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How to engage with industry: The importance of dealing with individuals using practical solutions

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This paper discusses the use of “community engagement” to develop and sustain enrolments of students. The practical application of the six Cs of engaging with a community illustrates the “how to” and “how not to” manage engagement processes by focusing on capability, commitment; contribution, continuity, collaboration and conscience. The literature describes the key element of successful engagement as mutuality. That is, that there should be benefits for both parties if engagement is to be meaningful, sustained and successful. In the University sector engagement should be a planned process that encompasses working with middle managers or course coordinators to align and develop specialty course content and assessment for the mutual benefit of industry and professions. This interaction is characterised by a two way flow of benefits: for industry and professional groups it ensures a means of providing quality award-based educational programs and for the university it provides students. Designed and managed well, participatory planning can produce better substantive ideas, useful relationships and stronger civic institutions, new agreements across stubborn divides, and the kind of legitimacy and political support that's increasingly important for acting on community and industry problems. On the other hand, opening up the direction-setting process, particularly if participation is more “ritual” than reality, may lead to frustrated expectations, power grabs in which parochial interests dominate, technically deficient ideas, and deeper conflicts and mistrust. Understanding the pitfalls of work between the University sector and the employment sector when developing courses is especially important as attention to diversity in work culture, employment prospects, and threats of ideas and paths not clearly understood or articulated creates difficulties if not attended. Unfortunately, most how-to advice provided to assist those involved in community engagement projects emphasise participation tactics and techniques with little consideration of the human factors that may thwart the successful outcomes of any project. This paper, using a case study approach identifies problems related to community engagement; and, offers strategies to positively progress a community engagement project that has stalled.

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Sound of “Silence”: A technique for understanding the “three delay” in seeking treatment

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Studies have consistently shown that access to appropriate health care including skilled birth attendance at delivery and timely referrals to emergency obstetric care services can greatly reduce maternal deaths and disabilities. A maternal death review is an in depth enquiry of the causes and circumstances surrounding maternal deaths. However, using the “three delay” framework model the major causes for delay in seeking treatment are categorized into three categories. This study is designed with background knowledge that socio-economic/cultural factors, perceived accessibility/perceived quality of care determine the early treatment seeking of women with obstetric complications. It therefore becomes necessary for a new approach to be applied in researching this sensitive issue. The objective of this study was to utilize the sound of ‘silence’ framework as a new research and analysis method to uncover and understand the underlying reasons for the delays in seeking obstetric care. The framework is for researching sensitive issues among marginalized groups. This study utilized quantitative and qualitative data. Semi-structured interviewer administered questionnaires were used to collect data. Both univariate and bivariate analysis will be applied. The sound of ‘silence’ framework defers from other existing framework as it provides a road map for this study.

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