Catalyst-Clemente – Enhancing participation: New possibilities for disadvantaged Australians

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Catalyst-Clemente program

- Making university education accessible to disadvantaged Australians
- Enhancing self-confidence through rigorous learning helps bring about personal change
- Positive view of the future enhances lives and promotes transition
- Potential of humanities education to change lives and promote social inclusion
- Genuine intersectoral collaboration
Shakespeare fits the bill on the journey to hell and back

Shave Harman

STUDENTS at the University of the Western Cape and the University of the Western Cape, who have been preparing to perform in the next season of Shakespeare's "Hamlet," are excited about the prospect of bringing the play to life. The production is scheduled for April 2023 and is expected to draw a large audience.

"Hamlet" is a complex and thought-provoking play that explores themes of love, loss, and revenge. The characters are complex and multi-faceted, and the production team is putting a lot of effort into bringing the story to life on stage.

The production is being directed by a team of experienced actors and directors, and the cast is made up of students from both universities. The production is being funded by a grant from the university's arts council, and the team is grateful for the support.

"Hamlet" is a play that has been performed countless times, but this production promises to be a fresh and exciting take on the classic. The cast and crew are working hard to make sure that the production is a success and that it is enjoyed by all who attend.

Malouf an ex-junkie’s addiction

Brooke Lee

An ex-junkie’s addiction

Malouf, a former drug user, is currently studying for his degree in psychology. He was once addicted to heroin and was on the brink of losing everything when he decided to get help. He credits his addiction to the support of his family and friends, as well as the help he received from the university’s counseling service.

Malouf’s story is one of determination and resilience. He is now working towards a better future for himself and his family, and he hopes to inspire others to get help when they need it.

"I’ve been through the worst of times, but I’ve come out the other side,” Malouf said. "I know what it’s like to be on the brink of losing everything, but I’m proof that it’s possible to turn your life around with the right help.”
Overview

- What is Catalyst-Clemente?
- Assessing the impact
- Outcomes (intended; unintended)
- Making it happen: interconnections
- Key learnings
- Future

Origins of the program

- Earl Shorris began the *Clemente* program in New York, mid 1990s
- Based on philosophy that education in humanities can assist disadvantaged people out of cycles of poverty and homelessness
- Reflect on world in which they live – promote broader re-engagement with society
Catalyst-Clemente in Australia

- St Vincent de Paul began running 
  *Clemente* in Sydney in 2003
- MA began program in Sydney (calling it *Catalyst*) in 2005 and Brisbane 2006
- Expected future expansion to Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth

Pre-requisites for participants

- A desire to learn
- A willingness to try to commit to a 12 week program
- A literacy level sufficient to read a newspaper
- Some ‘stability’ in their lives
About some of the students

- Significant life challenges:
  - drug addiction
  - alcoholism
  - mental health issues
  - prison
  - major grief and loss issues
- Journey to healthier, happier, more stable life
- Courage required to attend courses

Others involved

- Key contributors:
  - academics
  - community agency support staff
  - learning partners
- Learning partners recruited from community, usually corporate sector – meet with students one-on-one each week for duration of course
Structure

- Each subject takes 12 weeks
- Range of assessments
- Students usually take one subject at a time
- Four subjects qualify participants to receive a non-Award Certificate of Liberal Arts from the ACU
- Pathways into a university degree

Research Background

- Preliminary Australian research (2004)
- Mission Australia, St Vincent de Paul and Australian Catholic University: second phase of research – impact (2006)
- Research overseen by a steering group – significant collaboration at all levels
## Research Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Beginning (Hopes)</th>
<th>Middle (Experiences)</th>
<th>End (Outcomes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Partners</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecturer</td>
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<td>Agency Staff</td>
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## Research Methodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Info to gather</th>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>When</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>Decision (why do it etc) Expectations &amp; hopes</td>
<td>1 page survey</td>
<td>Community agency co-ordinator; Researcher</td>
<td>First night</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Milestones/ changes What’s going well What’s most challenging Enjoyment What they’re getting out of it Why they come back</td>
<td>Focus groups</td>
<td>Community agency co-ordinator; Researcher</td>
<td>4-6 weeks into course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>Distance travelled Feedback about course Unexpected outcomes</td>
<td>1 page survey In-depth Interviews (1-2 students at each site)</td>
<td>Community agency co-ordinator; Researcher</td>
<td>Last lesson</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outcomes for students

- 17 out of 30 students completed course
- Demonstrate writing, organisational and communication skills
- Core themes emerging from students’ comments:
  - self
  - social interaction
  - relationships
  - learning
  - community participation
  - the future

Self

This course gives you self esteem ... I have learnt so much through the course. Not just about the subject matter but my own capabilities.

I need something meaningful in my life because up until now it has been just busy surviving ... but now I am able to start this ... I feel encouraged to just have a go and I have found by having a go, that it is from having awareness, all kinds of things are opening up.
Social interaction

It is a great joy being here with my peers, … you find yourself talking not just about art, you are talking about life, which is what it is all about anyway. It is expanding and it is good fun.

I’ve enjoyed the social side of it. I’ve enjoyed meeting new people, loved going to the Opera House and seeing Shakespeare and all of that.

Relationships with others

…People see that I have a brain because I have done a university unit. I am back in society.

It is important because everyone always asks you first thing what you do … now we’re doing something.

It might be too soon to say but I think it has enhanced my self-esteem. I think my teenage son is proud of me.
Learning

This whole experience of education is really alien … I never went to school. I’ve had an interest in the content of what we’ve been studying but I haven’t had the discipline to actually sit down and read and write an assignment … So it’s been challenging and rewarding and I’ve received quite good marks … It comes as a bit of a shock to me … It’s been really good for my confidence that I’m at this university level. I would never have guessed that.

Community participation

Just the experience of going to the theatre, never done that before, and that was an eye-opener, something I didn’t really think I was going to enjoy, and I ended up enjoying it …

…He (the lecturer) makes us more aware of what is going on around us, and the environment as far as art is concerned and architecture and sculpture … (we’ve) more awareness…
The future

It is helping (me) for the present, for now, to think a bit more positively about the future and taking those steps into the future. It is currently a key part of my positive steps in life…

We’d like to think that quite possibly through learning we can make a difference for our children and our future.

I am thinking about my future, and thinking perhaps I can direct it.

Outcomes

- Expansion of tangible possibilities:
  - one student organised work experience at an art gallery
  - another applied to National Art School
  - another enrolling for university degree
Outcomes for learning partners

You may be the only person in their life who is providing encouragement and is 100% on their side, cheering for their success without seeking anything in return.

I gain more intrinsic reward from an hour a week working with people than 40 hours a week sitting in an office in front of a laptop with little people interaction. I want to do more of this long term somehow.

Outcomes for academics

I’m certainly getting an extension way beyond the teaching that I’ve been doing for 30 years at ACU where we’ve got a fairly privileged group of students who have often got a lot of parental support, and here I’m working with students who have none of the supports, and they’re in difficult circumstances. And yet there is an intensity of life experience and insight and human warmth that’s expanding my whole range…
Outcomes for agency staff

Some are now applying to mainstream tertiary institutions. Also, for some, I believe there is a greater hope for a more optimistic future in which their dreams can be realised.

Key contributors to success

- Familiar and comfortable environment
- Small classes (8-15)
- Humanities education
- Rigorous university-level education
- Engaging and flexible lecturer
- Committed learning partners
- Availability of a “welfare worker”
- Administration and IT support
  ➔ Recognition from Carrick Institute & B-HERT awards
Making it happen

- Genuine cross-sectoral collaboration
  - Community, university, corporate; between and within
  - Utilising existing resources in a new way
    - Dollar costs minimal: largely in-kind contributions from various partners
    - Lecturers receive payment to reflect expected standards
    - Other costs include texts, food, transport, support staff

Key learnings

- Making it happen
  - Time-intensive and sensitivities
- Program
  - Students: doesn’t suit all – needs to be stability. For the right students at the right time the program can have profound impact
  - Program will look different in different places
- Research
  - Improvements in methodology
  - Longitudinal research
  - International research agenda
Issues for sustainability

- Further Australian & international research inc long term impacts
- Expansion into Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Gold Coast and beyond including with other ‘client groups’
- Expand financial support for program
- Ensure changes in students’ lives are sustainable