

HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY

Annie Bolick-Floss at Humboldt State University incorporated the concepts from Holland's workshop on collaborative education in a number of ways. The HSU Service-Learning office:

- Offered a breakout session within a larger civic engagement forum that encouraged HSU faculty and community partners to explore the meaning of co-education.
- Held three community partner forums at different locations using the world café model dialogue and explored co-education as a table topic.

Some, but not all, of the training offered by the HSU Service-Learning office brought together faculty and community partners. HSU hosted monthly SL Faculty Fellows meetings during which participants discussed the role of co-education and co-educators, how HSU faculty worked with their partners, and how they respected the strengths and abilities of those partners. Other forums, such as those on civic engagement and on community partners, deliberately included both faculty and community partners so that everyone could be at the table during discussions.

HSU felt a commitment to a large geographic area and wanted to be out in those communities. For these meetings, they considered faculty who worked or perhaps lived in those areas. HSU wanted community members to see people they recognized and had worked with on research projects or in school settings. This strategy was extremely appreciated and useful. Of four major events, one was on campus and was attended by about 150 people who came from both Humboldt and Delmart Counties. The other three events were held off campus: 50 miles south of HSU, 40 miles east of HSU, and one in the Humboldt Bay region. Sites included a community services district, a community foundation office, and a California Conservation Corps facility.

HSU did not charge a registration fee. Through Learn and Serve they were able to underwrite food and receptions, and all the facilities were free. Costs therefore included only supplies, materials, staff time, and food. Estimated costs for one forum included \$150 for food, as well as coordination time for faculty and staff. All participants received a \$25 stipend thanks to a grant from the California Campus Compact.

Successful Interactive Activity

Meeting organizers found the world café activity (see www.theworldcafe.com for more information) particularly useful. In addition, they found a modified version was also useful: Participants broke into small groups to brainstorm about various issues. HSU also invited its risk manager to attend one of the forums. The risk manager and the participants found this to be a positive experience, as it allowed the risk manager to put names to faces, to hear directly from the partners themselves, and to hear about some of the issues that community partners face. Other nonfaculty were also invited to attend trainings.

Successful Recruitment Strategy

Annie felt that HSU was fortunate not to need an elaborate recruitment strategy. Although stipends were offered, she does not believe they were responsible for the good participation. Rather, the Humboldt community is very collaborative and recognizes the intellectual expertise, the availability of facilities, and the opportunities for programs to work with the campus and university folks. The nonprofit and public entities are "lean and mean" in terms of budgets, and HSU focused on meeting their needs and accessing campus resources. She felt that HSU faculty want to be involved. To help faculty find a partner for a particular course, Annie called the community agency to ask about the potential fit. She assured them that it was okay to decline and that doing so would not deter HSU from offering them other opportunities in the future. Annie felt that community partners often fear that declining a particular partnership might jeopardize their relationship with the university in the future, so she emphasized in her conversations that the partnership needs to make sense to the community agency based on its capacity, staff, and work.

Lessons Learned

First, HSU was surprised to discover that regional issues are very different. It heard very different things from individuals living in the southern part of Humboldt County in comparison to those in the eastern part of the county.



Second, HSU sees the importance of being ready for the diverse responses of participants. HSU discovered that its understanding of “community education” was very different from its partners’ ideas. It is important to structure meetings and forums so that participants can have time to discuss terminology and come to an understanding together of what is being discussed. It is important to have an orientation with community partners and faculty (prior to placing students at the site) to talk about teamwork and building collaborative work. Many community partners said it was not their responsibility to educate students. It was the first time for many partners, some of whom came to the table thinking, “Do you mean like boys and girls co-education?” HSU realized that it also comes to these forums with major assumptions about what that term means. The world café model therefore offers a wonderful way to say, “No, we are really talking about you being experts in the field and recognizing your strengths and what you have to offer our students.”

Also surprising was the reaction from community partners when they heard what is being expected of them as co-educators. Many said, “Whoa, it’s not our role to educate the students.” Therefore, the forums have allowed them to recognize their strengths and honor their abilities. They’ve been able to see how they are educating HSU students.

Agenda: Community Partner Forum

Welcome and Introductions

Statement of Meeting Purpose

World Café Dialogue Session Topics

Co-education

Building and Sustaining Partnerships

Logistics of Partnerships

Break

Group Call Back

Small Group Brainstorm: Where Do We Go from Here?

Evaluation

Ms. Annie Bolick-Floss
Service Learning Coordinator
Humboldt State University
(707) 826-4965
amb2@axe.humboldt.edu