

## **Extending the boundaries of institutional space: Regional campus initiatives**

Bronwyn Ellis, Centre for Regional Engagement, University of South Australia,  
[bronwyn.ellis@unisa.edu.au](mailto:bronwyn.ellis@unisa.edu.au)

Joy Penman, Centre for Regional Engagement, University of South Australia,  
[joy.penman@unisa.edu.au](mailto:joy.penman@unisa.edu.au)

### **Abstract**

This paper examines the ternary relations that the University of South Australia has created in a variety of initiatives, through its regional Campus in Whyalla, now part of the Centre for Regional Engagement, which also encompasses the recently established Mount Gambier regional centre. Such relationships can be described, drawing on Bateson, as three-cornered, where one corner would be the University, another would be the students and communities in rural and remote locations and the third corner would represent the product or outcome that is the provision of learning and teaching environments to engage a more diverse group of learners. This outcome overrides the remoteness between spaces and places, developing a wall-less university, and disrupting the old rural/regional-metropolitan and other often disempowering binary relationships. Foucault's linking of spatial realities with power relations has relevance in this situation; just as increased communication possibilities have led to changes in people's behaviour, so they also change and enrich the behaviour and teaching and learning experiences of all concerned. Such relationships develop and create new learning environments that are accessible to a wider community, building on links already forged over the years. In all these locations – Whyalla, remote communities, Mount Gambier, abroad, cyberspace – teaching and learning spaces have been extended and expanded.

This article has been peer-reviewed and accepted for publication in *Studies in LEID*, an international journal of scholarship and research that supports emerging scholars and the development of evidence-based practice in education. ISSN 1832–2050  
© Copyright of articles is retained by authors. As an open access journal, articles are free to use, with proper attribution, in educational and other non-commercial settings.

### **Introduction**

Until fairly recently, the University of South Australia's regional delivery of education has been provided through the flexible delivery of programs to students in many places within the state and beyond, and through its regional presence at Whyalla Campus in the north-west of the state, 400 kilometres from the capital. As South Australia's only regional university campus, the catchment, areas of responsibility and influence of Whyalla Campus have been broadly defined. Its students are local, but are also from the Adelaide metropolitan area, from other regions and international; they include both on-campus and off-campus students. The campus has been involved in various initiatives reaching out to distant groups, institutions and communities in Australia and beyond as well as to organisations in its vicinity.

In early March 2005, the University, responding to the needs of another region centred on Mount Gambier in the south-east, established a new regional centre there, which was granted 40 full-time equivalent federally funded student places. A steering committee comprising representatives from community, education and regional development agencies had worked towards this. Mount Gambier has recently supplanted Whyalla as the second-largest city in the State. Whyalla Campus, whose Dean is now also Director of the University's Centre for Regional Engagement, took up responsibility for implementing the delivery of three programs also offered at the Whyalla Campus – bachelor's degrees in nursing, social work, and business. This move by the University is a strategy that creates and develops a new learning environment that is available and accessible to a wider community. On behalf of the University, Whyalla Campus has been very much involved in spatial outreach to include various community groups and sectors of society. Its flexible delivery of the first year of its Nursing degree program in 1997 was an Australian first. Within the University it pioneered summer school delivery of two undergraduate courses, bringing in many metropolitan students to experience regional campus learning. By providing practical learning experiences for its students in remote communities, by offering international experience, and by teaching students at a distance the Campus demonstrates its unwillingness to confine learning to bricks-and-mortar-defined spaces. Combining in one position both Campus leadership and Regional Engagement leadership, opens up further possibilities.

When higher education was established in Whyalla in the 1960s, the aim of the then South Australian Institute of Technology (SAIT) was to satisfy local needs of commerce and industry, particularly in accounting and engineering fields, but "outside of this sphere had little community impact" (Munn, 1987, p. 2). The range of programs offered developed and changed over the years and the campus attracted students from other places, including overseas. Initially the campus was very much an offshoot of the two metropolitan campuses of SAIT. This subsidiary relationship continued when the number of metropolitan campuses expanded as a result of the merger with the South Australian College of Advanced Education and its three campuses that resulted in the new University of South Australia. Staff at Whyalla frequently found themselves in the position of having been forgotten (Ellis, 2001) or not consulted in matters that concerned them just as much as they concerned the metropolitan campuses (Ellis, Boxall, Dollard, & Sawyer, 1999; Ellis, Sawyer, Dollard, & Boxall, 2002). However, and with the catalyst of questions about the continuation of its very existence (Harvey, 1999), Whyalla Campus began to be seen to having its own niche, positioning itself "to be more responsive to the needs, aspirations and potentialities of a wider range of regional stakeholders" (Harvey, 1999, p. 75), including beyond regional South Australia. The geographical distance between Whyalla and the metropolitan campuses had some positive element as well as the negative of being overlooked as part of the larger University. New initiatives originated in and emerged from the small regional campus as there developed an expanded view of its role within the University and the community.

This paper explores the ways in which this regional university campus community has been extending its place and space within the institution by providing appropriate and relevant teaching and learning opportunities to a wider community of learners. Several conceptualisations of space may be used to map the complex and varied ways our University reaches out and engages with communities. We give an overview of these, examining in detail several examples, describing the initiatives and the relationships involved, noting that *two-way* space extensions or infiltrations are normally involved: influence, learning and enrichment flows *from*

and to the university. In this we draw on a number of research projects and papers that have explored these relationships over the years.

## Understandings of space

A number of conceptual themes provide a framework for examining the ways in which a regional university campus community has discovered that its boundaries can be flexible, elastic, and embracing rather than excluding. These include: Bateson's discussion of ternary, rather than binary, relationships; Mant's extension of this to a consideration of 'ternary people' with collaborative propensities; Foucault's connection of spatial realities with power, and Lefebvre's focus on space as relationship. The role played by language in positioning related groups is also briefly considered (Fairclough, 1989).

For Bateson, Western culture exhibited "a proneness for dualism" (Bakan, 1989, p. 40) and was preoccupied with binary pairs: rich and poor, old and young, etc. (Bateson, 1973). However, for him life was much richer than this: he experienced a "sense of reverence for the multileveled pattern of connections entailed in healthy human communication", and believed in the importance of "maintaining the connections between different parts of any complex system, and in mending the connections when they had been broken" (Rieber, 1989, pp. 14 & 13). For despite having "a conscious sense of our own identity, or our own existence as separate people, we always 'live' our lives in a contextual sense within a social interaction network" (Rieber, p. 15). Bateson coined the term *ternary* to describe three-cornered relationships in which "the product, purpose, ideal, or outcome, rather than the protagonist or antagonist" is what 'wins', with all involved pursuing common aims (Danaher, Danaher, & Moriarty, 2003, p. 165).

Mant (1994) picks up the notion of ternary relationships and speaks of binary and ternary people. He describes binary people as "those that when approached about anything in terms of relationship behave as if the primary task is to win you over – not to lose in the interaction", whereas ternary people "are able to work with [others] in a relationship where both parties keep a focus on the primary task with which they are both involved", having a common purpose (Mant, 1994, p. 5). If institutions are to develop ternary relationships, their members need also to have this focus.

Foucault showed how new developments such as railways in the 19<sup>th</sup> century fostered new communications networks and led people to think about space differently and behave differently, people began to relate to people who had previously been beyond their ken because they existed outside their familiar surroundings (Rabinow, 1991). Foucault also looked at the way in which buildings and architecture, by their spatial arrangements, can determine behaviour and influence power relations: "Space is fundamental in any form of communal life, space is fundamental in any exercise of power" (Rabinow, p. 252). They do this through ensuring "a certain allocation of people in space, a *canalization* of their circulation, as well as the coding of their reciprocal relations" (p. 253). In a city, the way government distributes facilities provides a means for controlling people (Rabinow). The use of space also applies to power relations within institutions.

Foucault used the term *heterotopias* to describe "those singular spaces to be found in some given social spaces whose functions are different or even the opposite of others" (Rabinow, 1991, p. 252). They "always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable. In general, the

heterotopic site is not freely accessible like a public place. Either the entry is compulsory ... or else the individual has to submit to rites and purifications. To get in one must have a certain permission ...” (Foucault, 1967, p. 4).

Lefebvre (1991) speaks of “the dialectical relationship which exists within the triad of the perceived, the conceived, and the lived,” corresponding to physical, mental, and social space (p. 39). (Social) space

is the outcome of a sequence and set of operations, and thus cannot be reduced to the rank of a simple object . . . . Itself the outcome of past actions, social space is what permits fresh actions to occur, while suggesting others and prohibiting yet others. (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 73).

For him, space “is not a thing but rather a set of relations between things (objects and products)” (p. 83). These social spaces co-exist and overlap and intertwine, forming “networks of exchanges” (p. 85). Such interrelationships are part of institutions such as universities.

Pervading all our ideas about spatial relations is the language that frames such relationships and positions us as citizens of metropolitan or regional areas, as workers in academe, as learners and teachers. Language constructs our identity: how we see ourselves and how others see us, and the way language is used has the force to empower or disempower (Ellis, 1998). As has been said, “in communicating reality, you construct reality” (Hines, 1988, p. 257).

Universities have increasingly been seen as connected to their regions. Not only do they play a significant part in regional economies (Garlick, 1998), there are mutual benefits that arise out of a deeper engagement than has often been the case in the past (Garlick & Pryor, 2002). Such mutual benefits to both a university and its ‘region’ are exemplified in many of the areas described below.

## **Reconfiguring and pushing the boundaries outwards**

Since the earlier days with its more local focus, when curriculum content areas were controlled very much by metropolitan Schools, the campus identity has developed and expanded in various ways. One aspect of this process has been involvement and partnerships with other organisations such as

- the Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group<sup>1</sup> and more recently the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre<sup>2</sup>
- research projects involving researchers from other campuses and other universities (within and beyond Australia)
- student placements in faraway places
- international relationships such as those enabling student and staff exchanges

---

<sup>1</sup> The Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group was established in 1999 “to facilitate economic development in the region and turn around the depressed, declining regional economy” in the region comprising the cities of Port Augusta, Port Pirie and Whyalla and their hinterlands (Cheers, Harvey, Clarke, & Heffernan, 2002, p. iv).

<sup>2</sup> The Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre is “a national research network linking Indigenous and local knowledge with science and education to improve desert livelihoods”. It is Commonwealth funded and has a vision of “A Sustainable Future for Desert Australia” involving “thriving desert regional economies”: see Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre 2006

- the flexible delivery of the nursing program and some individual courses
- breaking down barriers between the campus and community by opening up its facilities to individuals (e.g., community library membership) and groups (e.g., the University of the Third Age)
- leasing facilities to other organisations (Smith Family)
- running on- and off-campus sessions for people from the community
- organising health fairs both locally and in other places (in another regional city, Mount Gambier, and in remote communities such as Oodnadatta).

(Details of some of these engagements can be found in Harvey, 1999; Miller and Ellis, 1999; Ellis and Heffernan, 2002; Ellis and Penman, 2003; Penman and Ellis, 2003; Penman, Oliver and Buzzacott, 2004; Penman and Ellis, 2004b.)

The campus facilities also include an area set aside for the Indigenous Support Unit of the University – here Indigenous students may seek support and find a quiet place to work, whether they are students of Whyalla programs or external students of institutions. An Advocacy Centre has enabled local residents to gain preliminary assistance in relation to personal and legal issues. Current moves to have a healthy lifestyle centre on campus will draw in others from the community as well as providing fitness activities for staff and students. The campus through its social work staff, has recently increased its involvement with the Whyalla Counselling Service (Munn, 2005). Many of the listed involvements have involved attracting people onto the university space and/or taking the university into their spaces. In all cases they extend the boundaries of potential networks on which both academe and community can draw, as do the examples described in more detail below.

### ***TAFE cooperation***

A significant linkage that widened tertiary access possibilities for local students was forged through relationships built up with the local Spencer TAFE (the local Technical and Further Education, i.e., vocational education and training provider). Various articulation possibilities exist, for example, TAFE-trained enrolled nurses are given credit for some first year degree courses and/or some assignment exemptions. In 1998 and 1999 a Pathways program enabled TAFE studies to lead into a Computing degree program at the University campus. Other pathways into Business programs were developed by University, senior high school and TAFE staff (Sawyer, Zubrinich, & Carter, 2003). Such cooperation with TAFE has also been an important part of the past flexible delivery of the nursing program to students in the south-east of the state through Mount Gambier and now in the recent Mount Gambier-based initiatives described below.

### ***Spencer Gulf Rural Health School***

While increasing numbers of external students (mainly in nursing) have resulted in a reduction of the number of students on the campus itself, other initiatives have widened community access to the campus. A new development in 1997 was the establishment at the campus of the South Australian Centre for Rural and Remote Health (SACRRH), now part of the Spencer Gulf Rural Health School (SGRHS). This is a joint venture of the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia, with funding from the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care. While this meant the “invasion” of some of the campus and conversion of former teaching spaces by offices and meeting rooms for the new body, it also brought into the campus the opportunity for new ideas, relationships and collaboration. A recent example of this has been the collaborative provision by SGRHS with Nursing and Rural Health lecturers of a three-day university

experience for local Year 10 students, giving them hands-on exposure to university life and also an opportunity to gain awareness of various health-related careers.

### ***International relationships***

Students and staff have been enriched by various international links, exchanges and visits (Ellis & Heffernan, 2002; Ellis & Penman, 2003; Penman & Ellis, 2004a). These have included staff exchanges, lecturing offshore, accompanying student academic visits, study leave, and collaboration with international colleagues. The campus has a small contingent of international business students (from Bhutan and China) and currently has one Canadian nursing student. Recently a Nursing and Rural Health lecturer has facilitated rural placements of one or two weeks duration for students from the University College of Worcester in the United Kingdom. In addition to their capital city placements, students also experience rural nursing through a program that includes visits to local hospitals including small ones in Eyre Peninsula towns, the Pika Wiya Health Centre for Indigenous Health in Port Augusta, the local University campus, and visits to farms and other rural enterprises, so that this part of their placement provides a true rural and remote flavour. Similarly, immigrant nurses doing Australian accreditation programs come to Whyalla; it is hoped that their rural placement will raise their awareness and interest in rural nursing.

### ***Mount Gambier Regional Centre***

In establishing the new Mount Gambier Regional Centre as part of its commitment to regional engagement, the University was able to build on Whyalla Campus links already forged through the flexible delivery of nursing programs over a number of years (Miller & Ellis, 1999; Ellis, Miller & Lowings, 2002). The external nursing program included the conducting of workshops at Mount Gambier; this is now expanded to include internal students. The new centre, with its business and social work students as well, is located in the TAFE facilities, these having been identified as a suitable site for the University presence. In addition, Tenison Woods College, a Catholic secondary school, allowed the use of its science laboratories free of charge. The extension of the University involves a relatively small ensemble of physical spaces and additional staff: the marketing and public relations officer of the Centre for Regional Engagement is now based in Mount Gambier, and along with an administrative officer, ensures the smooth delivery of courses. Local experts are employed on a part-time basis as tutors or lecturers. Counselling services are provided by Anglican Community Care. The teaching and learning approach taken is blended delivery, a combination of face-to-face instruction by local and visiting Whyalla lecturers, videoconferencing, and independent self-directed study. The aim is to give students an on-campus university experience.

### ***Student placements***

Clinical learning is a foundation of the University of South Australia's four-year Bachelor of Social Work and three-year Bachelor of Nursing programs. Students take a variety of clinical experiences during these programs. Clinical learning is integral to the programs because it provides opportunities for students to learn experientially (Penman & Oliver, 2004), gaining valuable real-life experience. Considerable learning happens in each experience, which is unique but interrelated to other learning episodes. The placement venues (physical space) give students authentic work experiences and involve situated learning, as knowledge is presented in authentic work contexts. Students are enmeshed in the practice and

acquire certain beliefs, practices and behaviours promoted by the people working there. Providing opportunities to work in hospitals and health centres, and immersing students in problem-rich environments hones their thinking skills and facilitates clinical knowledge acquisition, enhancing problem-solving and self-correction. Most clinical experiences focus on rural and remote settings.

### **Community-based research projects**

Many research projects conducted by Whyalla Campus staff, alone or in partnership with other organisations, have involved community outreach and service. These have included research related to services for young people in the region, statistical services provided by the campus's Applied Statistics Unit, and projects under the auspices of the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre. A recent example of collaborative research is a palliative care project in which Nursing and Rural Health formed a consortium with rural South Australian palliative care teams from four regions of South Australia to address the problems of terminally ill people and their carers through the provision of educational information sessions. The participants were from rural and remote backgrounds, diverse cultures, and Indigenous communities. There is a dearth of health services information available in geographically isolated areas (where many do not recognise the term *palliative care*), there is underutilisation of services, and lack of coordination and communication among health professionals or between the general community and health care professionals (Oliver, Penman, & Ofner, 2005).

### **Cyberspace**

The availability of new technologies along with well-tried print/paper-based delivery modes has enabled many of these initiatives. Through the introduction of on-line teaching and learning, staff and students engage in learning pursuits through discussion groups, lectures etc. Videoconferencing allows some approximation of the face-to-face teaching and learning situation when actual face-to-face interaction is impossible. E-mail and web-based research are increasingly important staff work tools for teaching and learning as well as for administration and research. Information management is a very necessary skill, if information overload is to be avoided. For academics, these capabilities have been a catalyst and enabler for other activities, opening up new opportunities over recent years. While collaborative work with colleagues in distant places has been possible in the past with older technologies, the ability to confer and share documents without the time lost in postal exchanges makes possible greater productivity. The increasing number of online journals increases the ease with which new research is disseminated, electronic reviewing processes also enabling faster responses to authors of submitted articles. This greater access to sources of information, including initiatives like the Gutenberg project ([www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)) that provide access an increasing numbers of digital books. However, it has a downside if users do not learn to be discriminating and critical when evaluating the quality of sources of this information. The rapid changes in technology also mean that care must be taken that work is not lost to future generations because it has been stored only in a format that is no longer easily readable (e.g., on 5¼ inch floppy disks; even the newer floppy disks are being bypassed, with no drive for them on many newer computers).

## Impact of expanding institutional space

The distances between Whyalla Campus and the metropolitan campuses of the University create spaces within the institution, spaces that have had an impact on relationships between Whyalla and the wider university. Because courses and programs offered at Whyalla are often coordinated through a metropolitan-based school and division (formerly faculty), the ability of Whyalla staff to make changes has had constraints put upon it. In this respect power resides in the metropolis. This power asymmetry occurs when the Whyalla Campus community is not considered and consulted in decisions that affect it, lack of communication about such matters can lead the community to perceptions of being regarded as inferior in some way, and to rumours threatening the continued existence of the campus some or of parts of it such as the library. However, distance from the central campuses also provides space for independent activities and allows initiatives to develop out of the different regional situation. It was explained earlier in this article that those occupying the metropolitan space can learn from those in regional spaces – the latter have a unique contribution to make. As these initiatives have been implemented and the Whyalla Campus has taken hold of its future, some power to make a difference in regional Australia has been reclaimed.

During its early development there was a sense of a binary divide, the regional/rural space had fewer resources, students, programs and educational opportunities compared with the metropolitan centre of control, since then the Whyalla Campus community has moved away from these disempowering binary relationships to view the situation in terms of ternary relationships that explore possibilities, to create new learning outcomes and achievements where the University, in its multiple locations, engages with communities for mutual benefit (Ellis, Boxall, Dollard, & Sawyer, 2000). The binary view of people in the university “ivory tower” versus people outside the University has been disrupted. They have become ternary people (Mant, 1994) so that those within and without the University now work together to achieve common goals. Our regional and rural education presence involves different space connections – physical, conceptual, as well as intellectual, social, cultural and emotional. In a sense, relationships between entities developing a ternary relationship involve negotiation of a transcultural space, bridging the rural/regional and metropolitan binaries, and the differing cultures of University and TAFE (Kostogriz, 2004).

The University has extended its catchment not only in physical space but in mental, educational, and institutional space as well, as it has initiated pedagogical changes and improvements to meet the needs of the wider community. In addition to face-to-face teaching, it has introduced a diversity of approaches building on earlier distance education and flexible delivery modes and other educational possibilities such as service learning. In service learning, students are placed in a variety of community organisations to work and provide services relevant to their studies, enhancing both their learning and community well-being (Kinsley, 1994). In using these varied approaches, the learner and teacher do not remain only in their original positions separated from one another, but also meet in actual and virtual spaces and places.

Just as increased communication possibilities have led to change in peoples’ behaviour, as Foucault described (Rabinow, 1991), so they also change and may enrich the behaviour of those teaching and learning and their experiences in the teaching and learning context. The University as a provider of learning services for the community interprets its space broadly. The physical walls are only one aspect of the institution, they refer to the space confined within the immediate campus

environment. In another interpretation, the University becomes a wall-less university as it recreates and expands institutional space. The perception of the workplace for both staff and students becomes transformed and expanded. The University can be regarded as a ‘heterotopia’ (Rabinow, 1991, p. 252), but whereas it has “a system of opening and closing that both isolates . . . and makes . . . penetrable” (Foucault, 1967, p. 4), attempts have been made to lessen the isolation and increase the access. Entry criteria are important for maintaining quality, but at the same time barriers that exclude people who have the potential to benefit from a university education need to be surmounted. These barriers can be overcome by providing multiple pathways into university, including bridging or enabling programs and articulation with TAFE awards, and the provision of support to scaffold the learning of non-traditional university students as they become acculturated to the higher education environment.

While academics theoretically have power to evaluate critically the structures of their institutions and regions because they are free to pursue intellectual enquiry according to their own judgement, in fact the demands of gaining research grants and meeting other externally imposed requirements mean that they have a difficult balancing act to accomplish. However, “a successful university system needs to both challenge and serve the interests of State and industry at one and the same time”, (O’Farrell, 1996, p. 2). Showing competence and leadership in education in the face of a lack of this in state or industry is paramount (O’Farrell, p. 3). Academics need to be aware that some of their “research of social ‘facts’ plays the important role in society of objectifying, normalizing, and so perpetuating those ‘facts’ and the interests and power relations which give rise to them” (Hines, 1988, p. 257), and so they need to critically examine the motivation and foci of their research endeavours. In expanding their networks, academics have created opportunities for accessing power to make changes and influence others, and opportunities for sharing this power with those in the University’s extended sphere. In a ternary relationship, leadership is shared and power distributed. No longer is the university the sole keeper of knowledge but rather a facilitator of the attainment of knowledge.

The new presence of the University in Mount Gambier has had advantages for the city as well as for the University, and the new arrangements were warmly received. TAFE specifically welcomed the opportunity of sharing its rooms with university students, staff and administration, and the Tenison Woods College staff were pleased that their secondary students would be able to see on their campus university students studying to be nurses. Community members enthusiastically participated in the two-day health fair conducted at the local shopping mall (*Border Watch*, 29 April, 2005), raising awareness of the new venture as well as providing a service to the community and allowing students to practise skills. Three Mount Gambier students were also involved in a visit with four Whyalla nursing students to the Coober Pedy community (a visit that evolved from a planned Oodnadatta program that encountered transport problems) (Penman, 2005). For Whyalla staff the new arrangements involved extending and expanding space, and adding on and being included in new networks. Not only have relationships with TAFE in the region been strengthened, but new relationships have been formed with the local Catholic college and the Anglican organisation providing counselling services for University students. All this requires new communication networks to be established and old ones strengthened, and as their potential is realised, this introduces new opportunities that can transform those involved. Mount Gambier now is able to look forward to becoming a regional education centre (University of South Australia, 2004).

New and old technologies have been mediators that extend boundaries. Cyberspace, as well as being a virtual space, offers the means of negotiating and crossing separating distances in geographical space. The university outreaches we have described have invaded cyberspace as well and been enabled by it to operate successfully. Changes in relationships between the university and communities have been enabled by modern communication technologies such as videoconferencing (Centra), CaptureCam, e-mail, electronic evaluation tools and electronic discussion groups. The new spaces created have been sustained by these and older technologies such as print and telephone.

In interrogating the diversity of spaces, we challenge the traditional conceptualisation of binary pairs: Adelaide as metropolitan and Whyalla as rural/regional/remote, depending on one's stance. By altering our thinking to label the metropolitan as 'non-regional' we may disrupt the 'othering' that often characterises metropolitan ways of relating to 'the bush'. We thus bring a more informed and enlightened focus to a range of situations where each participant in the discussion has something to offer the other, while retaining their own characteristics and special attributes.

## Conclusion

The institutional space whose borders have been stretched in the initiatives described in this article is one in which intellectual activity and educational provision are the bases for the relationships among the people involved, widening possibilities for and through creative engagements in regional and rural locations. The staff of this regional university campus have challenged the marginalisation that was so often experienced in the past, moving beyond concerns about their immediate vicinity and metropolitan connections to include concerns other regional areas, empowering themselves and responding to the needs of communities whose own space shapes their inhabitants. In this mutually beneficial relationship they have experienced the dynamism and flexibility of institutional space – its elastic boundaries.

Community engagement has both local and wider focuses. As members of the campus have reached further afield, so they, the campus and the University have been enriched. They have been ambassadors to different cultural spaces, have grown personally in their encounter with those spaces, and have returned to contribute to their original space from what they have learned. At the same time they have contributed to the empowerment of people in places near and far as they have equipped students and others in the community with knowledge and skills to lead more productive lives. The University's positioning statement, "educating professionals, creating and applying knowledge, serving the community", relates easily to the outcome of these initiatives. The aims it includes describe very well the outcomes that are produced in the ternary space created out of these initiatives as the University moves towards being fully engaged with its regions.

## References

- Bakan, D. (1989). Power, method, and ethics: A reflection on Bateson's 'Morale and national character'. In R. W. Rieber (Ed.) (1989), *The individual, communication and society: Essays in memory of Gregory Bateson* (pp. 31–47). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press & Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme.

- Bateson, G. (1973). *Steps to an ecology of the mind: Collected essays in anthropology, psychiatry, evolution and epistemology*. St Albans UK: Paladin.
- Border Watch (29 April, 2005). Putting theory into practice, p. 6.
- Cheers, B., Harvey, J., Clarke, R., & Heffernan, P. (2002). *The Upper Spencer Gulf common purpose group: A model of intra-regional cooperation for economic development*. Whyalla: University of South Australia.
- Danaher, P.A., Danaher, G.R., & Moriarty, B.J. (2003, Winter). Space invaders and pedagogical innovators: Regional educational understandings from Australian occupational travellers. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 18(3), 164–169.
- Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre. (2006). *Desert knowledge CRC*. Retrieved January 26, 2006, from <http://www.desertknowledge.com.au/index.cfm?attributes.fuseaction=home>
- Ellis, B. (2001). Travelling up the lifelong learning curve: A regional odyssey. Paper presented at the Language and Academic Skills Conference, Wollongong, NSW, 29–30 November.
- Ellis, B. (1998). Words and images: Meaning makers and identity shapers. Paper presented at 7th Australian Women's Studies Conference, Adelaide, 16–18 April.
- Ellis, B., & Penman, J. (2003). From the margins to the centre: Regional international education partnerships. In Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia 19th National Conference 2003 Proceedings: Global focus – local partnerships. Canberra, September 28–October 1, 2003, pp. 59–67. Toowoomba, Australia: SPERA.
- Ellis, B., Boxall, D., Dollard, M., & Sawyer, J. (2000). Rural academics and rural/regional communities: A symbiotic relationship. In *Constructing alliances across rural communities: Proceedings of the 4th National Regional Australia Conference*. Whyalla, South Australia, 11–14 April, 2000, Vol. 1, pp. 29–35. Adelaide: University of South Australia Library.
- Ellis, B., Boxall, D., Dollard, M., & Sawyer, J. (1999). Swings and roundabouts: Working as a rural academic. Paper presented by D. Boxall at the *Annual National Research Forum of the Australian Rural Education Research Association Inc.*, Melbourne, 3 December. Retrieved July 27, 2005, from [http://www.nexus.edu.au/TeachStud/arera/research/\[Ellis\].htm](http://www.nexus.edu.au/TeachStud/arera/research/[Ellis].htm)
- Ellis, B., & Heffernan, P. (2002). Regional campus and global interchange: Taking off the monocultural blinkers. *ultiBASE*, May. Retrieved July 16, 2005, from [http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/10088/20020815/ultibase.rmit.edu.au/Articles/may02/\[Author1\].htm](http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/10088/20020815/ultibase.rmit.edu.au/Articles/may02/[Author1].htm)
- Ellis, B., Miller, J., & Lowings, S. (2002). Mostly out of sight, but never out of mind: Facilitating the learning of off-campus nursing students. In P. Kell (Ed.), *Ways of learning: The revolution in teaching and learning* (pp. 49–57). Melbourne: Common Ground Publishing.
- Ellis, B., Sawyer, J., Boxall, D., & Dollard, M. (2002). Working as rural academics. *Education in Rural Australia*, 12(1), 43–50.
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. London: Longman.
- Foucault, M. (1967). Of other spaces, heterotopias. Retrieved March 29, 2005, from <http://foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia/foucault.heteroTopia.en.html>
- Garlick, S. (1998). 'Creative associations in special places': *Enhancing the partnership role of universities in building competitive regional economies*. Evaluations and Investigations Program, Report No. 4. Canberra: Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs.
- Garlick, S., & Pryor, G. (2002). *Universities and their communities: Creative regional development through knowledge-based engagement*. Report prepared for the Department of Transport and Regional Services. Retrieved August 6, 2005 from [http://www.dotars.gov.au/rural/rdp/index\\_downloads.aspx](http://www.dotars.gov.au/rural/rdp/index_downloads.aspx)

- Harvey, J. (1999). Making a difference: New directions for a rural university campus. In *Healthy communities for the bush: Proceedings of the 3rd National Conference for Regional Australia and the 1st Broken Hill Human Services Conference*. Broken Hill, 20–22 November, 1998, pp. 70–76. Adelaide, Australia: University of South Australia Library.
- Hines, R. D. (1988). Financial accounting: In communicating reality, we construct reality. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 13(3), 251–261.
- Kinsley C.W. (1994). What is community service learning? *Vital Speeches of the day* 61(2), 40–43. Retrieved July 3, 2006, from <http://weblinks1.epnet.com/#bib2>
- Kostogriz, A. (2004). Rethinking the spatiality of literacy practices in multicultural conditions. Paper presented at the *Annual Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education Melbourne*, 28th November–2nd December.
- Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space*. (D.Nicholson-Smith, Trans.). Oxford UK & Cambridge USA: Blackwell.
- Mant, A. (1994). *Identifying and developing leadership capabilities*, (Seminar Series July, No. 35), Melbourne: Incorporated Association of Registered Teachers of Victoria (IARTV).
- Miller, J., & Ellis, B. (1999). Nursing: flexible delivery and support. In *Open, flexible and distance Learning: Challenges of the new millennium, collected papers from the 14th Biennial Forum of the Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia*. Geelong, 27–30 September, 1999, pp. 310–314. Geelong, Australia: Deakin University.
- Munn, P. (1987). History of S.A.I.T. (Whyalla). Unpublished document. Whyalla: SAIT.
- Munn, T. (2005). Community partnership: UniSA Whyalla Campus and the Whyalla Counselling Service. Paper presented at the Australian Universities Quality Forum 2005: *Engaging communities*, Sydney, 6–8 July, 2005. Abstract retrieved August 6, 2005 from <http://www.auqa.edu.au/auqf/2005/program/abstract/c3.htm>
- O'Farrell, C. (1996). Restoring the scholarly balance. Comment, *Campus Review*, Jan 18–24, 8. Retrieved March 29, 2005, from <http://www.qut.edu.au/edu/cpol/foucault/unis.html>
- Oliver M., Penman, J., & Ofner C. (2005). The impact of partnership on capacity building in palliative care among rural communities: A South Australian experience. *8th National Rural Health Conference Handbook*, Alice Springs, NT, 10–13 March.
- Penman, J. (2005). Creative learning solutions in difficult remote practice realities. Paper delivered at the SPERA Conference, Darwin, 5–7 October.
- Penman, J., & Oliver, M. (2004). Meeting the challenges of assessing clinical placement venues in a Bachelor of Nursing program. *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice*, 1(2), 59–73. Retrieved January 25, 2006, from <http://jutlp.uow.edu.au>
- Penman, J., & Ellis, B. (2003). Mutualism in Australian regional university-community links: the Whyalla experience. *Queensland Journal of Educational Research*, 19(2), 119–136.
- Penman, J., & Ellis, B. (2004a). Philippine academic visit: Brief but life-changing. *International Journal of Nursing Education Scholarship*, 1(1). Retrieved August 8, 2005, from <http://www.bepress.com/ijnes/vol1/iss1/art25>

- Penman, J., & Ellis, B. (2004b). Successful strategies for contributing to lifelong learning in regional, rural and remote communities, in *Lifelong learning: Whose responsibility and what is your contribution?* Proceedings of the 3rd International Lifelong Learning Conference. Yeppoon, 13–16 June, 2004, Queensland, Australia, pp. 294–300. Rockhampton, Australia: Central Queensland University.
- Penman, J. Oliver, M., & Buzzacott, C. (2004). A cross-cultural partnership towards health and wellness of the Oodnadatta community. *RED snapshots. PHCRED –SA Conference 2003 Proceedings: Research and Evaluation Resources for Primary Health Care*. Issue 2. Adelaide, October 16–17, 2003, pp. 107–122. Retrieved August 6, 2005, from <http://www.phcred-sa.org.au/REDSnapshots2.htm>
- Rabinow, P. (Ed.) (1991). Space, knowledge, and power. In *The Foucault reader: An introduction to Foucault's thought* (pp. 239–256). London: Penguin Books.
- Rieber, R.W. (1989). In search of the impertinent question: An overview of Bateson's theory of communication. In R. W. Rieber (Ed.) (1989), *The individual, communication and society: Essays in memory of Gregory Bateson* (pp. 1–28). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press & Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme.
- Sawyer, J., Zubrinich, P., & Carter, J. (2003). Partners and pathways in education: the Whyalla model. *Education in Rural Australia*, 13(2), 63–73.
- University of South Australia. (4 November, 2004). UniSA brings university degrees home to Mt Gambier. Press release. Retrieved March 15, 2005, from <http://www.unisa.edu.au/why/news/releases/2004/mtgambier.asp>