

Being in Community: A Food Security Themed Approach to Public Scholarship

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For six years the Food Security Research Network at Lakehead University, Canada, has been engaged in an interdisciplinary theme-based service-learning initiative focusing on food security. Informed by complexity theory, the contextual fluidity partnership model brings community partners, students, and faculty into a nexus through which new knowledge focused on addressing food security can emerge. This approach to public scholarship diminishes boundaries in the location and forms of knowledge, opening up space for community knowledge to be a genuine part of the knowledge mix. For the last six years we have blurred the lines between community (public, private, and social sectors), students, and academics to create an “in community” focus to service-learning. This article highlights how the themed approach to service-learning using a contextual fluidity partnership model impacts faculty members and their involvement in public scholarship, and leads to innovation and new knowledge that is grounded in place and context.

Service-learning provides institutions of higher education with a compelling way to address pressing societal issues (Boyer, 1996; O’Meara, 2008). By leveraging their strengths and resources, and engaging their academic expertise in partnership with community-based expertise, they are able to realize Boyer’s (1996) vision of the “scholarship of engagement” (p.19). Combining classroom and community-based learning, service-learning represents a shift in the locus of knowledge generation, in that it recognizes the value of knowledge from the community (Sandmann, Saltmarsh, & O’Meara, 2008; Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton, 2009), and acknowledges that learning has multiple directions (Rice, 2005). Through service-learning, knowledge transfer and knowledge mobilization can be collaborative processes between the academy and the community; expertise

is shared and exchanges flow in multiple and overlapping ways. It is thus a means to public scholarship.

Bingle and Hatcher (1996) noted that “faculty involvement [in service-learning] is critical because service-learning in its most common form is a course-driven feature of the curriculum” (p. 227), yet there have been relatively few studies on the motivations for and impact of service-learning on faculty members, and none could be found that focus on faculty at Canadian universities. This article considers how a themed approach to public scholarship affects the teaching and research of faculty engaging in the Food Security Research Network (FSRN) at a university in northern Ontario. Theme or issue-focused approaches to service-learning have received little coverage in the public scholarship literature, and there is a need for more studies on the effects of a themed approach on faculty involvement with service-learning. This article, therefore, adds to the literature on the effects of public scholarship on faculty work in general, to the literature on Canadian perspectives more particularly, and contributes to the understanding of the effects of a theme-based approach to service-learning on faculty teaching and research as public scholarship. The data for the article is drawn from a variety of sources, including a recent study of faculty in the FSRN (Harrison, 2013), course syllabi, organizational reports, and personal reflections.

After outlining the approach to themed service-learning undertaken by the Food Security Research Network, this paper focuses specifically on the faculty members involved, therefore highlighting only one of the partners engaged in the service-learning relationship. Although we recognize that it is the joint collaboration of the various partners that is core to service-learning, we felt that the relative lack of studies on faculty involved in service-learning, particularly Canadian-based faculty, justified a need for a more selective focus that brings added understanding to what appears to be an understudied aspect of the service-learning process.

Faculty Engagement in Service-Learning

Service-learning involves a counter-normative approach to teaching and learning (Clayton & Ash, 2004; Howard, 1998) wherein the various partners (most often faculty, students, and community members from the surrounding area) engage in initiatives that deepen learning and enhance community capacity. Many faculty members come to service-learning with “traditional expectations and norms” (Clayton & O’Steen, 2010, p. 105), based on their own exposure to lectures as the primary teaching format in higher education. They therefore need to make various “shifts in perspective and practice” (Clayton & Ash, 2004, p. 64) when teaching in an environment that encourages the various partners to co-teach and co-learn

in ways that are potentially transformative (Harrison & Clayton, 2012).

Service-learning, as we operationalize it, allows both students and faculty to step outside the campus and participate in a holistic, integrated way with both their academic knowledge and their personal knowledge, operating collectively as members of the larger community. From this vantage point (of service-learning “in community”), the community-based knowledge collaboratively generated by community members, faculty, and students returns to the academy where it both enriches the existing academic understanding and is transformed by academic inquiry. Likewise, this knowledge returns to the community where it enriches understanding and is transformed through community practice. Thus, new knowledge is dynamic and continually emerging through a process of co-evolution, where community, students, and faculty evolve and transform through their mutual impacts on one another. We suggest from our experience that this is the essence of engaged public scholarship and the subsequent democratization of knowledge. Moreover, service-learning as a mechanism for democratizing knowledge can assist universities in fulfilling civic engagement missions (Astin, 1999; Jacoby, 2003) and perhaps even change the university itself (Saltmarsh, 2011).

Research findings suggest that incorporating service-learning into teaching is beneficial to faculty members, professionally and personally (e.g., Bloomgarten & O’Meara, 2007; O’Meara, 2002; O’Meara & Niehaus, 2009), but there is an overtone in the existing community engagement literature that emphasizes how difficult it can be for faculty to engage in this pedagogy. O’Meara, Terosky, and Neumann (2008) term this overtone the “narrative of constraint” (p. 2). Service-learning is said to involve more time and work for faculty, to prove harder to assess, and, often, to not count as positively in promotion and tenure decisions as other forms of teaching or scholarship (Abes, Jackson, & Jones, 2002; Bulot & Johnston, 2006; Butin, 2007; O’Meara 2002, 2008). Yet faculty involvement is crucial to the survival and growth of service-learning.

O’Meara et al. (2008) observe that in the current focus on constraints there is a missing piece in the literature on faculty work, that of “growth” (p. 2), and call for more of a focus on faculty growth in studies of public engagement. This article takes up their call through an emphasis on the generative effects of engaging in a themed approach to service-learning on faculty teaching and research.

Theme or Issue-Focused Service-Learning

Theme or issue-focused approaches to service-learning have not seen much coverage in the public scholarship literature, perhaps suggest-

ing that a themed approach is unique. Three such programs, in addition to Lakehead's, include:

- Faculty members at the University of Memphis engaged in an interdisciplinary partnership with students and community partners to devise “comprehensive revitalization strategy for the core of the South Memphis community” (Lambert-Pennington, Reardon, & Robinson, 2011 p. 60).
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) faculty and students and the community of Lawrence are involved year-round in a comprehensive, interdisciplinary partnership centered on the needs and opportunities of the Lawrence area that they term MIT@ Lawrence (Hoyt, 2010).
- Johnston et al. (2004) write about the Urban Nutrition Initiative (UNI), namely partnerships between the University of Pennsylvania and West Philadelphia schools with an urban nutrition focus.

Of the three programs, two are themed by their area of community focus (i.e., place) and one by the topic (i.e., nutrition). The themed approach aids in deepening, expanding, and coordinating the focus of the service-learning as public scholarship, but is not necessarily the only means of engaging deeply in service-learning or achieving these outcomes.

The Food Security Research Network

The Food Security Research Network (FSRN) at Lakehead University, Ontario, began in 2006 as an opportunity to initiate a themed approach, in this case food security, in a new university-wide program in service-learning. The network is supported by internal university operating dollars, a six year grant from the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, over \$1.6 million (Canadian) in external research grants, and in-kind contributions of faculty toward service-learning courses, service-learning graduate community-based research, and community outreach. The service-learning program also receives support from an in-house soils lab, botany science labs, greenhouse facilities, and the FSRN campus community garden.

The Food Security Research Network (www.foodsecurityresearch.net) coordinates service-learning at Lakehead University, reporting to the Vice-President for Research, Economic Development, and Innovation. In addition, service-learning is deeply embedded in the university through the support of the Vice-President Academic and the Deputy Provost, Faculty Deans, Student Services, and Student Recruitment, Aboriginal (indigenous)

Student initiatives, the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee, and the Instructional Development Centre, all of whom assist with promoting service-learning. The University has approximately 8,000 full-time students, 50% of whom are Northern Ontario residents and of that 50% approximately 20% are of Aboriginal heritage. The rest of the student body comes primarily from Southern Ontario, specifically the greater Toronto area.

Service-learning is an innovative, natural extension of the university's commitment to public scholarship with its regional communities. Since its establishment in 1965, Lakehead University has been nationally and globally recognized for its expertise in being a community-oriented university. Lakehead's strategic goals include a commitment to the community, encouragement of volunteerism and community participation, and support for "strong, sustainable, and collaborative community partnerships." Further, Lakehead University's mission statement places emphasis on student-centered learning. It states, Lakehead University is committed "...to educating students who are recognized for leadership and independent critical thinking and who are aware of social and environmental responsibilities." The institution's vision is to "...reflect and serve the Aboriginal and other diverse cultures, institutions, and organizations that comprise its unique regional setting as it reaches out nationally and globally" (Lakehead University, 2011).

The City of Thunder Bay, where Lakehead is located, is the largest community in Northwestern Ontario and acts as a hub for many of the primary industries, the largest of which are mining and forestry, as well as a hub for northern Aboriginal Treaty 9 activities. Agriculture has been a stabilizing industry through the boom and bust cycles so typical of primary natural resource-based industries. Agriculture has been focused historically on the supply management-controlled dairy industry, with some beef. Consumer demand is high for local foods and through the service-learning initiative, the FSRN has been a significant catalyst for many local food initiatives.

Since the initiation of service-learning six years ago, the FSRN has involved 28 faculty members from seven academic faculties and 16 disciplines in service-learning courses organized around the theme of food security, or sustaining access to food. The innovative approach focused on food security has proven to attract a diverse group of multi-disciplinary faculty, which results in a comprehensive approach to food security, including issues of production, distribution, processing, marketing, as well as social justice issues of fair income for producers and fair accessibility for consumers. Approximately 10% of the student body from across all academic faculties has participated in food security service-learning courses. Students bring their knowledge as community members into the academy, contrib-

uting to a co-evolving transformational process where their knowledge is both shared and changed through interactions with faculty and the community in credit-based courses.

Through service-learning, FSRN's aim is to build long-lasting connections in the regional communities, along with others who are working on local and regional food issues (Food Security Research Network, 2010a). Public scholarship emerges from the interactive engagement of faculty, students, and community focused on local food systems. The theme-focused approach means that students and faculty may be engaged with multiple community participants who each bring a stakeholder perspective to collaboration with faculty and students. Thus, a theme-focused, service-learning program enhances engaged public scholarship by diversifying the voices and generating adaptive, resilient, and innovative community-based solutions to regional food security. These service-learning experiences suggest that community collaborative approaches to knowledge creation are the best tool for developing local solutions to the complex environmental, social, and economic issues involved in developing a resilient food system from within our unique Northern region.

The FSRN Contextual Fluidity Partnership Model

The FSRN's approach to service-learning occurs through a community engagement partnership model termed "contextual fluidity" (Nelson & McPherson, 2003, 2004), and is based in a framework of community capacity building (Nelson & Stadey, 2004a, 2004b; Nelson, Stadey, & Lyons, 2005). Contextual fluidity draws from complexity theory (Folke et al., 2010; Simmie & Martin, 2010; Walker & Reid, 2008), which seems particularly appropriate given the complex nature of the collaborations among faculty, students, and community. The five core dimensions of Contextual Fluidity require that an approach is (a) context-based, (b) fluid in embracing the richness of the complexity of multiple community perspectives engaging with many disciplines and numerous student learning needs, (c) driven by vision, (d) organized as webs of service-learning networks, and (e) open to new interconnections, which we term "strange attractors" for their unanticipated nature. Using these five principles of Contextual Fluidity, the service-learning process is an organic, self-organizing open system across a range of scales that focuses on localized actions within the context of a globalized strategy of food security. Through this vision-driven and place-based approach, service-learning can use accumulated experience and influence to open up possibilities and new directions for the democratization of knowledge as public scholarship.

Dewey's (1938) work provides many of the insights for why a context-based approach is so tactical to the democratization of knowledge

through the service-learning experience. Dewey believed that education takes place in conjunction with one's interaction with one's community, and he stated that the person and her/his community are inseparable. He valued experience as a teacher and saw reflection as being key to learning. He recognized that the quality of the experience is important, and stated that a primary responsibility of educators is to be cognizant of how environment or context can shape the learning experience. Moreover, a context focus reinforces the opportunities to draw on the knowledge and insights of the service-learning partners.

This contextual fluidity model provides both the philosophical framework for service-learning partnerships, and the principles for action. Leadership in the partnership shifts based on areas of expertise that are valuable in that moment, and recognizes that knowledge is multi-directional. This fluidity or ductility in approach is a hallmark principle of FSRN's approach to service-learning and is one that facilitates the democratization of knowledge. Fluidity in action within the service-learning program is as diverse as the word implies. Fluidity encourages a perspective that endorses multiple relationships, the building of shared values, the importance of participation in the process, a keen ear for listening to all community voices, engaging as a community member, a focus on strengths not problems, being opportunistic in using a diversity of resources, finding ways to respect and bring out the unique gifts of individuals and groups, placing more energy into the process than into definitive plans, accepting and building from mistakes, and engaging all (Nelson, 2009, p. 2).

The FSRN describes the vision to include a centerpiece on collaborative knowledge generation:

We believe that giving students opportunities for community engagement in food security within academic course requirements will establish life-long learning skills to build the capacity of civil society and enhanced community well-being. We see that the melding of academic and community goals *provides a medium for a growing shared knowledge base* [emphasis added] and the practical application of research. (Food Security Research Network, 2010b)

Our community service-learning experiences for faculty, students, and community partners are enriched through our abundant, active engagement, what we term our "community service-learning community." This community includes international and national connections comprised of community engagement associations, governmental agencies related to food security, producers and market systems, charitable and social organizations, community gardens, cooperatives, and community supported

agriculture. Through these collaborations, our undergraduate students work directly on service-learning projects and our faculty and graduate students present at international, national, and provincial symposiums, workshops and conferences. Faculty are the key to nurturing these resources in the service-learning experience.

The organic, self-organizing nature of the contextual fluidity approach to service-learning leads to unanticipated and diverse resources, what we term “strange attractors,” which are then incorporated into the service-learning initiatives. The following examples illustrate how unique the service-learning experience can be when strange attractors are endorsed and encouraged in the service-learning. Of note is how these strange attractors lead to opportunities to recognize student knowledge.

Examples of FSRN Collaborations

Through the food security themed service-learning program at Lakehead, enabled by our contextual fluidity model, faculty have encouraged students to be involved with policy change and advocacy in support of local food systems. While some of our students may take on social justice issues of enhanced food distribution to those in need, in other service-learning experiences students and professors explore with the community the cultural and political contexts of food. Service-learning courses provide opportunities for our faculty and students to empower people to grow, harvest, and store their own food. They examine policy issues such as national seed saving regulations or municipal pollination by-laws that can affect the development of local food systems. They collaborate with First Nation (Aboriginal) communities to support the revitalization of local boreal forest food sources and to explore additional approaches for increasing community food security.

Within the context of Lakehead’s service-learning courses, our students join forces with local farmers to enhance the marketing of local beef and community supported agriculture (CSA) operations or team up in the development of a local flour milling operation. Thus, the specialized food security theme allows Lakehead to develop a greater diversity of courses for which service-learning is appropriate, partner with a larger number organizations interested in service-learning, and provide a wide variety of service-learning experiences for our students.

As noted earlier, through this “in community” approach to public scholarship, faculty members become one of the partners in service-learning, collaborating with students and the various community partners in this joint service-learning experience. We turn now to consider faculty members’ experiences and their impact through service-learning.

FSRN Faculty Insights on Their Service-learning Experiences

Through our focus on the generative effects of engaging in a themed approach to service-learning on faculty teaching and research, this article takes up O'Meara et al.'s (2008) call for more emphasis on growth in studies of faculty. Among other sources listed earlier, we draw from a recent research study by Harrison (2013) in which she investigated the experiences of faculty involved with the FSRN's themed service-learning approach. Harrison's purposive sample included 13 faculty participants in the Food Security Research Network. All but one of these faculty are full-time, and all but two have tenure. There was an even split of male and female participants. This qualitative case study, conducted over a six month period, was framed through an "appreciative inquiry" approach (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). Appreciative inquiry uses an asset-based or strengths-based framework to collect stories that reflect the phenomenon under study "at its best" (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005), making it a particularly well-suited response to O'Meara et al.'s (2008) call.

The Effects on Faculty and their Public Scholarship

In this section we highlight four major findings from Harrison's (2013) study. We provide an overview of each of these findings followed by a discussion of the possible implications of these topics for faculty engagement in public scholarship. These findings include: 1) The effects of a themed approach on faculty and their work, 2) Interactions with research, 3) Self-Identity and 4) Faculty insights into the Contextual Fluidity Partnership Model. All four findings relate to elements of faculty public scholarship as enacted through a food security themed Contextual Fluidity Partnership approach. We begin with the value of a themed approach that proved to have a rich impact on faculty work.

Value of a themed approach. The food security themed approach was found to result in many benefits to faculty and their public scholarship. We bring attention here to six key areas of benefit, namely: (a) the theme attracts faculty to service-learning, although it can also be seen to add a level of complexity to their work; (b) leads to new personal and professional insights; (c) encourages novel disciplinary approaches; (d) fosters interdisciplinary collaborations; (e) provides a common language, and (f) builds a focus on relationships "in community." We expand on these areas below.

The theme attracts faculty. The appreciative inquiry approach yielded rich narrative data from faculty about how the food security themed approach to service-learning had become a means to attract faculty to public scholarship. Faculty members were often drawn to this work due to dis-

ciplinary and personal interests they had in areas such as environmentalism, community gardening, and the local food movement, which aligned well with the food security theme and provided ways to enhance food security in the community. Being a theme to which any discipline can potentially connect, the theme acted as a focus point and scaffold for faculty planning service-learning courses.

While, in general, the themed approach was seen to be of value, a few faculty members commented that having a theme could be an obstacle to implementing service-learning, even if the theme was seen to be of value. As several faculty were new to service-learning, the theme added a layer of complexity in course planning in that they were learning about implementing a service-learning approach at the same time as organizing their course around food security. One of the participants noted that he found the theme “unwieldy” at first, due to its breadth and the uncommon linkage of food security and his course content. He, like some of the other faculty, commented that he “struggled at first” with how to incorporate service-learning into his course, as this pedagogy is “not very common” in his area of focus. In hindsight, he now sees that a connection to food security and a service-learning approach has enriched the teaching of his course and extended his students’ learning, and he is building on his service-learning offerings.

Leads to new personal and professional insights. Faculty gave examples of how the insights gained from their work in community had given them the opportunity to engage in work that was personally and professionally rewarding. They remarked on how their work in community had led to relationships that had become both professional and personal, and how their thinking about their own discipline had changed as a result of insights from their public scholarship. One illustration of this change is reflected in a faculty comment that,

[My community engaged experiences] have affected my thinking and my approach to both research and scholarly activity of my own, as well as my teaching, by causing me to try to find ways of making my understanding of, or presentation of, the knowledge more complex, more resonant with the experiences that people are having, more accommodating of all the differences and nuances and multidimensional aspects of things. It has really fleshed out my approach to research and teaching and even to my own development.

This comment reflected the experiences of several faculty members, and pointed to their deepening and expanding public scholarship.

Encourages novel approaches to covering disciplinary content.

While some faculty noted that the theme can make course planning more complex at times, particularly due to its breadth and perhaps being a non-traditional focus area for that discipline, it was often mentioned that the food security theme offered a novel approach to teaching the disciplinary content of the course. As one faculty member noted:

It's just that extra challenge, that reorientation of what we might usually do. . . . [H]aving a theme challenges you to think outside of that discipline and outside of what might normally be expected in terms of service-learning.

Part of this broadened thinking was the application of disciplinary knowledge outside academia. Faculty noted how their students seemed more deeply engaged in the course's content, and performed better, due to the real world application of the knowledge.

Encourages interdisciplinary collaborations. Within the university, food security has become the basis for interdisciplinary dialogue. It has provided a reason to collaborate with colleagues that faculty would not have otherwise met, leading to teaching, learning, and research possibilities that cross disciplines. It has also led to the development of novel courses.

Provides a common language. In addition to creating a cross-disciplinary dialogue, the theme has become a common language for faculty and their community partners. As one faculty member noted:

You can both sit down and talk about [food security] as two human beings with a common concern, as opposed to two roles trying to find a way to meet some goal, which becomes dehumanized.

Builds relationships "in community." As a result of the common focus on food security, the emphasis is on the relationship between partners as they work together on projects of mutual interest from the perspective of being "in community." The theme of food security appears to act as a joint or mutual area of convergence within which all partners work collaboratively. It becomes a pathway to approach "issues as 'us' issues not 'we-them' issues" (FSRN, 2009, p. 11). In other words, the themed approach encourages public scholarship where partners all have expertise to contribute and have a mutual language that draws them together as they plan and implement the various projects. This "in community" approach encourages what Saltmarsh, Hartley, and Clayton (2009) term "democratic" rather than "technocratic" faculty engagement.

Interactions with research. A second key finding from this

investigation of the impact on public scholarship illuminated how involvement with themed service-learning related to research. For many faculty, service-learning with a themed approach started with a research project that led to connections with a course that was or could be offered. Faculty and students became engaged in community-based research and teaching that supported each other and became intertwined. Research projects, therefore, may spawn specific opportunities to develop service-learning courses. As one faculty member stated:

Really what you're doing through service-learning is data collection, for your own research. . .but this is data collection coming in filtered through the experience of students . . . the stronger the correlation between the teaching and the research, the better both tend to be because there's a synergy that builds up.

On the other hand, what started as a service-learning teaching opportunity often leads to new research opportunities. For example, a service-learning course in community capacity building around vulnerable people and their limited access to food led to several high profile national research grants. The continual back and forth of research leading to teaching opportunities and teaching leading to research opportunities can have the effect of broadening faculty members' understanding of their own discipline, and its relevance in the community.

Self-identity. Third, in addition to blurring the boundaries between research and teaching, the food security themed approach to service-learning often led faculty to new ways of thinking about themselves as academics. An example of this change in thinking was exemplified in a faculty member's comment that,

I've become just a part of the social movement. I'm contributing all kinds of things to those movements, and the research questions come secondarily, or it comes as a resource that I can lend to their work Whereas before I would approach it as "I am the researcher, I have this grant, here, will you work with me because I can do this research in your setting." Instead [because the service-learning experiences opened up genuine community connections] now I'm already there in the setting, I'm part of the fabric of the movement, and as we're all talking, "well, here's some resources I can lend."

As this quotation suggests, working in community resulted in faculty work that became more integrated and there was a broadening of traditional notions of faculty work.

Impact of the partnership model on faculty engagement in service-learning. The fourth key finding brings attention to how the principles of the contextual fluidity model, as described in the section above, impacts faculty engagement in service-learning. We suggest that this particular partnership model is a pivotal means to public scholarship that can enrich faculty work and foster new mechanisms and approaches to teaching and research. We describe two examples below.

One of the five principles, for instance, relating to the context-based approach of the FSRN, involves the faculty members placing themselves in community so that genuine dialogue about place-based issues can emerge. The faculty members approach the issue of food security as a community member first, one who is immersed in the context of this community and its food security issues. Moreover, faculty members recognize that knowledge goes in multiple directions (Rice, 2005), and that community and students are knowledge holders and knowledge producers. Similarly, the principle of fluidity was operationalized by faculty as they were observed adapting fluidly to the dynamics of the community as they reveal themselves in the moment. The focus is on the relationship and on food security, not prescribed or preset agendas.

In essence, through a contextual fluidity model to service-learning, faculty and their partners are accomplishing the civic mission of the university, as well as addressing community-based opportunities or needs and, therefore, building community capacity. They are also reinforcing the university's place as a valued community institution of knowledge, and a valuable partner. As illustrated by the faculty insights, the knowledge has become richer, deeper, and more useful to people beyond the university setting while also providing meaningful teaching and learning experiences for the faculty members involved.

Implications for Faculty Engagement in Public Scholarship

Engaging “in community” through a themed approach to service-learning appears to be contributing to the rewarding nature of service-learning involvement for faculty, as it fosters an environment within which faculty learn and grow, professionally and personally. Faculty members are the catalyst for bringing both the knowledge of the community and that of the student into the knowledge base of a service-learning course. The fact that this process takes place in this particular service-learning program where there is such a diversity of partners, multi-disciplinary students and faculty from a breadth of academic faculties and disciplines, confirms that service-learning, in many cases, is a catalyst for public scholarship.

By articulating and disseminating the emerging vision of a food-

secure community, the FSRN has provided a unifying force that weaves together the diverse approaches and courses of each faculty member and harnesses their collective power toward realizing this vision. By avoiding a top-down agenda, the vision of food security that is shared in the community inspires waves of students and faculty to embed themselves in real community processes and thus facilitate a community-driven knowledge creation process in the service of food security. We suggest that having a contextually driven, place-based, themed focus that is founded on a contextual fluidity partnership model has much to offer as an approach to public scholarship.

Conclusion

Boyer (1996) argued for a broader vision for academia, and higher education in general, pointing to the need to broaden scholarship and focus it outwards, in what he termed the “scholarship of engagement,” which has come to be included in a vision of public scholarship. He called on universities to connect “the rich resources of the university to our most pressing social, civic and ethical problems” and noted that “campuses should be viewed by both students and professors not as isolated islands, but as staging grounds for action” with “a larger purpose, a larger sense of mission, a larger clarity of direction” (Boyer, 1996, p. 32). We feel that engaging faculty, staff, and community partners in projects related to food security, using a complexity based partnership model, embraces Boyer’s vision and even perhaps extends it. For although profound, Boyer’s thinking was still one of a higher education institution reaching outwards to the community, applying its knowledge in ways that would benefit the community, rather than one where faculty are “in community,” learning from the knowledge of their various partners as well as contributing their knowledge, skills, and labor.

In higher education institutions such as Lakehead University there is now more recognition of the value of community knowledge as an integral aspect of public scholarship. The integration of community and academic knowledge offers new pathways as faculty, students, and their community partners co-create their service-learning experiences as a key approach to public scholarship. These emerging trends offer opportunities for further work between faculty and their student and community partners, particularly as outside funding agencies are becoming more focused on the integration of community members in research. It is an exciting time for public scholarship. In this community-driven knowledge creation process there is an essential role for community members who are academically trained (faculty) or are being academically trained (students). Together, as one community with a diversity of skills and resources to lend to a social change movement, an abundance of innovation and new knowledge can

emerge that is grounded in place and relevant to the issues of the community. As such, the ancient role of the university as a hub of knowledge creation remains intact. What changes is the context, and the university is challenged to redefine and restructure itself to adapt to this changed context. A themed approach to public scholarship is one way of doing so.

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