficient relationships for the development of communicative spaces which are respectful and invite genuine guidance from the host agency and the Community. Engagement between host agencies/communities, university staff and WIL are usefully seen as overlapping, and provides a pathway for identifying foci for host-nominated student placements and projects. There must be a willingness to work with host agency/community statements of need rather than imposition of sometimes narrowly conceptualised disciplinary frames to what students might be involved in.

There is an already existing key role for field education staff in ensuring that there is relevant learning in host-nominated projects so as to meet student, graduate and profession learning outcomes and expected capabilities. Our experience suggests this quality assurance is achieved through a dialogical and developmental project and placement confirmation process – one that cannot be reduced to an administrative interaction. Loosening the role of field education and other university staff expectations is important if projects are going to be both Community located, and student-learning assured.

Facilitating interdisciplinary student engagement and support

The needs and projects identified by Community could often be usefully explored through a variety of disciplinary lenses. Rather than attempt to identify aspects of nominated need that fitted most easily with constructed notions of social work and human services practice, it was more place-responsive to facilitate, where possible, a range of students from different degree programs to become involved and invite them to engage with the nominated task. The university CELaR structure referred to earlier, supported this process. It also became apparent that the social work and human services students on placement were ideally situated, relative to both practice theory and their sustained period in a host agency, to play a boundary-spanning role (Oliver, 2013). Their presence provided a practical human resource and location for process coordination that would not be present otherwise. The boundaries students could span were topical, institutional, disciplinary and systemic, and clearly reflected capabilities and expectations of social work/human services community practice.

Orienting students adequately in the host context

For decades, Indigenous communities have been subjected to non-Indigenous people undertaking research *on* Aboriginal peoples (Fredericks, 2008). Often, communities are inherently disempowered due to researcher bias (Sherwood, 2010) or the reproduction of stereotypes (Davey & Day, 2008). Some students may thus present with an over-identification or romanticism about the *exoticness* of Aboriginal peoples and communities (Davey et al., 2008) or feel an overwhelming desire to "help," rather than support, Aboriginal self-determination.

Students who apply for the Cherbourg placement experience are screened through a process which includes written responses to culturally informed questions and an interview with staff, one of whom is Indigenous. Orientation covers cultural humility (Fisher-Borne et al., 2015) and cultural safety (Ramsden, 2003), the history of the Cherbourg Community, and principles and processes for community-based participatory action research (Crane & O'Regan, 2010). All staff and students are required to engage in a tour of the Ration Shed Museum facilitated by Community Elders before they commence their placement or project. Additionally, students must be accepted by the host organisation through a personal introduction and dialogue process.

Central to student participation is an understanding of, and acceptance to abide by, the CELaR Cherbourg student protocol. Over time, the academic team and the Community have negotiated a working protocol agreement, revisited and reaffirmed each semester, to outline principles and expectations for students and academic staff. Recent research undertaken by the Community and university staff has developed a protocol to cover student engagement from all tertiary education providers (Cherbourg Health Action Group, Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council, 2016).

Loosening the way university staff process work to incorporate greater place responsiveness

The question of who owns what is produced from student and staff involvement with Aboriginal communities is critical to consider from a decolonising perspective. In Cherbourg, the project outcomes and resources produced are handed back to the Community at the end of each semester rotation, in recognition of the primary knowledge ownership as residing in the Community.

University staff involved form a team-oriented approach to benefit the Community, students, university and themselves as academics. In the Cherbourg experience, the university staff project team adopted a role-based, rather than a role-bound, approach to their partnership involvement. This approach results in role boundaries between university staff becoming more permeable as staff utilise their professional location and skills to negotiate roles, based on the contribution, rather than bounded by their traditional professional and institutional role description. This approach results in a critical network of support, sharing and legitimacy of contribution. Key to the team cohesion is a commitment to communication, respect and keeping Cherbourg at the heart of what is done, when, and by whom.

CONCLUSION

The experience of working with the Cherbourg Community necessitated the consideration of how the relationship between various stakeholders should be regarded. A place-responsive approach gives due recognition and benefit to the host agency and the Community in the process of negotiating and supporting student placements and projects which also benefited the university–community relationships. Whilst this does not usurp other considerations such as traditional prioritisation of university, profession, and student-learning frames, it does require the expectations associated with these to be loosened, and made responsive to the host context. To achieve this, and resonating with Cooper and Orrell (2016), the university–Community relationship needs to be characterised by deliberate and explicitly negotiated reciprocity.

Rather than conceptualising a place-responsive approach as only relevant to Indigenous communities, it is suggested that there is a broader applicability to how field education is understood in "place," one which carries a capacity to situate students undertaking social work and human services placements as providing a boundary-spanning role in inter-disciplinary WIL initiatives.

When applied to Indigenous host agencies and communities, we need to confront the real possibility that we are replicating colonialist relationships through field education policies and processes that do not account for Indigenous understandings of purpose, accountability, relationship and meaningful engagement over time. This requires a shift from conceptualising placements as a vehicle for "learning in" an agency, to a relational process of sustained engagement over time which is reciprocal and meaningfully reflects a "learning from" orientation.

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