

Assignment Two

**Critical Reflection on Effective Community Partnerships in Health and Physical
Education for Diverse Learners**

by

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for

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School-Community engagement programs provide a much-needed resource to assist schools and teachers in fulfilling the full breadth of teaching general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities, not only subject specific content. They, when utilised correctly and effectively, provide specific context to students that may otherwise be misunderstood or absent in the traditional classroom. The volume of requirements by teachers and schools to complete the bare minimum education requirements continues to grow. These requirements are often administrative but there is a growing need to apply contextual relevance to content, in order to future proof students' knowledge and learning. Further, the additional requirements to increase life-skills that, whilst not academic, are critical to the global citizen's success also increases the demands placed on teachers and school. (Dicke, et al., 2018. Evers, et al., 2016)

The programs discussed, specifically target students with disadvantages, either through societal or intellectual. Further, these programs specifically promote a healthy lifestyle and physical activities to improve academic performance and life-skills.

The Clontarf Foundation is a non-profit organisation that commenced in the year 2000 in Western Australia. It has expanded to operate 119 academies in the Northern Territory and all states, except Tasmania. It reportedly facilitates programs, education and training for over 9000 students. The program targets "Any Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander male enrolled at the school/s" where the Clontarf Foundation is active. (Clontarf Foundation, n.d.)

Participants at the end of 2019 was 7 739 with 613 participants completing Year 12. It was unclear how many students commenced Year 12 in 2019 or had been admitted to the program within the graduating cohort and had withdrawn or delayed their graduation.

According to the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (2020) in October 2020, 850 students were currently enrolled in Year 12. This shows a significant success rate of participants within that year. Without clearer data, it is difficult to summarise the overall

success of student retention from entry through to exit of the program. Clontarf reports 79% attendance from all its participants and makes concerted efforts to manage and improve attendance for students on an individual basis, through mentoring and relationships from staff and associated schools. The foundation received \$56 644 152 in 2019 from state and federal government and private donations.

In the rate of completion of Year 12 and the decision of whether to leave school early is typically made in advance. Further, the intent to complete Year 12 is also typically achieved. Generally, the rate of students that plan to complete Year 12 fluctuates between 85 and 90%. Whilst completing secondary education and continuing further educations' importance has grown significantly, such as tertiary or other education such as vocational, the planned completion and completion rate largely remains constant. Further, Year 12 completion favours students that have aspirations of further academic education, rather than other forms. This completion rate raises questions regarding the efficacy regarding community engagement programs, where the report aim relates to academic success. Academic success is not the only measure that programs can be held to account. Employment after leaving traditional education organisations and further study in other fields are some examples of ways the participant of these programs can succeed in life.

National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions (NP YAT), Northern Territory (2013), shows the retention rate of Indigenous students from Years 7/8 to Year 10, 75.9% and from Years 7/8 to Year 12, 32.7% in 2012. Again, the data from Clontarf's reports are unclear about similar completion and retention rates, however the rate of retention, from Year 7/8 to 12, remains largely unchanged, varying by 2.1% between 2010 and 2012. As Clontarf was initially established in the Northern Territory in 2007, the expectation is that these retention rates would increase. (Department of Education, Skills and Employment. Australian Government. 2012).

Clontarf's aim is to "[help] young men to attend school, finish Year 12 and enter employment." As discussed above, completion rates of Year 12, year-by-year, tend to remain consistent, regardless of the growing expectation by society for further education. Therefore, there is the expectation that programs such as Clontarf provide more objective evidence of success, through retention, as well as completion. (Clontarf Foundation, n.d.)

As Clontarf only accepts male Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, it is not an inclusive education organisation. This does not mean that its goals are not inclusive. By targeting these boys, the organisation is able to identify an "at risk group" and seek to remedy the issues surrounding them. As identified in the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions (2013) only 30% of students are retained between early secondary school and its completion. By identifying these students, the organisation is including them in broader societal goals of education, employment and other life skills. (McCoy, 2012).

In almost direct contrast to the Clontarf Foundation, the Girl's Academy is an engagement program that specifically targets Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls. Comparatively, the program currently supports nearly 3 000 girls in 46 schools. The Girls Academy's "Big 4 Objectives" are to increase school attendance, Year 12 graduation rates, academic and personal achievement and facilitate post-school transitions. As with Clontarf, the Girl's Academy reports increases in academic achievement and graduation rates, in line with their objectives. In 2018, the latest year available for comparison, Clontarf received \$45 811 613 in State, Federal and private funding, whilst Girl's Academy received \$10 575 068. Whilst the difference in funding is significant, the number of participants to funding available is proportionate. The difference, however, is when funding per participant is compared. Girl's Academy participants have approximately \$3 500 per student whilst Clontarf has approximately \$5 000. (Clontarf Foundation, n.d. Girls Academy, n.d.)

This should prompt discussion about the allocation of government resources. ABC Premium News (2018), in conversation with the WA Treasurer Ben Wyatt, did discuss the difference in funding. Per student, Clontarf receives \$5 000 whilst the Girl's Academy receives approximately \$3 500. Further discussions regarding the equitable allocation of resources continues to be discussed, however will also include efficacy of each program. Whilst it is simple to consider Girl's Academy and Clontarf Foundation in isolation, Clontarf is the only publicly funded program of its kind, whilst there are numerous programs for girls. For this reason, without greater analysis, it is difficult to fully assess the allocation of resources to various groups.

The discussion between full inclusion and partial inclusion of students with special learning needs continues to ignite debate and identification of benefits and disadvantages options for all parties involved. Further, the conflation of political and pedagogical ideologies within the discussion further complicates the issue, as many opinions often do not fully understand the structures and organisations of the education system. Practically, exclusion exists at all levels of education for students with special learning needs. They can be excluded from performance evaluation or have them modified. They can be assigned a status or label to identify them as an administrative function. They are also separated at the individual interactive level, where teachers and other students will incidentally expose differences through the occurrence of a normal lesson or through interactions. This does not, necessarily, advocate the inclusion or exclusion from traditional schooling, nor the abolishment of specialist programs, rather, identifies that they exist and will continue to exist. Therefore, the programs should continue to be maximised to benefit the individual participants and broader society as much as is possible. (Berg & Schneider. 2012. Michailakis & Reich. 2009. Moore & Slee. 2012)

Regardless of the outcome of the discussion between whether full inclusion is proliferated into school or the form of partial inclusion that occurs, all programs need to be evaluated or validated through adequate objective analysis. Often without oversight, reporting and a dedication to continual development, even initially productive programs will utilise resources inefficiently or not produce adequate outcomes.

Hayhurst, et al. (2016) investigated the benefits of sport for development and peace (SDP) programs targeting Indigenous girls and women, between Canada and Australia. They identify that the programs aim to promote life-skills, such as leadership, teamwork and confidence, as they are critical values for young Indigenous women. They also identify and are critical, in that, the programs often do not produce the desired outcomes within the participants. This statement whilst true, does not provide any evidence, other than anecdotal, such as data, showing the level of success or failure of the discussed programs. As with all programs, especially those targeting young, disaffected, at-risk or marginalised people, there will be a commitment of limited resources that does not achieve the desired outcome. Rather, as discussed above, programs need to be evaluated objectively to assess their relevance in the current context.

The Defence School Mentor (DSM) program specifically supports students of Defence families due to the unique nature of their lifestyles. As Defence families are subject to frequent and sometimes impromptu relocations, young people are often ill-prepared for the radical changes to their situation, where education is often a casualty. DSMs are placed within schools to support the “social and emotional wellbeing” of students and initiate innovative programs to support their unique educational needs. They also assist students and their families in engaging with the broader community to assist with their relocation. (Defence Community Organisation, n.d. Defence Community Hub, n.d. St Mary’s Catholic Primary School, n.d.)

The unique context of local socio- and economic situation plays a critical role in the implementation and, potential, efficacy and success of any community engagement program. As with all teaching content, context is vital, as the students can identify relevance to their situation, therefore encouraging greater engagement with the content and maximising the learning process. Students will relate to issues that directly affect their situation or their perceived future situations. Further maximisation of learning goals through peer lesson delivery. Engagement and retention in content, when a student will be required to teach the content to other students, is well established to increase significantly. (Pridham & Deed, 2012. Van Acker, et al., 2011)

The innovative methods in which these programs engage the application of content is equally important, if not more so. As with traditional education models, a variety of methods are critical to the successful assimilation of content from the curriculum. Further, these methods must be relevant to the environment the students are a part of. For Clontarf, AFL and other sports are used to engage students on a regular basis to encourage higher attendance rates. They also engage in Aboriginal learning techniques, exploring nature and sites of cultural significance. Girl's Academy uses mentoring with a community led focus. DSM program specifically engages Defence students and their families to ensure their transition is as seamless as possible, through group gatherings of students in the same situations and through engagement with the local Defence Community.

School organisations and educators can no longer fully educate students with the surmounting pressures, both internal and external. For this reason, it is critical that School-community partnerships are built and fostered to endeavour to fulfil the full breadth of opportunity and requirement that can be achieved during the critically formative schooling years. Further, the diverse ways in which students learn, also increase the pressures and

requirements of educators to manage time and resources to benefit the maximum number of students possible. (Bray, 2001. Casto, 2016).

These engagements must be designed with a number of criteria to better enable their success. As with many programs and with the school culture, school leadership must be engaged and committed to the success of these programs. Without their support, the programs are significantly more likely to fail or their efficacy be reduced. The program must be designed around an existing need, rather than created in isolation of any resource gap assessment. Ongoing development and evolution of the program must be utilised to ensure that initial success continues with the evolution of the student needs. Further, short- and long-term goal established, held to account and shared to allow their success and failures to be learnt from by other organisations seeking to achieve the same or similar endeavours. (Roche & Strobach, 2019). These criteria are not exclusive, as context must also be applied to the specific situation to which the program intends to be installed.

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