PLEASE NOTE

This essay was originally published as S. Colnan and L. E. Semler, 'Shakespeare Reloaded (2008-10): A School and University Literature Research Collaboration,' *ALS for Schools* 1 (2009): 1-17. We thank *Australian Literary Studies* for allowing us to put this PDF version on our website. Please be aware that this essay is an historical piece now and a few details would be updated if it were revised. That said, we hope it offers insight into the initial structure and processes of the 'Shakespeare Reloaded' project before we became the 'Better Strangers' project in 2011. It is co-authored by the original leaders of the project and explores its design and functioning from the dual perspective of school teachers and academics. It aims to provide guidance based on our experience for those who might want to generate secondary-tertiary collaborations. What are the rapids to navigate? What are the principles to consider?

Shakespeare Reloaded (2008-10): A School and University Literature Research Collaboration

I

Introduction

Shakespeare Reloaded is a collaborative research and teaching project run by the

English Department at the University of Sydney and Barker College (Hornsby, NSW).

It is jointly funded over three years (2008-10) by the University, Barker College and

the Australian Research Council (ARC) under its Linkage Projects scheme within its

National Competitive Grants Program.[1] According to the ARC website, the linkage

scheme 'supports collaborative research and development projects between higher

education organisations and other organisations, including within industry, to enable

the application of advanced knowledge to problems.'[2] Linkage projects are known for

being particularly workable in the sciences and university disciplines that have close

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[1] L. E. Semler, Penny Gay, Kate Flaherty: "Shakespeare Reloaded: Innovative Approaches to Shakespeare and Literature Research in Australian Universities and Secondary Schools" (2008-10; project num. LP0882082).

[2] [This is quoted from the 2009 Linkage page.] See 'Linkage Projects' on the Australian Research Council website: https://www.arc.gov.au/grants/linkage-program/linkage-projects

ties to industry, but have been somewhat more challenging to design and run in the humanities and English in particular. This is due, at least in part, to the fact that many academics working in university English departments tend to gravitate to the more traditional humanities research model of conducting solo literature projects within their chosen fields. English is not widely thought of in entrepreneurial or linkage terms and once it is it can be challenging to find the right blend of project, academic researchers and organisational partners.

The value of the linkage project scheme for academics working in English is that it provokes fresh thinking about what constitutes academic research, promotes collaborative and cross-disciplinary projects, and offers another avenue via which university researchers can engage with and demonstrate their relevance to the wider community. These strengths are bound up with challenges relating to the involvement of multiple and non-tertiary partners in determining the objectives, methods and desired outcomes of humanities research projects. The purpose of this essay is to introduce *Shakespeare Reloaded* as an example of a collaborative literature research project fostered by the linkage scheme and demonstrative of what Ronald Barnett calls 'realisational' engagement (67). Realisational engagement refers to a university's engagement with wider society that nonetheless keeps at its core the university's realisation of itself as a university in traditional philosophical terms even in such an engagement. In the context of *Shakespeare Reloaded* this means the ability to satisfy the requirements of a non-tertiary partner while also engaging in genuine, intellectually and ethically uncompromised, research activity.

The history and nature of Shakespeare teaching in schools and universities is a fascinating and well-documented subject but it is not our objective to engage it here. Rather, our spotlight is on the design and workings of a specific, secondary-tertiary

collaboration within English. We begin with a snapshot of the project, move to some comments on its implementation and conclude with a set of transferrable principles that might aid teachers and academics (whatever their institution or subject area) in the development of other research and teaching collaborations.

II

Shakespeare Reloaded: A Project Snapshot

The Sydney University team comprises Professor Penny Gay (a Shakespeare scholar with research interests in women's roles and the comedies), postdoctoral fellow Dr Kate Flaherty (an expert in Australian recuperations of Shakespearean drama), and project director Dr Liam Semler (an early modern scholar), all from the English Department. Also affiliated with the project as research assistant and researcher in her own right is Dr Semler's doctoral student Linzy Brady (in English Education, University of Sydney). In addition to their collective involvement in the five elements of *Shakespeare Reloaded* explained below, these team members are conducting individual research projects that interconnect productively with the larger project. The individual projects explore: postmodern theatrical productions of Shakespeare (Gay); Shakespeare studies as a tertiary discipline (Flaherty); the learning and teaching of English literature at senior high and junior university (Semler); and collaborative approaches to teaching Shakespeare in schools in London and Sydney (Brady). The Barker College side of the partnership has enthusiastic support from the Headmaster Dr Rod Kefford and was initially project-managed by the school's Director of Curriculum, Mrs Shauna Colnan, who was a co-designer of the collaboration. The core membership of the project at Barker is the teaching staff in

the English and Drama Departments and the student body studying Shakespeare in Years 11 – 12 (and to a lesser degree students studying Shakespeare in Years 7-10).

What are the aims of *Shakespeare Reloaded*? A project of this size has numerous short and long-term aims and outcomes and one's view of these varies depending on where one puts the emphasis. A purely academic point of view might highlight the academics' individual research projects noted above: the aims would vary from project to project and the desired outcomes would include conference papers, academic chapters and articles, new and innovative tertiary units of study in Shakespeare, scholarly monographs and Brady's PhD. A secondary education perspective might consider the project as being all about the professional development of Barker's teachers as teachers of Shakespeare: the ultimate aim of such professional learning would be to enhance the learning experience of English and Drama students of Shakespeare as they learn within the NSW English and Drama syllabi at the school. Both these views are accurate and any successful linkage project will seek to maximize the gains for each side in terms that make sense to each side. However, the project would be a parody of collaboration if it all came down to mutual exploitation. *Shakespeare Reloaded* works because it is more than the sum of two parts: there is a crucial middle ground with aims and outcomes of its own to which both sides have committed and distinctively contribute.

The shared aim of *Shakespeare Reloaded* is to seek to understand how Shakespeare and literature generally are taught in Australian schools and universities and to facilitate innovative approaches to these areas for the benefit of Australian students of English. This involves contributing to the dissolution of unnecessary boundaries between academics and school teachers—by enhancing information flow and collegiality—so that both groups may have a fuller understanding of the literature

education package being delivered to students in senior high and junior university and be better placed to enrich it. These are large, long-term goals that rely ultimately on the participation and contribution of teachers and students of English in public and private schools and universities across Australia. Although the core partnership of *Shakespeare Reloaded* is between one university and one independent school, some aspects of the project such as the postgraduate units of study (2008 – 09) and the conference (2010), specifically invite wider involvement and it is intended that the open access website currently under development will become a forum for the exchange of ideas in Shakespeare and pedagogy.

The five core elements of Shakespeare Reloaded are:

- Academic in Residence programme;

- Postgraduate units of study;

- Travel fellowships;

- Website; and,

- Conference.

These elements are explained in *Figure 1* under the following headings: description, duration, aims and participants. The five elements of the project were designed to stand as discrete, yet permeable and interconnected, 'innovation communities,' focussed on the teaching and learning of Shakespeare. We derive the term 'innovation communities' from Michael Keane's use of it in his discussion of the benefits of research activity that is characterised by the networking of research talent and the crossing of systemic and intellectual boundaries (143). Our version of 'innovation communities' is also inflected by David Booth and Gordon Wells' notion of 'communities of inquiry' as sites in which teachers can engage in collaborative

'critical reflectiveness' (23).[3] The idea is that the project's aim to pursue innovative approaches to Shakespeare studies is best served by the establishment of a disparate array of teaching, learning and research contexts which each have their own specific character, duration, aims and participants. This arrangement means that Shakespeare pedagogy is explored under a range of distinct conditions (hence leading to valuably diverse outcomes), information is shared via feedback loops between the five elements, and participants in one innovation community may also be participants in others. Each of the five communities will have at least one participant from the university and one from the school but most will have more and will also in some way include participants from outside Barker College and Sydney University. The website and conference categories begin as small working-party communities, but each is intended to expand into a larger, quite different community of research and knowledge dissemination.

Considered in its entirety, *Shakespeare Reloaded* is a three-year project comprising five communities of inquiry that delivers on the five critical features of professional development identified by Laura M. Desimone: subject matter content focus; active learning opportunities for teachers; learning that is coherent with teachers' knowledge, beliefs and institutional pedagogical frameworks; extension over sufficient duration to effect robust intellectual and pedagogical change in teachers; and collective participation (183 – 84). Desimone posits these as the essential features that enable professional development to increase teachers' knowledge and skills and change their attitudes and beliefs with the result that their teaching changes in ways that improve student learning (Desimone 184 – 85).

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[3] Also see Neelands pages 162 – 64.

	Project element	Description	Duration	Aims	Participants
1	Academic in Residence programme	Members of the university team on site at Barker for a full day of Shakespeare-focussed teaching and learning activities that have been collaboratively planned. This includes: lectures to students and staff on texts and contexts; workshops and seminars to explore and trial ways of teaching Shakespearean material; 'conversations' with teachers centered on single plays; feedback and relationship building; website and project development meetings.	Approx. 2 full days per school term or approx. 8 days per year over 3 years (2008 –10).	To develop mutual trust in the university-school relationship through long-term, recurring contact. To enrich Shakespeare teaching and learning via pedagogical activities aligned with the NSW syllabus. To build teachers' expertise in Shakespeare studies beyond any curriculum frameworks. To enhance students' literary analysis and essay writing skills. To act as a space for the development of new approaches to Shakespeare pedagogy and literature research.	The University team and Barker's English and Drama staff. All senior-school students studying Shakespeare and as many middle-school students as practicable. Potential to expand downwards to include junior high students.
2	Postgraduate units of study	Two of the University of Sydney's postgraduate units of study relating to Shakespeare to be funded by the project and taught onsite at Barker by members of the university team. The units are: 'ENGL6972: Shakespeare and the Renaissance' and 'ENGL6982: Shakespeare and Modernity.'	ENGL6972 taught in 2008; ENGL6982 taught in 2009. Each unit is of one semester duration.	To take postgraduate learning to the suburbs for all eligible students and to facilitate the return of practicing teachers (from Barker and other schools) to academic study within their discipline.	These are regular postgraduate units of study in the Arts Faculty at the University of Sydney and so normal enrolment and eligibility rules apply.
3	Travel fellowships	One travel fellowship awarded to a member of the Barker English Department to travel with Dr Flaherty to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and to consult with US Shakespeare academics. A second fellowship	Approx. 10 days during the September-October school vacation in 2008 and 2009.	To create one-on-one collaborative learning in an international academic and theatrical context. To discuss *Shakespeare Reloaded* with colleagues and practitioners overseas and to bring back new knowledge and resources to	Two pairs of researchers, each pair comprising an academic and a school teacher.

		awarded to a Barker Drama teacher to travel with Prof. Gay to the Globe Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, and the Blackfriars Theatre reconstruction in Staunton, Virginia, for engagement with Shakespeare academics and practitioners. Fellowships awarded on merit via competitive application process.		be disseminated via staff workshops and new units of work at Barker.	
4	Website	The *Shakespeare Reloaded* open-access website intends to deliver Shakespeare scholarship and teaching resources as well as assisting students in understanding literature research methods and practice. It will have a specific focus on the needs of students, teachers and researchers operating in the ambit of Shakespeare studies at senior high and junior university.	Initial website creation period will be 2008-10 with further development over subsequent years.	To make available a range of Shakespeare resources and links. To facilitate national and global exchange of ideas, methods and practices in Shakespeare scholarship and pedagogy. To provide resources to aid student transition from school to university in literary studies.	The development committee in 2008-10 comprises the Sydney University team and a working party of Barker teachers. It is hoped that participation will expand nationally via information sharing after the site is launched.
5	Conference	The conference theme is 'Drawing out Shakespeare: Shakespeare and Learning Then and Now.' It is co-hosted by the *Shakespeare Reloaded* project and the Australian and New Zealand Shakespeare Association (ANZSA).	A three-day conference (17-19 June 2010).	To provide an international forum enabling rich exploration of Shakespeare and pedagogy at tertiary and secondary levels.	Participants include the entire *Shakespeare Reloaded* team (teachers, students, academics) and Shakespeare scholars, teachers and practitioners from Australia and overseas.

Figure 1: The five elements of *Shakespeare Reloaded.*

A brief comment on each of the five elements will help clarify their character and value. The academic in residence programme is the backbone of the project because it extends evenly throughout the three-year period and guarantees that there will be two days in every term when academics will be on site at Barker conducting or collaborating in professional learning activities or student-focused lectures and workshops of one sort or another. This is a space of continuity, in which the academic team is seen to be committed to the project and to working at the school according to an ongoing, regular timetable, and a space of innovation because it is within this context that new teaching and learning ideas are collaboratively pursued and trialled. Throughout the year all senior students studying, and all teachers teaching Shakespeare, have at least one direct encounter with the project in relation to the texts they are dealing with. The types of encounter vary a fair bit in mode and aim, and any one academic in residence day could have up to four different types of learning exercise scheduled in addition to project and website development meetings. Some examples of academic in residence day teaching and learning activities are tabulated in *Figure 2* to give an idea of their diversity and the way they range from tight focus on set plays to contextual background and analogues, from close reading and essay writing to performative approaches, from large to small groups, and from staff or student focus to mixed audiences and participation.

The academic in residence days generate teaching resources relating to Shakespeare studies and literature pedagogy that can be made available more widely via the NSW English Teachers Association's publication *mETAphor* and ultimately on the *Shakespeare Reloaded* website after it is launched.[4] At the end of 2008, Barker staff were surveyed about *Shakespeare Reloaded* and the anonymous responses revealed a

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[4] See, for example: Flaherty; Semler 'Bard Blitz'; and Brady.

sense of enriched teacher knowledge and confidence, a trickledown effect of knowledge and enthusiasm to students, and a deep appreciation for the experience of becoming learners again in a way that had immediate benefits for their motivation and quality of teaching. In an email reflection on the academic in residence days (to Dr Semler, 29 April 2009), English teacher David de Montfort admires how students and teachers are enabled by the project to learn together and concludes: 'The ideal of a learning community, so often imagined and speculated on, is brought close to realisation [in *Shakespeare Reloaded*].'

Date	Topic	Mode	Leader	Participants
5 Mar 2008	Robert Wilson's *Hamlet: A Monologue.*	Workshop discussion of Wilson's approach to performing *Hamlet* based around Marion Kessel's film documentary on Wilson's *Hamlet*.	Liam Semler	All interested and available staff.
14 May 2008	Varieties of Early Modern Selfhood.	Lecture outlining three approaches to understanding selfhood in Shakespeare's day: the humours, public office holding, and the acted 'part.'	Liam Semler	Entire Drama and English staff at staff meeting
12 June 2008	Learning on your Feet: Shakespeare and the Challenge of Embodied Language.	Workshop exploring performative approaches to understanding and teaching Shakespeare.	Kate Flaherty	All interested and available staff.
4 Aug 2008	Conversations around *Lear, Hamlet* and *The Tempest.*	Three separate 'conversations' around three plays: *Lear* and Wu Hsing-Kuo's Taiwanese *Lear is Here*; *Hamlet*, narratable selves and 'being oneself'; and emotion-mapping *The Tempest*.	Liam Semler	Three small groups of teachers teaching each text.
11 Sept 2008	*Macbeth*: Poetry and Rhetoric.	Guided close reading exercise of selected passages in *Macbeth*.	Penny Gay	All staff teaching *Macbeth* to Year 9.
11 Nov 2008	*Richard III*—Kings' Games: Murder, Muddy, Marry or Make Friends.	A game style learning exercise to teach students about the plot and themes of *Richard III*.	Kate Flaherty	All staff proposing to teach *Richard III* in 2009.
18 Mar 2009	Richard loves Richard: *Richard III* and the Question of Identity.	Interactive lecture (with visuals) to Year 12 students exploring the diverse ways that Richard has been performed and embodied over the centuries.	Penny Gay	All Year 12 students and their teachers studying *Richard III*.
30 Mar 2009	Keeping it Real: *Romeo and Juliet* from Early Modernity to Postmodernity	Lecture to Year 10 students exploring representations of teenagerhood in *Romeo and Juliet* through the ages.	Liam Semler	All Year 10 students and their teachers studying *Romeo and Juliet*.
10 June 2009	The Bard Blitz	Trial run of intensive, small group exercise in close reading and original essay building (a transferrable learning module based on *Hamlet*).	Liam Semler, Linzy Brady	Teachers Steven Allan and Brad Moar's two Year 12 *Hamlet* classes, and any other interested teachers as observers.

Figure 2: Some examples of *Shakespeare Reloaded* academic in residence learning activities.

While the academic in residence days encompass varied forms of communal learning, the two postgraduate units of study taught at Barker in 2008 – 09 set up small, tightly focussed, learning communities governed by University of Sydney English Department course requirements. A key advantage of teaching postgraduate coursework off the University's main campus and close to suburban schools is that it makes it easier for teachers to enter or continue with postgraduate study in their subject area. The unit of study evaluation responses to Dr Flaherty's 'ENGL6972: Shakespeare and the Renaissance,' which she taught at Barker in 2008, reveal how much the teachers enjoyed being together as a group of students and one respondent identified the unit as 'by far the most helpful professional development I have been involved in.' Responses also indicated that teachers experienced an intellectual tension between desiring to plunge into untrammelled exploration of Shakespeare's works and wanting content that could be translated immediately into curriculum-aligned teaching material for the classroom. *Shakespeare Reloaded*, in its entirety and in its component elements, always traverses this tension because academics and school teachers have some divergent governing priorities.

A defining feature of this particular learning community is that the teachers, now as formal students (some for the first time in decades), needed to write an assessable essay. One teacher admitted in the unit evaluation that 'having to do the assessment task [in ENGL6972] was wonderful discipline' and it was clear that such a requirement gave an extra dimension to the active learning experience of the teachers and enhanced their sense of achievement (as learners in the subject areas they teach). This learning community benefited teachers more widely because Dr Greg Cunningham, Director of Teaching and Learning at Barker, edited the term papers into a bound collection as an in-house resource for teachers teaching Shakespeare, and

one teacher's essay on *Hamlet* was delivered as a conference paper and then published in *mETAphor* (2009; issue 2, pp. 5 – 10).

The most intimate of the learning communities is the travel fellowship in which two people, the academic and the teacher, go on a physical and intellectual journey together to explore something of the international Shakespeare scene and share their experience with each other during the trip and with Barker's English and Drama staff on their return. The recipient of the 2008 travel fellowship was an English teacher who went with Dr Flaherty to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (where they attended workshops) and met with Shakespearean academics at Southern Oregon University, UC Berkeley and Stanford University. On their return they presented an account of the trip and its implications in terms of learning and teaching at the academic in residence day on 11 November 2008 and a staff development day on 29 January 2009. The English teacher referred to the experience as profoundly enriching and as a result prepared a Shakespeare unit of work for junior high students based on knowledge acquired in the US. In 2009 a Drama teacher accompanied Professor Gay to Stratford-upon-Avon and the Blackfriars Theatre reconstruction in Staunton, Virginia. On his return he discussed with colleagues the value and vagaries of 'original practices' approaches to drama pedagogy.

The fourth learning community is a small group of academics and teachers developing the *Shakespeare Reloaded* website. The final learning community is the conference held in 2010 on the theme of Shakespeare and learning.

Shakespeare Reloaded is therefore an inquiry infrastructure that actively promotes diverse modes of teaching and learning and varied forms of involvement by students, academics and teachers, but all unified around exploring Shakespeare studies and literature pedagogy. It is based at Barker College and while the core

benefits occur there, there are strategies to distribute the benefits more widely (such as via publications, postgraduate units, conference and website).

III

Shakespeare Reloaded in the School: Issues for Teachers

Collaborative projects like *Shakespeare Reloaded* are uncommon in NSW secondary schools. A visit to any busy high school might explain why. The core business of timetabled teaching and learning sees teachers and students moving from class to class over the course of a highly structured day, punctuated by bells or their equivalent. Teachers often say that they find little time or space in the school day for reflection, collaboration or new learning. Work-shadowing a high school teacher will confirm that most appear to give out more than they have opportunity to take in. Yet, the need for both remains essential for high quality teaching and learning.

While there is a genuine commitment on the part of school leaders to offer teachers a range of professional development opportunities both on campus and off, the fact remains that secondary English and Drama teachers may teach five classes from year seven to year twelve, in addition to coaching sport, debating, public speaking, staging productions and helping students at lunch times and after school—all underpinned by heavy marking loads. In many schools a serious lack of funding for basic pedagogical necessities makes the teacher's job all the more difficult and is a key factor in keeping staff morale low and opportunities for exciting research ventures curtailed.

This relentlessly unchanging picture of regimented schools and work-weary teachers highlights a compelling case for change. Collaborative projects like *Shakespeare Reloaded* are worth championing or at least carefully considering for

Australian secondary schools. Any school can potentially create new opportunities for itself by turning the distinctivness of its profile into collaborative research and development possibilities, but it will require clear-eyed self-assessment, imaginative envisioning of alternative futures, investigation of funding opportunities and confident approaches to potential partner organisations. There is nothing to stop schools (individually or as a small cluster) from developing research projects that meet their particular needs and blend with professional learning. Usually what it takes is a teacher energetic and enthusiastic enough to take on the task and drive it through the various stages. If a secondary-tertiary partnership is desired, such a person should not be bashful about approaching universities with a plan or concept of some sort of research and teaching collaboration. Be assured: universities are interested.

Feedback from teachers confirms that *Shakespeare Reloaded* is resulting in benefits to teachers and their students. One anonymous teacher's survey response in 2008 declared of the academic in residence programme: 'much of it has fed directly into my teaching.' Another respondent wrote: 'I think this is a hugely valuable program, in essence because I *learned* so much.' We are finding that immersion in one to five of the project's innovation communities is enhancing teachers' capacity to learn and teach. However, to make such projects work somebody within the school needs to believe passionately in the value of the project and must be committed to it conceptually and logistically. The school-based project manager has the special challenge of putting into operation something that may not have been seen before in the staffrooms and classrooms of the school. Such novelty means that the person must have a high degree of belief in the project, an ability to pitch or sell it more than once and to various audiences, and a credible implementation strategy. A director of curriculum or a head of English or Creative Arts, may be ideal for this crucial role.

The school-based project manager must be committed to acting on problems that emerge by leading in what Richard Beckhard and Wendy Pritchard describe as a thoughtful 'learning mode' (14). This person needs to facilitate and engage in the practice of 'double loop doubting' (262 – 64), stepping back from deeply held assumptions so that visions of the future are not foreclosed by practices of the past. An aspect of this is readiness to accept suggestions from any of the staff about future directions and about the trialing of specific teaching and learning ideas. Such openness values and affirms the teacher-participants as professionals possessing crucial practical experience and self-reflectivity that should be harnessed by the project as a whole.

Collaborative projects all differ from one another. *Shakespeare Reloaded* exemplifies open systems theory as discussed by Daniel Katz and Robert L. Kahn, whereby the requirement for flexibility is more pressing than that of seeking stability through tighter coordination. As Katz and Kahn explain, 'open systems are not at rest' (34), nor as it turns out, is the interaction of teachers, students and academics within the five elements of this project. Dynamism, rather than stillness, is the prevailing atmosphere of the project. Yet, at the same time*, Shakespeare Reloaded*'s five elements and its general trajectory of exploring innovative Shakespeare pedagogy and literature research, remain invaluable constants.

Kurt Lewin's description of organisational equilibrium as a flowing river rather than a deep pond (qtd. in Katz and Kahn 27) is a helpful metaphor for describing the nature of *Shakespeare Reloaded*. Teacher responses revealed that three key rapids in this river need careful negotiation:

- Time;
- Fatigue; and,

- Institutional interface.

These are not one-off researcher's riddles to be conquered and dismissed, but rather persistent features of the collaborative landscape, and each of them manifests variously in the project, its participants, and the partner organisations. It pays to be alert about them from the very start.

In schools, time is commonly identified as an obstacle to achieving change and pioneering innovation. Teachers have busy schedules and one of the most frustrating problems for school administrators is balancing the teachers' need to be given time away from their classes to attend professional development events, against the need for students to be taught day by day by their regular teachers. A challenge faced by the *Shakespeare Reloaded* project is to reach and engage all English and Drama teachers and their students without creating too large a burden on the school timetable or any teacher's workload. A commitment to thoughtfully and transparently designing and delivering professional learning to all teachers in the project is non-negotiable.

It is in the lead up to the academic in residence days that time can become a source of intense problem-solving. Communicating early and often—between the Barker project manager, the academic(s), and the relevant teachers—tends to alleviate most problems. Each day's programme begins as a blank template, but there is a shared understanding that first priority is given to the Shakespearean plays being taught by HSC teachers. These have been *King Lear*, *The Tempest*, *Richard III* and *Hamlet*. Equal priority is then given to the plays taught from Years 9 – 11: *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello*. These priorities become the first organising principle of the day, creating sessions and releasing teachers and students to attend. Each day includes a lecture, presentation or workshop with students, thereby ensuring that we meet our

commitment to improve student learning in unmediated ways. There is a commitment also to broadening out the program to include sessions on Shakespeare's world and on texts not currently taught, such as Shakespeare's sonnets. In this way, the project reaches beyond the known and allows teachers space to contemplate the introduction of new units of work, new experiences of Shakespeare, to deliver in imaginative ways to students from Year 7 upwards.

By ensuring that the day targets syllabus prescriptions, we can more easily justify teacher and student release. The academic in residence programme is arguably the project's most important innovation community: it demands careful design because it is simultaneously the most expensive and most rewarding use of time. A programme of events is developed for the day and emailed to English and Drama teachers ahead of time; it explicitly identifies teachers and classes involved in each session and over the year, a fair and effective distribution of opportunities for release time can be allocated.

What about teachers who do not want to spend their only free period of the day attending a workshop on a Shakespearean play? For some teachers professional development fatigue has set in and enthusiasm for anything else beyond the classroom is hard to muster. One teacher's survey response indicated (quite understandably) that 'just wanting to have a cup of tea' might at times seem a preferable use of time than attending a *Shakespeare Reloaded* session. Some teachers will be more involved in the project than others and this is part of the desired flexibility built into its design.

It is clear that the project has developed momentum because of the quality and relevance of what is on offer. It must provide teachers with adventurous learning experiences that they may not otherwise have access to, but it won't work if teachers can't use what they learn in the classroom. One thing that has emerged as a common

link between all participants, is a mutual interest in Shakespeare, which is the currency of the project. If the day on offer is varied in its subject matter and delivery, it can in fact offer refreshment to even the most fatigued teacher. That we are all in the same boat (academics and teachers, and even students) in respect to time pressures helps us to treat this issue seriously, sympathetically and collaboratively. It is testament to the success of the project that despite being time-poor and variously fatigued, many teachers enrolled as new students in the University of Sydney's postgraduate coursework programmes and committed to the postgraduate unit of study delivered on the Barker campus for two hours one afternoon a week, over a semester, culminating in tutorial presentations and the completion of a four thousand word essay. Many of these teachers have subsequently enrolled in other postgraduate units.

The third rapid to negotiate is the institutional interface which often manifests as a dissonance between what teachers want and what academics offer. Secondary school teachers are trained to take complex concepts in their discipline, break them down, reassemble and communicate them to students from age eleven to eighteen. The early desire on the part of some teachers for academics to come in and teach students in the lower secondary school seemed misdirected and indicated a need to communicate more explicitly the unique strengths of all project participants. Mutual discovery about the differing worlds of the academics and the teachers has been an important emerging feature of *Shakespeare Reloaded*.

The enjoyment that most teachers in the project are experiencing as they learn from academics, reinforces the notion that it would be reductive and counter productive for academics to disown their own discourses and seek merely to deliver curriculum resources to teachers. The delivery of university-style content that is genuinely

empathetic to secondary education professionals while also keeping its 'strangeness' or singularity acts upon the teachers and the culture of the school as a sort of 'positive turbulence' (Gryskiewicz): a clear goal of the project. Teachers are also being affirmed for what they bring to the project: curriculum knowledge, pedagogical expertise, and the ability to distil fresh learning into the classroom for the benefit of students.

As academics enter the school community through the academic in residence programme and teachers take steps into the research-infused world of the academics through the postgraduate units of study and the travel fellowships, all participants are becoming part of the process of blurring the lines between disciplines. This can only be beneficial for us as we collectively try to imagine improved futures for the literary education of our students, many of whom, in transitioning from school to university, know, experientially, far more than their mono-institutional teachers about the problems of receiving subject English via a dual system (see Semler 'Culture Shock'). The benefits to teachers go hand in hand with the benefits to students and the question we keep returning to with every aspect of *Shakespeare Reloaded* is: how does this benefit the student learning experience?

IV

Transferrable Principles

Shakespeare Reloaded is just one example of how a university and a school might collaborate in a research and teaching enterprise. Every school-university partnership will be unique and yet we suggest a number of transferrable principles derived from *Shakespeare Reloaded* that might help guide (or provoke alternative principles to guide) teachers, researchers and practitioners who are interested in designing

collaborative projects between universities and schools in any subject area. This list of transferrable principles is not meant to be prescriptive or exhaustive; we simply offer it as potentially helpful:

- Genuine project, partnership and participants;

- Owner built, not 'store bought';

- Tight, yet open;

- Diversity and connectivity;

- Reflectiveness and accountability; and,

- Dual and distributed leadership.

First and foremost, the project must be genuine. It will need to be judged genuine from the point of view of the school, the university, and any other organisation involved including funding bodies (such as the Australian Research Council or the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations). Each will have its own frameworks for measuring the genuineness of a project and these will be intrinsically linked to the purpose of each institution and funding scheme. Finding a convergence of these core values is essential in generating a project rationale. The project must be a genuinely collaborative enterprise sought by both parties: each will be able to articulate its relevance in their own terms and articulate the wider or deeper value of it *as a partnership*. To make this work one needs genuine participants sincerely committed to this particular project and this particular partnership. There will always be cultural differences between collaborators (a part of the 'institutional interface' rapid), and we know that initial financial negotiations are especially sensitive, but we utterly defend the humanities-based view that transparency, sincerity and a shared belief in genuine partnership are invaluable and far exceed more competitive models that produce bad-faith, exploitative, solipsistic and half-cocked

collaborations. Achievement of genuineness is not as easy as it might seem: it takes a rare alignment of the right people and the right partner organisation(s) along with enough reflective time to develop the best project conception and design. A year's preparation and negotiation is not inappropriate (although shorter periods might work) before the grant application goes in or the start date arrives.

The second transferrable principle is fundamental to the success of the first. The project must be owner built, not 'store bought.' It is unwise, and very likely to contradict the first transferrable principle, to adopt wholesale a project that has been designed and executed in another context. Collaborative projects are all about people working together and this is far more likely to occur smoothly if the project has a homegrown genuineness: it should be indigenous, not exotic. The sort of ownership arising out of being owner-builders who live through the design and establishment periods of a project absolutely outweighs any perceived benefit of lowering a store-bought, prefabricated project onto one's site. It also makes the three operational rapids far easier to handle.

Our third transferrable principle requires poise between tightness and openness. The project needs to be fully worked out, and operationally comprehensible and credible, but containing built-in space for the emergence of the new and unexpected. This space can manifest as a broad mechanism like the academic in residence programme or as more tightly determined meetings for reflective thinking by participants on the project's unfolding nature and its milestones. Or any other way one might think of to facilitate project torque (and talk) so as to stay relevant, innovative and evolving. A sufficiently, but not overly, aerated structure will provoke expressions of creativity, freedom and risk from diverse members of the project, and such things are the lifeblood of the new.

The remaining three principles are conceptual pairs that each presuppose a tight, yet open project. The fourth transferrable principle asserts that it is essential to build in guarantors of diversity and connectivity so that even the most tightly focussed projects stay vital and enjoy the intellectual and conceptual benefits of fresh data and feedback to enrich its processes. Diversity enables a working of the problem at the heart of the project via disparate modes and also allows participants to find the modes that suit them best. Connectivity is to be encouraged so that all participants are recipients of varied information which creates positive turbulence and provokes new solutions and methods.

The fifth transferrable principle requires the valuing of reflectiveness and accountability. The project must be accountable in terms of its milestones and outcomes, the partner organisations must be accountable to their obligations and the spirit of the project, and the participants must be enabled to participate in the project in ways that facilitate their demonstration of their accountability to it. The constraints of a fully accountable enterprise are essential to maximize its processes and outcomes. The project should also facilitate ongoing reflectiveness about itself: reflectiveness and accountability need to occur in respect to one another. It should value highly the allocation of time to transparent consideration of where things are at, how things are going and how all aspects of the project might be improved or developed.

Our sixth and final transferrable principle asserts that a collaborative partnership between a school and university needs a manager from each institution because there is no better way to do justice to the full identity of each context. Furthermore, local knowledge is essential to efficient problem-identification, problem-solving and logistics-work within any organisation. You might need to call in a builder to fix your roof, but you know best where the water is dripping and how

to manage the dog. In addition to collaborative, dual management, the project should have scope for the development of further leadership roles so that participants can fully express their varied skills and levels of commitment. Attention to distributing leadership and responsibilities produces a generous project, enhances communal ownership of it, and helps participants develop a sense of personal and professional fulfilment and leadership skills that are useful beyond the project.

V

The Way Ahead: Iteration v. Innovation

The fundamental premise underlying *Shakespeare Reloaded* is the need for school teachers and academics in subject English to rediscover that they are in fact believers, practitioners and researchers in the one profession. This is not to deny that secondary and tertiary educational institutions have their own perfectly valid responsibilities, interests, constraints and opportunities that they must look to satisfying according to their own professional insights and methodologies. It is also not to claim that already-overloaded teachers and academics must now somehow become experts in each other's domains. Rather, it is to assert that in an increasingly technologised, mediatized, and corporatised world, where young people's personal spaces for the reading of literature are dissolving and the field of the Humanities is transmuting, it is incumbent on literary studies professionals to shake themselves out of unthinking iteration of inherited patterns and begin to re-appraise their domain according to the broadest of remits. If we are to empower the institutional voices for the literary imagination and English language we must, at the very least, blast open the portals of communication and empathy between academics and teachers. Collaborative pursuit of understanding about the nature of the literature education package we are

delivering to Australian students is a necessary starting point and the same would apply to most subject areas. The sort of inventive or radical thinking provoked by collaborative research enterprises can help us engage in 'double-loop doubting' about our institutional contexts and this is a first step to making sure that our proposed futures are not always foreclosed by our present structures of thought (Blackman and Henderson 258 – 59). We have a long way to go, but there are enormous intellectual, practical, and strategic gains to be made by pooling our resources across the institutional divide.

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