

# Changing Pedagogies

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When efforts emerge in higher education to change pedagogical practice, it is likely a sign that something is fundamentally wrong. In the current period of reform, which began in the late 1970s, efforts to change pedagogy have been fueled by two critical failures in higher education. One is a failure of teaching and learning in undergraduate education; the other a failure of higher education to fulfill its civic mission. Changes in pedagogy are reflected in experimentation with active and collaborative forms of teaching and learning tied to community-based public problem solving. New community-based, engaged pedagogies—most prominently service-learning—connect structured student activities in communities with academic study, de-center the teacher as the singular authority of knowledge, incorporate a reflective teaching methodology, and shift the model of education from “banking” to “dialogue,” to use Freire’s distinction (1970/1994). To assert their civic relevance, higher education institutions strive to revive their founding missions, which in some dimension express the aim of serving American democracy by educating students for productive citizenship. Campuses encourage pedagogies of engagement to prepare students with the knowledge, skills, and values needed for democratic citizenship.

“Changing pedagogies,” however, has a double meaning, because community-engaged pedagogies are also associated with efforts to transform higher education institutions. Changes in teaching and learning are not confined to alterations in classroom dynamics; they have wider institutional implications. They involve reconsideration of fundamental epistemological assumptions; they are aligned with disciplinary border-crossing in the curriculum; they are integrated seamlessly into faculty roles along with engaged scholarship and engaged service; and they thrive in an institutional culture that changes in ways that support all these dimensions of engagement. Engaged pedagogy compels institutional

change, and it is necessary to account for the institutional implications of changes in teaching and learning. Deep, pervasive institutional changes align across the institution in the emergence of an engaged campus. Indeed, the engaged campus is a relatively recent phenomenon in higher education that emerged, ironically, during the same period when higher education lost its image as a social institution fostering the public good and instead became widely perceived as a market-driven institution existing for the private economic benefit of upwardly mobile individuals—what William Sullivan calls “the default program of instrumental individualism” (2000, p. 21).

For those of us in higher education who are interested in the multiple meanings of changed pedagogies, we are often involved in subversive activity. In changing teaching and learning we seek to teach the content knowledge of our disciplines more effectively, but we also seek to cross disciplinary boundaries. We seek to change our classrooms, but we also seek to change institutional structures and cultures that delegitimize new forms of knowledge creation and different ways of knowing. We view educational practice not as a commercialized, credentialized, commodified end in itself but as a means to the larger end of active participation in a diverse democratic society. Changing pedagogy changes everything.

This chapter explores many of the dimensions of changing pedagogy by first describing the inner workings of changed teaching and learning through engaged pedagogy. It then conceptualizes the place of changed pedagogical practice within a larger framework of change and explores the deeper implications of changed pedagogies for students and community partners. Finally it examines the kind of institutional change necessary for this pedagogy to thrive in higher education.

## Engaged Pedagogy

Adopting and implementing changed pedagogy begins with the critical teaching and learning challenges facing higher education. One of these challenges is how to improve the quality of undergraduate education. The focus here is on developing and assessing effective educational practices that engage students in the learning process to develop higher-order thinking skills and improve learning outcomes. The second challenge relates to changing student demographics as increasing numbers of traditionally underrepresented students pursue higher education. The focus here is on developing educational practices that recognize different cognitive preferences and learning styles while educating *all* students effectively.

Addressing these challenges begins with bringing the past twenty years' worth of research in the cognitive sciences to bear on improving teaching and learning, and then incorporating that research into our thinking about pedagogy. Peter Ewell summarizes what the research reveals about “what we know about learning” (1997, p. 3–4):

1. The Learner is not a “receptacle” of knowledge, but rather creates his or her learning actively and uniquely
2. Learning is about making meaning for each individual learner by establishing and reworking patterns, relationships, and connections

3. Every student learns all the time, both with us and despite us
4. Direct experience decisively shapes individual understanding [cf. “situated learning”]
5. Learning occurs best in the context of a compelling “presenting problem” [cf. Freire]
6. Beyond stimulation, learning requires reflection
7. Learning occurs best in a cultural context that provides both enjoyable interaction and substantial personal support

Based on research findings, Ewell suggests that the cognitive sciences provide six foci for designing teaching and learning environments that promote learning:

1. Approaches that emphasize application and experience
2. Approaches in which faculty constructively model the learning process
3. Approaches that emphasize linking established concepts to new situations
4. Approaches that emphasize interpersonal collaboration
5. Approaches that emphasize rich and frequent feedback on performance
6. Curricula that consistently develop a limited set of clearly identified, cross-disciplinary skills that are publicly held to be important

These foci form the basis for designing engaged pedagogies that address the teaching and learning challenges facing higher education. As Barr and Tagg explain in their seminal essay “From Teaching to Learning,” the “purpose is not to transfer knowledge but to create environments and experiences that bring students to discover and construct knowledge for themselves, to make students members of communities of learners that make discoveries and solve problems” (1995, p. 15). Further, they point out that in a shift to more engaged teaching and learning, “the goal for underrepresented students (and *all* students) becomes not simply access but success. By ‘success’ we mean the achievement of overall educational objectives . . . [aiming] for ever-higher graduation rates while maintaining or even increasing learning standards” (p. 15). The research on learning indicates that although the student in the twenty-first century must learn what John Abbott has called “a whole series of new competencies,” there is doubt that “such abilities can be taught solely in the classroom, or be developed solely by teachers.” Abbott notes that “higher order thinking and problem solving skills grow out of direct experience, not simply teaching; they require more than a classroom activity. They develop through active involvement and real life experiences in workplaces and the community” (Marchese, 1996).

In her profoundly reflective essay on “reclaiming a pedagogy of integrity,” Patricia Owen-Smith, a professor of psychology and women’s studies, recalls the transformation she experienced when she confronted the challenges of improving teaching and learning in her courses. She explains that

when I began teaching in 1986, I reinvented the model I was educated with. It was, after all, the only one I knew. But at some level I recognized that this model worked for me neither as a learner nor a teacher. My students were performing well on exams, but it was increasingly clear to me that they did not have the conceptual clarity or the ability to “uncover” material that would serve them well as learners.

She made the decision that something would have to change. Thus, she reexamined both what she knew about teaching and what she knew about her students:

One aspect of the change in my attitude was that I looked at my students and myself differently, and realized that I had to leave the lectern, figuratively and literally. I abandoned essentialist assumptions about pedagogy—that some universal template of the teaching transaction existed—and began to introduce multiple pedagogical methods into my work to accommodate the multiple styles of learning expressed by my students.

The first thing she did was de-center herself in the classroom, an explicit symbolic recognition that she was no longer the sole authority of knowledge. Students possess significant authority of knowledge and contribute that authority as a valuable asset to the learning environment. Professor Owen-Smith also employed new pedagogical techniques in the classroom and lectured less often:

I stopped lecturing on a routine basis. When I did lecture, I made two assumptions about the place and quality of lectures in my classes. I believed that my students could read and comprehend the basic facts presented in the text, and I believed that maximum content coverage by me in lecture did not necessarily maximize student conceptual understanding. Therefore, my lectures were directed, more times than not, toward the philosophical issues and dilemmas surrounding the factual material (i.e., the why and how and the unexamined assumptions and implications).

Finally, as an extension of introducing active and collaborative teaching methods into her course, she added a community-based component, creating an engaged pedagogy that combined community-based service with academic study to improve teaching and learning:

I also began sending students out into the community to experience the connection between theory and praxis. Many educational psychologists remind us that the absence of experience might explain why students misunderstand. Through theory/practice or service learning opportunities students were challenged to negotiate the tension between their strongly held beliefs and the discrepant images and information gained from their actual experiences in social service agency work. They were compelled to reflect on the limitations of theories and assumptions in making sense out of and reconciling real world problems. (Owen-Smith, 2001)

Owen-Smith's strategies exemplify "service learning," a prominent pedagogical approach that has emerged in the past quarter century and which incorporates design characteristics meant to improve learning and connect teaching and learning to experiences in community. Service learning has been defined as "a credit-bearing, educational experience in which students participate in organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflects on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility" (Bingle & Hatcher, 1996, p. 222). This definition incorporates the key elements of service-learning educational design: it is an academically legitimate, course-based activity; students participate in carefully identified community-based activities that are aimed at fulfilling the learning goals of the course; the community-based service activity is determined by those in the community who have greater community-based knowledge and will have to live with the results of the activity the students are involved with; reflection is an essential component of course design and is the process for creating meaning and understanding out of the community-based experience in the context of the academic course content; the outcome of the integration of community-based activity and the course content in the discipline is greater

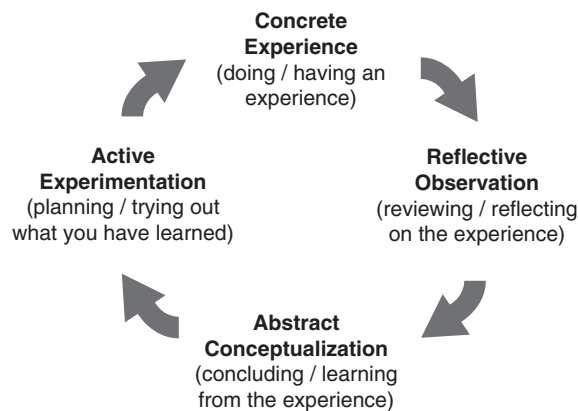
understanding of the disciplinary knowledge base of the course; and the development of the student’s civic engagement—which includes an appreciation of what civic engagement means in the context of a particular disciplinary or professional perspective—is a specific outcome.

Service learning has proved particularly effective as a pedagogy that engages students in the process of teaching and learning in deeper ways. As the National Survey of Student Engagement reports,

complementary learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom augment the academic program . . . [and] provide students with opportunities to synthesize, integrate, and apply their knowledge. Such experiences make learning more meaningful, and ultimately more useful because what students know becomes a part of who they are. (2002, p. 11)

This last finding has a remarkably Deweyian ring to it: Dewey described what he called “embodied intelligence” or “embodied knowledge” as knowledge that students acquired in such a way that it not only became what they knew but shaped who they were as individuals.

A key element of service-learning pedagogy is that it provides an educational design that acknowledges students’ different learning styles. All students come into our classes with certain cognitive preferences and styles of learning. The greater diversity of students in higher education means that there is a greater diversity of cultural backgrounds and a greater diversity of preferred ways of knowing and learning. Service learning offers an opportunity to teach to a variety of learning styles, engaging all students in learning and contributing to the academic success of all students. David Kolb explained experiential learning as a cyclical process that involves concrete experience, reflection on the experience, abstract conceptualization contextualizing the experience, and application of abstract concepts in real-world situations to test their validity. Kolb’s work is grounded in Dewey, who conceived of learning taking place through a reflective process involving a concrete activity. This for Dewey formed the basis of “experience.” To make his point, Dewey claimed that “mere activity does not constitute experience” (1916/1966, p. 139). Experiential education, as Kolb explains, entails more than “concrete experience”—it includes reflection, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (see figure 1; adapted from Kolb, 1981).



**FIGURE 23.1.** Experience and Education

SOURCE: David A. Kolb, “Learning Styles and Disciplinary Differences,” in A.W. Chickering and Associates, *The Modern American College: Responding to the Realities of Diverse Students in a Changing Society*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

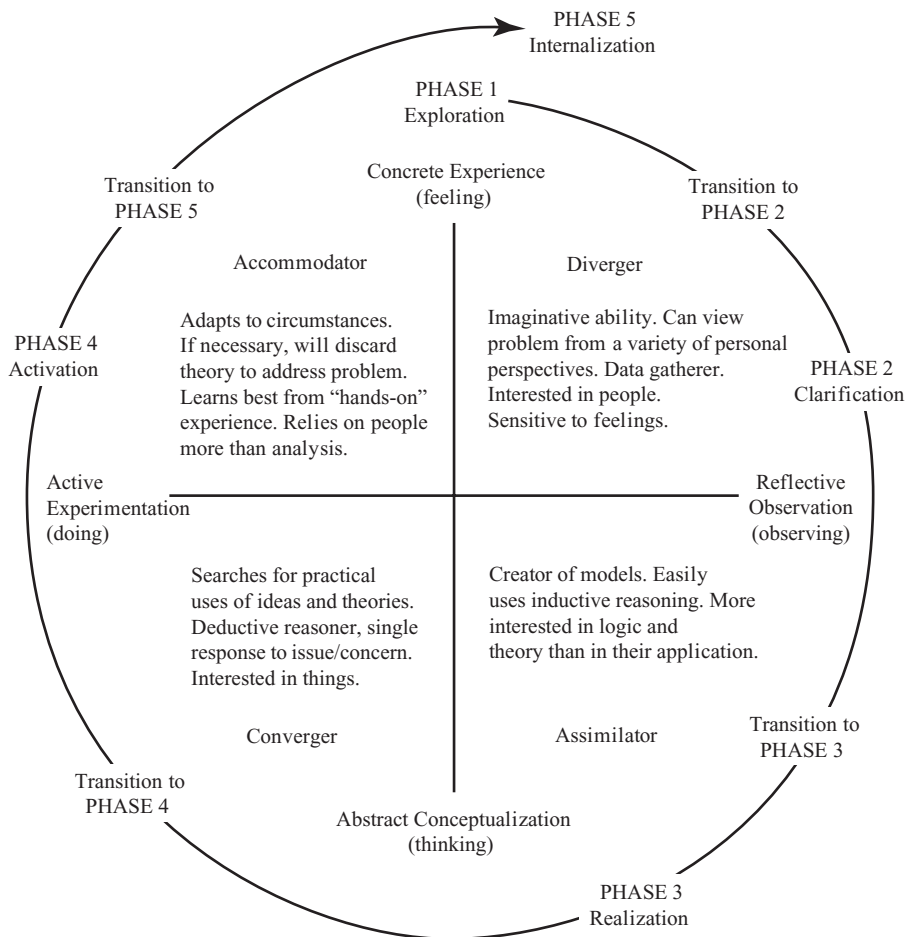
With service-learning pedagogy, students engage in the learning process through their preferred mode of learning and improve their ability to learn through the other modes of learning. For example, a student who learns best through hands-on experience can learn through a concrete experience in the community as his or her preferred mode of learning; having engaged in the learning process through his or her preferred mode of learning, the student can then reflect on the experience, can read academic material related to the experience, and can devise ways to participate in the experience more effectively. Another student whose preferred mode of learning is through abstract conceptualization can read academic material as a way of making sense of the community-based experience before participating in it; reflection helps the student connect the experience in the community to the course material, allowing him or her to read and understand the academic concepts in more complex and deeper ways as the student thinks through how he or she can participate in the community experience more effectively. The key is that service-learning provides the opportunity to learn through multiple modes of learning without privileging any single cognitive preference.

Through this understanding of experiential learning, Kolb identified learning styles associated with preferred modes of learning. Kolb's model has been adapted for service learning as a way to understand the educational design and its implications for learning (see figure 2).

This model explicates the educational design in a number of ways. It highlights different preferred modes of learning and different learning styles, and it explicitly connects affective and cognitive development. It also identifies a number of stages in the learning process, including exploration, clarification, realization, activation, and internalization; however, these stages comprise not a cyclical process but a spiral, leading to higher and deeper learning.

Let me offer an example from a course that I taught using service-learning pedagogy. One of the students, a sociology major in her junior year of study (we'll call her Michelle—not her real name), chose to provide service to a homeless shelter for women in a neighborhood near the campus, in fulfillment of her community-based experience for the course. In a reflection session during the first week of class, I asked all the students, including Michelle, why they wanted to be at the community-based agency they had chosen. Michelle avoided the question, and when pressed, she answered: "I don't care how the women at the shelter got there; I just want to help them." I had expected an academic answer, one more in line with a sociological analysis of the situation of homelessness and women's experience with homelessness. Yet Michelle's response was an affective one. The service-learning model explains that individuals do not move to higher levels of cognitive development without connecting it to their affective development. How would that happen? Again, the model explains that the process entails (1) concrete experience and (2) reflection on that experience, (3) in the context of contextualization of the experience, and (4) ways to reconceptualize participation in the experience. This will lead to movement to the next stage in the learning process.

For Michelle, the transformational process was revealed six weeks later, when during a reflection exercise in class, I reminded her of her response to the question on the first day of class. She was visibly stunned at her previous response, and then proceeded to talk with the other students about her experience at the shelter. She explained that her work at the

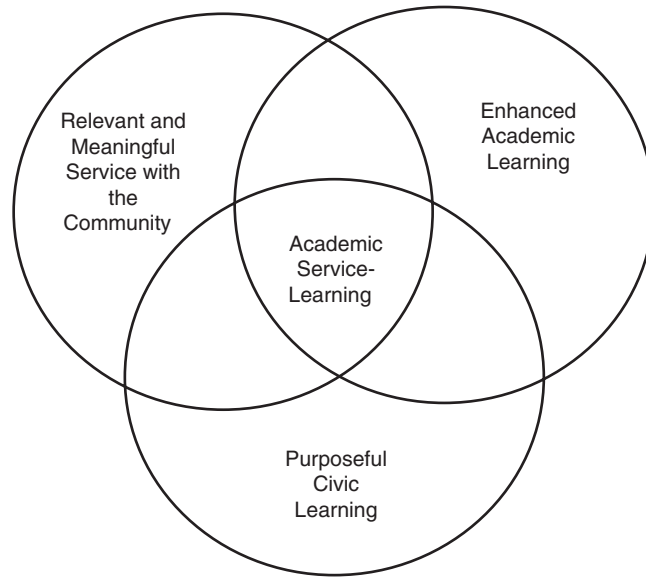


**FIGURE 23.2** Comparison of Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle with the Service Learning Model  
 SOURCE: Delve, C. I., Mintz, S. D., and Stewart, G. I. (eds.). *Community Service as Values Education*. New Directions for Student Services, no. 50. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990, p. 37.

shelter consisted of intake—taking information from the women who came into the shelter. She told the class that she spent more time doing intake than anyone else at the shelter. Then she proceeded to provide a detailed, sophisticated and complex sociological explanation for why women ended up at the shelter. According to the model, she was somewhere in the phase of realization and had reached higher levels of cognitive development. To complete the story and the cycle, Michelle finished the course and graduated the following year. Her first job after graduation was as the volunteer coordinator at the shelter. According to the model, her learning had become internalized. What she knew became part of who she is.

Service-learning, through relevant and meaningful community-service activity, is designed to achieve learning outcomes in two primary areas—academic learning and civic learning (see figure 3).

In the example of Michelle's experience, purposeful civic learning was structured into the course primarily through reflection that framed questions within a civic dimension. In *Civic Engagement across the Curriculum*, Richard Battistoni provides examples of reflection



**FIGURE 23.3.** Comparison of Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle with the Service Learning Model

SOURCE: Jeffrey Howard, 2001. *Service-Learning Course Design Workbook*, Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, summer, p. 12.

questions with a civic dimension: “What is the civic role of your chosen profession/discipline? What are the public/civic dimensions of your anticipated work? What expectations does a democratic community place upon you as an individual? Upon you in your professional capacity?” (2002, p. 72).

Civic learning is an essential thread in the fabric of service-learning pedagogy. While at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in the early 1980s, Frank Newman, a leading service-learning proponent, asserted that “the most critical demand is to restore to higher education its original purpose of preparing graduates for a life of involved and committed citizenship . . . The advancement of civic learning, therefore, must become higher education's most central goal” (1985, xiv). More recently the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education claimed:

A good understanding of the democratic principles and institutions embodied in our history, government, and law provide the foundation for civic engagement and commitment, but the classroom alone is not enough. Research shows that students are more likely to have a sense of social responsibility, more likely to commit to addressing community or social problems in their adult lives as workers and citizens, and more likely to demonstrate political efficacy when they engage in structured, conscious reflection on experience in the larger community. To achieve these outcomes, students need structured, real-world experiences that are informed by classroom learning. (Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, 2003)

Jeffrey Howard, editor of the *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, defines civic learning as “any learning that contributes to student preparation for community or public involvement in a diverse democratic society.”

A loose interpretation of civic learning would lead one to believe that education in general prepares one for citizenship in our democracy. And it certainly does. However, we have in mind here



a strict interpretation of civic learning—knowledge, skills and values that make an explicitly direct and purposeful contribution to the preparation of students for active civic participation. (2001, p. 38)

Civic learning draws attention to the civic dimensions of education, emphasizing the need not only for the development of disciplinary mastery and competence, but also for civic awareness and purpose. Civic learning illuminates the socially responsive aspects of disciplinary knowledge, those dimensions that expand the view of education to include learning and developing the knowledge, skills, and values of democratic citizenship.

Engaged pedagogies such as service-learning are defined in part by learning outcomes that have a civic dimension. An essential point made by Edgerton and Schulman in reflecting on the 2002 National Survey of Student Engagement results is relevant here: “Students can be engaged in a range of effective practices and still not be learning with understanding; we know that students can be learning with understanding and still not be acquiring the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are related to effective citizenship” (National Survey of Student Engagement, 2002, p. 3). A focus on civic learning builds upon effective teaching and learning practices by *linking them more deliberately to civic outcomes*.

## A New Pedagogy Requires a New Epistemology

Donald Schon’s writings help to situate changes in pedagogy within a broader framework of changes that begin with shifts in epistemology and extend to shifts in institutional culture. Schon’s most influential writings focus on reflective practice and are grounded in Dewey’s educational thought. He describes a way of knowing and a form of knowledge that are associated with practice and action:

In the domain of practice, we see what John Dewey called inquiry: thought intertwined with action—reflection in and on action—which proceeds from doubt to the resolution of doubt, to the generation of new doubt. For Dewey, doubt lies not in the mind but in the situation. Inquiry begins with situations that are problematic—that are confusing, uncertain, or conflicted, and block the free flow of action. The inquirer is in, and in transaction with, the problematic situation. He or she must construct the meaning and frame the problem of the situation, thereby setting the stage for problem-solving, which, in combination with changes in the external context, brings a new problematic situation into being. (Schon, 1995, p. 31)

Here, Schon identifies practitioner knowledge, or “knowing in action” (p. 27), which represents a particular way of constructing and using knowledge.

What concerns Schon is that colleges and universities in the United States are dominated by technical rationality—what he called their “institutional epistemology (p. 27)” —which shuns other forms of rationality. “Educational institutions,” he writes, “have epistemologies. They hold conceptions of what counts as legitimate knowledge and how you know what you claim to know” (p. 27). Further, he explains that

all of us who live in research universities are bound up in technical rationality, regardless of our personal attitudes toward it, because it is built into the institutional arrangements—the formal and informal rules and norms—that govern such processes as the screening of candidates for

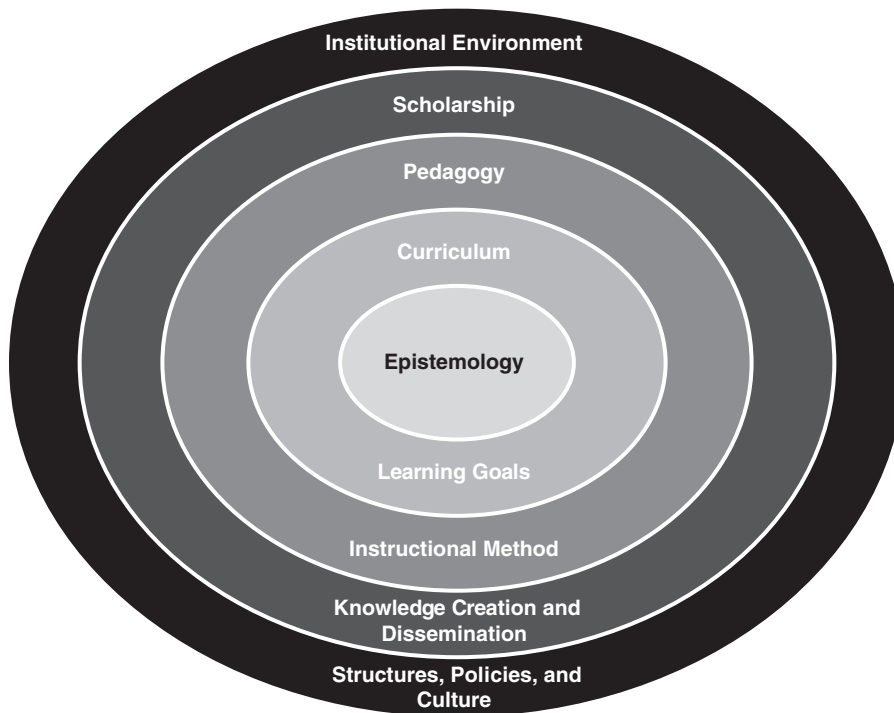
tenure and promotion. Even liberal arts colleges, community colleges, and other institutions of higher education appear to be subject to the influence of technical rationality by a kind of echo effect or by imitation. (p. 32)

For Schon, all the work being done to change higher education by broadening what is viewed as legitimate scholarly work in the academy—particularly the influential work of Ernest Boyer in his *Scholarship Reconsidered* (1990)—raises issues not only of scholarship but fundamentally of epistemology. If faculty were to engage in new forms of scholarship, Schon writes in a essay called “The New Scholarship Requires a New Epistemology,” then “we cannot avoid questions of epistemology, since the new forms of scholarship . . . challenge the epistemology built into the modern research university . . . if the new scholarship is to mean anything, it must imply a kind of action research with norms of its own, which will conflict with the norms of technical rationality—the prevailing epistemology built into the research universities” (p. 27).

Schon uses the example of community-based scholarship to make his point. “If community outreach is to be seen as a form of scholarship,” he writes, “then it is the practice of reaching out and providing service to a community that must be seen as raising important issues whose investigation may lead to generalizations of prospective relevance and actionability” (p. 31). This requires institutional change. “The problem of changing the universities so as to incorporate the new scholarship,” he explains, “must include, then, how to introduce action research as a legitimate and appropriately rigorous way of knowing and generating knowledge . . . If we are prepared to take [on this task], then we have to deal with what it means to introduce an epistemology of reflective practice into institutions of higher education dominated by technical rationality” (pp. 31–32). Schon links issues of scholarship to what he calls “the epistemological, institutional, and political issues it raises within the university.” He further connects questions of scholarship and epistemology to “institutional arrangements—the formal and informal rules and norms of the campus, or the institutional culture.” He argues that “in order to legitimize the new scholarship, higher education institutions will have to learn organizationally to open up the prevailing epistemology so as to foster new forms of reflective action research” (p. 34).

Schon’s insights into new forms of scholarship are useful in thinking about new forms of pedagogy. In the same way that a new scholarship requires a new epistemology, a new pedagogy—localized, relational, practice-based, active, collaborative, experiential, and reflective—requires a new epistemology consistent with changed pedagogical practice. Schon offers a framework that suggests that a shift in how knowledge is constructed (how we know what we know and what is legitimate knowledge in the academy) will lead to a change in how knowledge is organized in the curriculum, then to a change in how the curriculum is delivered through instruction (pedagogy), then to a change in how knowledge is created and shared, and then to a change in the institutional cultures that support change in all these educational dimensions. Each relates to the other, none can be considered in isolation, and all lead to issues of institutional transformation (see figure 4).

Community-based pedagogy raises issues of institutional change that are centered, as the framework suggests, in questions of epistemology. An example of this framework in practice comes from a group of multidisciplinary faculty at a small liberal arts college who



**FIGURE 23.4.** Components of Service-Learning

were teaching community-based experiential courses. The campus was involved in a strategic planning process, and the faculty determined that the central question that they wanted to discuss was the following: “For the sake of creating new knowledge, what is the intellectual space for complementary epistemologies at X College.” These faculty wanted to legitimize a different kind of epistemology that aligned with their conception of both how knowledge is constructed and how learning occurred in their classes. The “intellectual space” alluded to broader systemic issues at the institution, linking “complementary epistemologies” with interdisciplinarity, community-based teaching and learning, and engaged scholarship, as well as the structures, policies, and cultures of the institution. The situation on this campus is not unlike what is happening on many campuses, where introducing new pedagogies into institutions of higher education, Schon suggests, “means becoming involved in an epistemological battle. It is a battle of snails, proceeding so slowly that you have to look very carefully in order to see it going on. But it is happening nonetheless” (p. 32).

### Implications of Changed Pedagogy

Drawing on Schon’s insights, changed pedagogy results from changed epistemology. Understanding the role of students and community partners as co-creators of knowledge and collaborators in the design and delivery of the curriculum coincides with a fundamental shift in understanding how we know what we know, how knowledge is constructed, and what is considered legitimate knowledge within the academy.

### Implications for Students

Community-based teaching and learning is grounded in the position that knowledge is socially constructed, and that the lived experience and cultural frameworks that the teacher and learner bring to the educational setting form the basis for the discovery of new knowledge. This position is antithetical to the dominant epistemological position that holds knowledge as being objectified and separate from the knower, in which case the knowledge and experience that the learner brings to the learning environment is of little consequence. In this way, valuing the lived experience and the cultural frameworks that the teacher and learners bring to the educational environment directly challenges the position that all valid knowledge is rational, analytic, and positivist. Rather, this new framework legitimizes knowledge that emerges from experience. Knowledge, according to Mary Walshok, “is something more than highly intellectualized, analytical, and symbolic material. It includes working knowledge, a component of experience, of hands-on practice knowledge” (1995, p. 14).

Closely related to this epistemological position is the perspective that looks at students as assets to the educational process, challenging the deficit thinking that accompanies a traditional epistemological perspective. The student’s assets are embraced because the experience and knowledge they contribute to the learning process, and the authority of knowledge that they possess, contribute necessarily to the construction of new knowledge. This is the essence of learner-centered education. The educational value of diversity is enhanced proportionate to the greater ethnic, racial, cultural, religious, gender, and socio-economic diversity present in the educational setting. This means that a conventional university education

cannot offer nearly enough on its own to a huge range of students with starting-points, aspirations, and destinations immensely varied but mostly well outside the confines of the theoretical discipline . . . [It is necessary] to situate our university courses as far as possible in the context of the students’ experience at work and in the world they come from, go back to, and where they expect to exercise understanding and practical intelligence. To do that means rooting much of our teaching in our own engaged understanding of that world. (Bjarnason & Coldstream, 2003, p. 335)

From an asset-based perspective, the student is fundamentally a knowledge producer instead of a knowledge consumer, an active participant in the creation of new knowledge. In order to facilitate socially constructed knowledge, an educational design is needed that fosters active participation in teaching and learning—in a Freireian sense, everyone involved is both a teacher and a learner. Instruction, therefore, is designed to be active, collaborative, and engaged rather than passive, rote, and disengaged (in a deficit model, there is no need to involve the student except as the recipient of knowledge that is “out there” and that needs to be brought, by the instructor at the center of the classroom and in sole possession of authority of knowledge, to the student—typically in a lecture format). The civic corollary to this epistemological position is that education instills active participation in learning and in civic life; students, as knowledge producers, are educated to become active participants in democratic life instead of being spectators to a shallow form of democracy.

Positioning the student as a knowledge producer is associated with the design of educational experiences that reinforce democratic values and experiences. The works of Myles

Horton (1998, 2003), Paulo Freire (1970/1994), and bell hooks (1994) take the position that democracy in the process of teaching and learning is shaped by a framework of equality—equality defined as the equal respect for the knowledge and experience of all the participants in the learning process. When Myles Horton designed the learning experience at Highlander Folk School in the 1930s, he understood that “one of the best ways of educating people is to give them an experience that embodies what you are trying to teach” (p. 68). This meant creating a “circle of learners” (de-centering the teacher) with the commitment of all the participants “to respect other people’s ideas” (p. 71). This kind of educational design for democracy, influenced by Dewey and Jane Addams, played itself out in the Citizenship Schools that became a catalyst for action during the civil rights era. Equal respect for the knowledge and experience of everyone involved in learning presupposes a shift in epistemology. Horton explained it this way:

The biggest stumbling block was that all of us at Highlander had academic backgrounds. We thought that the way we had learned and what we had learned could somehow be tailored to the needs of poor people, the working people of Appalachia . . . We still thought our job was to give students information about what we thought would be good for them . . . we saw problems that we thought we had the answers to, rather than seeing the problems and the answers that the people had themselves. (p. 68)

Ordinary citizens from communities in the South came to Highlander with the goal of collectively working toward the solution of a public problem. They each came with a body of knowledge and experience that had relevance to the problem at hand. And they participated in a process of learning from each other and creating new understandings and knowledge to take back to their communities to address social issues. While at Highlander they participated with a certain authority of knowledge that was respected by others. They participated in community-based public problem-solving through a process that afforded equal respect for the knowledge and experience that everyone brought to the educational enterprise. It is this process of democratic knowledge creation that is at the heart of education that integrates pedagogies of engagement with civic engagement.

Horton’s educational approach was consistent with John Dewey’s educational philosophy in that it explicitly linked education and democracy. Dewey wrote that “unless education has some frame of reference it is bound to be aimless, lacking a unified objective. The necessity for a frame of reference must be admitted. There exists in this country such a unified frame. It is called democracy” (1937b, p. 415). Dewey’s conception of democratic education first broadens the meaning of democracy to encompass widespread, cooperative, participatory experience: “A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of co-joint communicated experience. The extension in space of the number of individuals who participate in an interest so that each has to refer to his own action and to that of others, and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to his own, is equivalent to the breaking down of those barriers of class, race, and national territory which keep men from perceiving the full import of their activity” (1916/1966, p. 87). Second, by “associated living, co-joint communicated experience,” Dewey maintains that “the foundation of democracy is faith in the power of pooled and cooperative experience” and “it is

the democratic faith that . . . each individual has something to contribute whose value can be assessed only as it enters into the final pooled intelligence constituted by the contributions of all” (1937a, p. 219). Both democracy and education require wide and diverse participation, and this participation cannot be limited because everyone has something to contribute to education and to the public culture of democracy. Dewey argued forcefully that “the democratic idea itself demands that the thinking and activity proceed cooperatively” (1937a, p. 220). In democratic education, learning takes place through a process “constituted by the contributions of all.”

For Dewey, “whether this educative process is carried on in a predominantly democratic or non-democratic way becomes therefore a question of transcendent importance not only for education itself but for its final effect upon all the interests and activities of a society that is committed to the democratic way of life” (1937a, p. 225). The result of nondemocratic education—*both for engagement in learning and engagement in democracy*—is that “absence of participation tends to produce lack of interest and concern on the part of those shut out. The result is a corresponding lack of effective responsibility” (1937a, p. 223). “What the argument for democracy implies,” Dewey noted, “is that the best way to produce initiative and constructive power is to exercise it” (1937a, p. 224).

In his book *Democratic Professionalism* (2008), Albert Dzur points out that “Dewey’s democratic educators foster cooperation and creative problem solving by structuring learning environments for students to work and deliberate together . . . Dewey’s students learn about democracy by acting democratically; the very structure of their schools gives students a taste for collective self-determination” (p. 21). According to Dzur, Dewey “directs educators to facilitate cooperative situations in the classroom in which ‘associated thought’ and the democratic habits that go along with it can thrive” and in which students are “initiated into the participatory and deliberative mode of associated living characteristic of a task-sharing democracy” (p. 21). Dewey was consistent and explicit in his meaning of democracy: it requires wide and diverse participation, drawing on the rich assets of knowledge and experience of individuals that contributes to the public culture of democracy.

A shift from a deficit-based to an asset-based approach compels a shift from knowledge as the sole possession of the academic expert to something that is shared among all those involved in the learning process. Students, then, share in the authority of knowledge in the classroom and contribute to the learning process. They are not viewed through the dominant deficit framework, as having little or nothing to contribute to their education; rather, through diverse knowledge and experiences, they help shape the learning that collectively takes place. Similarly, an asset-based approach affects how community partners relate to the educational process (see figure 5)

### Implications for Community Partners

Engaged academics in higher education relate to external community partners largely as a function of reconceptualized faculty work—i.e., from that of expert application to collaborative engagement. O’Meara and Rice make this distinction when they assess the developments in engagement in higher education since the publication of Boyer’s *Scholarship Reconsidered*. Specifically, they maintain that what Boyer called the “Scholarship of

|                                     | Deficit-Based Approach   | Asset-Based Approach   |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Implications for Students           | Student as knowledge consumer  | Student as knowledge producer  |
|                                     | Knowledge is rational, analytic, positivist  | Knowledge is relational, contextual, socially constructed  |
|                                     | Instruction is passive, rote, disengaged   | Learning is active, collaborative, experiential  |
| Implications for Community Partners | Expert generation and application of knowledge   | Collaborative and reciprocal knowledge production and use  |
|                                     | Traditional knowledge generation—the dominant position in the academy that all valid knowledge is rational, analytic, and positivist (pure, disciplinary, homogeneous, expert-led, supply-driven, hierarchical, peer reviewed, and almost exclusively university-based | Engaged knowledge generation—problem-centered, transdisciplinary, heterogeneous, hybrid, demand-driven, entrepreneurial, network-embedded, etc. (Gibbons et al., 1994) |

FIGURE 23.5. Pedagogy, Epistemology, and Institutional Change

Application” “builds on established academic epistemology, assumes that knowledge is generated in the university or college and then applied to external contexts with knowledge flowing in one direction, out of the academy.” In contrast, they explain that the

Scholarship of Engagement . . . requires going beyond the expert model that often gets in the way of constructive university-community collaboration . . . calls on faculty to move beyond “out-reach,” . . . asks scholars to go beyond “service,” with its overtones of noblesse oblige. What it emphasizes is genuine *collaboration*: that the learning and teaching be multidirectional and the expertise shared. It represents a basic reconceptualization of faculty involvement in community-based work. (2005, pp. 27–28)

An “expert-centered” framework of engagement (Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton, 2009; Saltmarsh & Hartley, in press), often identified as technocratic, scientific, or positivist, defines the dominant paradigm of engagement in higher education and is grounded in an institutional epistemology of expert knowledge housed in the university and applied externally. “This epistemology,” William Sullivan has noted, “is firmly entrenched as the operating system of much of the American university” (2000, p. 29). There exists, Sullivan writes, an “affinity of positivist understandings of research for ‘applying’ knowledge to the social world on the model of the way engineers ‘apply’ expert understanding to the problems of structures.” Knowledge produced by credentialed, detached experts is embedded in hierarchies of knowledge generation and knowledge use, creating a division between knowledge producers (in the university) and knowledge consumers (in the community). In the positivist scheme, “researchers ‘produce’ knowledge, which is then ‘applied’ to problems and problematic populations” (p. 29). Academic expertise, writes Greenwood (2008), focuses on “building theory, being ‘objective,’ writing mainly for each other in a language of their own creation, building professional associations, and staying away from political controversies” (p. 321). Valued more than community-based knowledge, academic knowledge flows

unilaterally, from inside the boundaries of the university outward to its place of need and application in the community.

This expert-centered framework of engagement locates the university at the center of solutions to public problems and educates students through service as proto-experts who will be able to perform civic tasks in communities they work with because they will have the knowledge and credentials to help communities improve. In the expert-centered paradigm, students, in their developing citizen roles, will not be taught the political dimensions of their activities, because questions of power are left out of the context of objectified knowledge production and the way that “service” is provided to communities. Higher education that includes civic engagement activities characterized by the expert-centered paradigm perpetuates a kind of politics that rejects popularly informed decision-making in favor of expert-informed knowledge application. Politics is something to be kept separate from the dispassionate pursuit of knowledge because it is understood in terms of competing partisan positions and opposing ideologies, and thus not only is avoided by academics who perceive such work as “activist scholarship” but is prohibited by federal mandate when community-service programs are funded through federal agencies. On many campuses what has emerged are remarkably apolitical “civic” engagement efforts.

Expert-driven, hierarchical knowledge generation and dissemination is not only an epistemological position but, as Harry Boyte points out, a political one. Traditional academic epistemology, with its embedded values, methods, and practices, signifies a “pattern of power” relationships and creates a “technocracy” and a particular politics that is “the core obstacle to higher education’s engagement.” As Boyte asserts, the power and politics of expert academic knowledge is “the largest obstacle in higher education to authentic engagement with communities,” and is “a significant contributor to the general crisis of democracy.” Its core negative functions,” he explains, “are to undermine the standing and to delegitimize the knowledge of those without credentials, degrees, and university training . . . It conceives of people without credentials as needy clients to be rescued or as customers to be manipulated” (2008, p. 108). In this way of thinking and acting, he notes, genuine reciprocal learning is just not possible.

Community partnerships in the expert-centered framework of engagement do not have an explicit and intentional democratic dimension in which academics share knowledge-generating tasks with the public and involve community partners as participants in public problem solving. A shift in discourse from “partnerships” and “mutuality” to that of “reciprocity” is grounded in democratic values of sharing previously academic tasks with non-academics and encouraging the participation of nonacademics in ways that enhance and enable broader engagement and deliberation about major social issues inside and outside the university. A democratic framework seeks the public good *with* the public—not merely *for* it—as a means for facilitating a more active and engaged democracy. Reciprocity signals an epistemological shift that values not only expert knowledge that is rational, analytic and positivist, but also a different kind of rationality that is more relational, localized, and contextual and favors mutual deference between laypersons and academics. Knowledge generation is a process of co-creation, breaking down the distinctions between knowledge producers and knowledge consumers. It further implies scholarly work that is conducted by



|                                       | Expert-Centered   | Democratic-Centered  |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Community Relationships</b>        | Partnerships and mutuality                                      | Reciprocity  |
|                                       | Deficit-based understanding of community                        | Asset-based understanding of community   |
|                                       | Academic work done <i>for</i> the public                        | Academic work done <i>with</i> the public  |
| <b>Knowledge Production/ Research</b> | Applied   | Inclusive, collaborative, problem-oriented   |
|                                       | Unidirectional flow of knowledge                                | Multidirectional flow of knowledge   |
| <b>Epistemology</b>                   | Positivist/scientific/technocratic                              | Relational, localized, contextual  |
|                                       | Distinction between knowledge producers and knowledge consumers | Co-creation of knowledge   |
|                                       | Primacy of academic knowledge                                   | Shared authority for knowledge creation  |
|                                       | University as the center of public problem solving              | University as a part of an ecosystem of knowledge production addressing public problem solving |
| <b>Political Dimension</b>            | Apolitical engagement   | Facilitating an inclusive, collaborative, and deliberative democracy                           |

FIGURE 23.6. Comparing Civic Engagement Frameworks

sharing authority and power with those in the community in all aspects of the relationship: defining problems, choosing approaches, addressing issues, developing the final products, and participating in assessment. Reciprocity operates to facilitate the involvement of individuals in the community not just as consumers of knowledge and services but as participants in the larger public culture of democracy (see figure 6).

**Implications for Teaching and Learning**

A “democratic-centered” framework of engagement locates the university within what Ernest Lynton called an “interconnected and interdependent ecosystem of knowledge” (1994, p. 90), requiring interaction with other knowledge producers outside the university through a multidirectional flow of knowledge and expertise. In an ecosystem of knowledge, Lynton explained, “knowledge does not move from the locus of research to the place of application, from scholar to practitioner, teacher to student, expert to client. It is everywhere fed back, constantly enhanced” (1994, p. 10). “The design of problem-solving actions through collaborative knowledge construction with the legitimate stakeholders in the problem,” writes Davydd Greenwood, takes place in

collaborative arenas for knowledge development in which the professional researcher’s knowledge is combined with the local knowledge of the stakeholders in defining the problem to be

addressed. Together, they design and implement the actions to be taken on the basis of their shared understanding of the problem. Together, the parties develop plans of action to improve the situation together, and they evaluate the adequacy of what was done. (2008, p. 327)

This interactive and interdependent process of knowledge creation is what Greenwood describes as “a democratizing form of content-specific knowledge creation, theorization, analysis, and action design in which the goals are democratically set, learning capacity is shared, and success is collaboratively evaluated” (p. 329).

In this collaborative framework, students learn cooperative and creative problem-solving within learning environments in which faculty, students, and individuals from the community work and deliberate together. Politics is understood through explicit awareness and experience of patterns of power that are present in the relationship between the university and the community; that is, politics is not reduced to partisanship. In the democratic-centered paradigm, academics are not on the front lines of partisan politics, but, as described by Dzur, they “have sown the seeds of a more deliberative democracy . . . by cultivating norms of equality, collaboration, reflection, and communication” (2008, p. 121). Civic engagement in the democratic-centered framework is intentionally political in that all those involved in the learning process learn about democracy by acting democratically.

A developing critique of a unidirectional, applied, expert-centered approach to knowledge generation, teaching, and learning, especially in the social sciences, recognizes that complex social problems can be addressed only if the intended recipients’ motivations and contexts are taken into account. In the expert-centered framework of engagement, “the terms of engagement, the ways of studying the issues, and the ownership of the actions and the intellectual products are not negotiated with the legitimate local stakeholders” (Weerts & Sandmann, 2008, p. 333). A democratic-centered framework, conversely, “must involve a true partnership, based on both sides bringing their own experience and expertise to the project,” noted Lynton, and “this kind of collaboration requires a substantial change in the prevalent culture of academic institutions” (1995, p. xii). A democratic-centered framework is premised on the understanding that “the pursuit of knowledge itself demands engagement” and that “a greater number of academics need to define their territory more widely and accept that they share much of it with other knowledge-professionals; engagement with those beyond the ivory tower may greatly enrich their own thinking” (Bjarnason & Coldstream, 2003, p. 323). A “more inclusive, two-way approach to knowledge flow” accompanied by “an epistemological shift . . . from a rational or objectivist worldview to a constructivist worldview” (Weerts & Sandmann, 2008, p. 78) is marked by movement away from traditional academic knowledge generation (i.e., pure, disciplinary, homogeneous, expert-led, supply-driven, hierarchical, peer-reviewed, and almost exclusively university-based) to engaged knowledge generation (i.e., applied, problem-centered, transdisciplinary, heterogeneous, hybrid, demand-driven, entrepreneurial, and network-embedded) (Gibbons et al., 1994).

The implication of this shift for teaching and learning is that it relocates students and community partners as co-producers of knowledge, valuing the knowledge and experience they contribute to the educational process, sharing authority for the process of knowledge generation and pedagogy, and allowing them to practice and experiment with a public culture of democracy as part of the work of higher education.

## Changing Higher Education from the Inside Out

Drawing on Schon's observations, if changed pedagogies are going to be adopted and sustained as part of the academic mainstream in higher education, then changes in teaching and learning practice alone will not be enough. Also necessary are changes in the institutional cultures in which the practices are embedded. This, in turn, will require new ways of thinking about teaching, learning, and institutional change.

Changes in practice are associated with what Larry Cuban describes as "first order change," which aims to improve "the efficiency and effectiveness of what is done . . . to make what already exists more efficient and more effective, without disturbing the basic organizational features, without substantially altering the ways in which [faculty and students] perform their roles" (1988, p. 342). Change in pedagogical practice as a matter of new technique need not fundamentally alter the established organizational structures and culture of higher education. It does not require what Eckel, Hill, and Green refer to as changes that "alter the culture of the institution," those that require "major shifts in an institution's culture—the common set of beliefs and values that creates a shared interpretation and understanding of events and actions" (1998, p. 3). Changes in pedagogy that perpetuate the dominant expert-centered educational paradigm do not compel change that transforms institutional culture. Civic engagement within the "democratic-centered" framework, with its explicit value of reciprocity and implications for students and community partners, points to change in the institutional culture of colleges and universities, or what Cuban identifies as "second-order changes" that

seek to alter the fundamental ways in which organizations are put together. These changes reflect major dissatisfaction with present arrangements. Second-order changes introduce new goals, structures, and roles that transform familiar ways of doing things into new ways of solving persistent problems. (1988, p. 342)

"Those who propose first-order changes," he writes, "believe that the existing goals and structures . . . are both adequate and desirable" (p. 342); therefore, there is no need to fundamentally alter the established organizational structures and culture of higher education.

Whereas first-order changes largely involve improving existing practice, those of the second order require significant restructuring of academic work aligned with a democratic conception of civic engagement. Second-order changes are associated with transformational change, what Eckel, Hill, and Green define as change that "(1) alters the culture of the institution by changing select underlying assumptions and institutional behaviors, processes, and products; (2) is deep and pervasive, affecting the whole institution; (3) is intentional; and (4) occurs over time" (p. 3). Cultural change focuses on "institution-wide patterns of perceiving, thinking, and feeling; shared understandings; collective assumptions; and common interpretive frameworks [that] are the ingredients of this 'invisible glue' called institutional culture" (p. 3). From this perspective, innovative practices that shift epistemology, reshape the curriculum, alter pedagogy, and redefine scholarship must be supported through academic norms and institutional reward policies that shape the academic cultures of the academy.

For changed pedagogies that foster civic engagement to be sustained as institutionalized practices, they will need to be embedded in the shared norms, beliefs, and values of the

institution—embedded in the institutional culture. They will need to be seamlessly woven into what Schon calls “the formal and informal rules and norms that govern such processes as the screening of candidates for promotion and tenure” (1995, p. 32). If civic engagement is practiced in such a way that it compels changes in institutional culture, then engaged faculty work not only may be sustained but can thrive amid a supportive environment that encourages such work. Sullivan observes that efforts of civic engagement in higher education “seem to succeed best in actually becoming institutionalized as standard academic procedure when they develop as actual partnerships in which knowledge and practices evolve cooperatively rather than proceeding in a one-directional way from experts to outsiders” (2000, p. 34).

Although higher education’s reliance on an expert-centered paradigm has emphasized individual and institutional expert self-interest at the expense of the public purposes of higher education, an alternative paradigm is possible—and can contribute to the reshaping of higher education to better meet its academic and civic missions in the twenty-first century. As Sullivan reminds us, “campuses educate their students for citizenship most effectively to the degree that they become sites for constructive exchange and cooperation among diverse groups of citizens from the larger community” (2000, p. 20). It is this democratic-centered paradigm that holds the promise of not only changing pedagogies but changing the institutional identity of colleges and universities, thus cultivating the values of long-term democracy-building and contributing to the public culture of democracy itself.

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