

Student Partnership in University Decision-Making and Governance: establishing a culture – emerging themes



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Australian Government

Department of Education and Training

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The Fellowship



National Senior Teaching Fellowship (began Sept 2016) - a sector-wide collaboration from April – June 2017

Principles guiding a student partnership in the UK - Chapter B5 QAA Code and The Student Engagement Partnership (TSEP)

A Student Participation Framework – student partnerships in quality Scotland (sparqs)

Ireland - Principles of Student Engagement and National Student Engagement Programme - pilot

The background

- Student engagement in university decision-making and governance

What, Why, and How?

- An OLT Strategically Commissioned Priority project (2015/2016)

What?



The elements of student engagement to partnership as identified by the Student Engagement Framework for Scotland:

1. students feeling part of a supportive institution
2. students engaging in their own learning
3. students working with their institution in shaping the direction of learning
4. formal mechanisms for quality and governance
5. influencing the student experience at national level.

Why?

- Students – empowerment, employability, citizenship, belonging – retention and success;
- Staff – ideas for collaborative processes, enhancement of learning and teaching, understanding of student needs;
- Universities – course enhancement; transformation from traditional relationships in higher education; development of self sustaining communities with shared goals and values.

[partly extracted from HEA UK, 2015 – *Framework for Student Engagement through Partnership*]

How?



Key points to take from research in Australia and abroad

Common understanding of ‘partnership’ vital

Institutional commitment to, and respect for, student voice, and to student leadership essential to embed principles and culture of partnership

A clear and committed vision of all members of the university community working together

Challenge is to engage every students’ voice –
International, indigenous, post graduate ...

Collaborative Workshop questions (for wide sector input)

Opportunities

1. What opportunities should universities be providing for students to participate as partners in decision making in their institutions?

Communication and Transparency

2. How should institutions be communicating with students about those opportunities and outcomes from engagement?

Student Leadership

3. How can universities best work in partnership with student leaders to develop and maintain effective student representation?

All student voices

4. What can universities do to encourage representation of all student voices?

A national partnership culture

5. On a national level what should the sector be doing to further a partnership culture?

Themes from workshops so far

Opportunities

- to be made clear from outset - at all levels and in all areas from beginning. Inclusion of students from the start of the idea (or working together to come up with ideas)
- Students need to actively embrace, commit to providing sustainable student partnership – knowledge transfer
- Good for unis to conduct audit to identify gaps, challenges and opportunities

Course representative system essential

Training and support vital– unis in partnership with student leaders

Student leadership has important role Professional support for student associations - ongoing

Communication and transparency vital at all levels so students can

- Know of opportunities
- See their voice counts
- Ask students what means of communication works for them

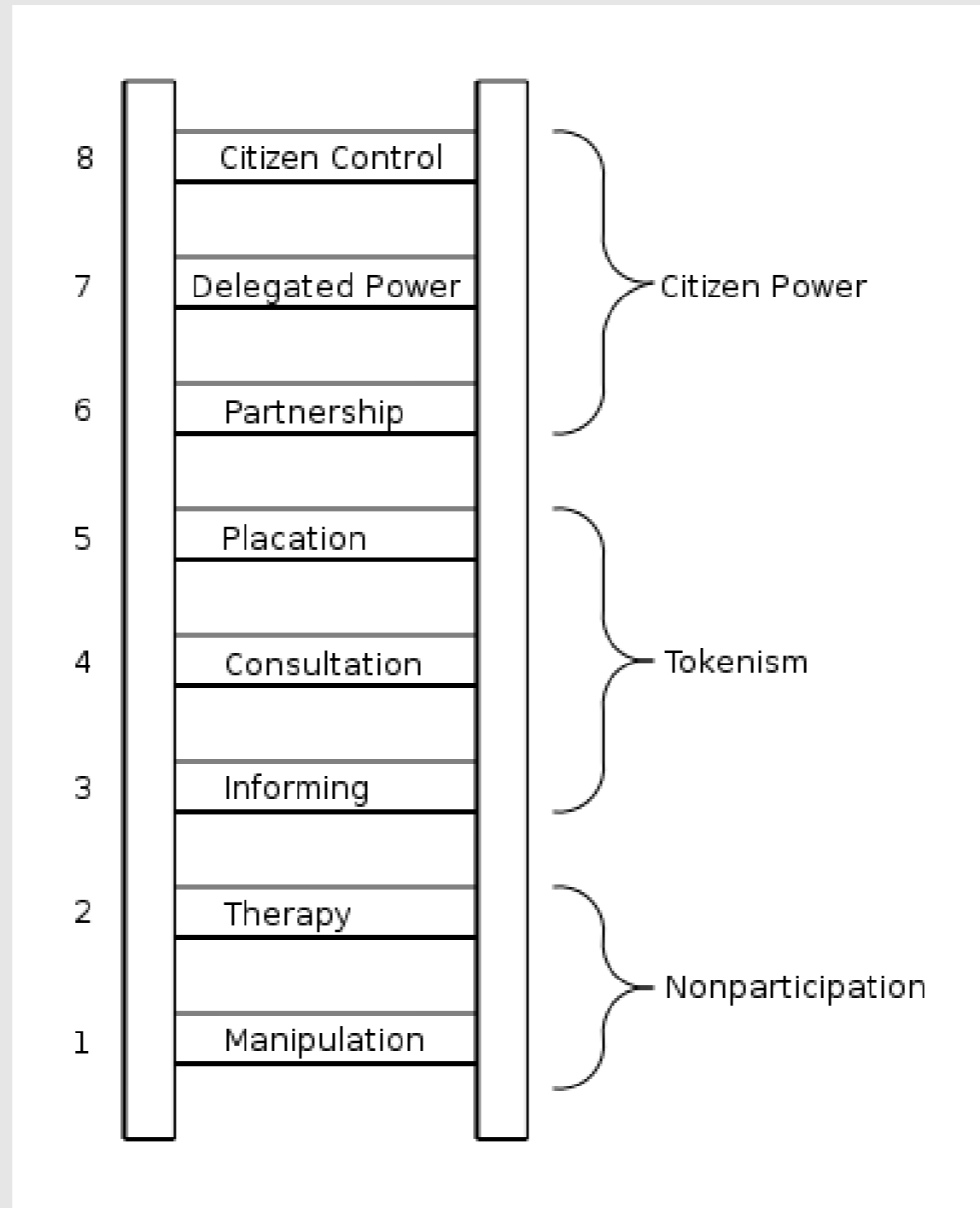
Capturing every student's voice – Australian unis are diverse – it is important for each uni to develop opportunities for varied cohorts

Incentives – recognition of value for considerable time students spend. Outcomes from partnerships celebrated.

National ongoing presence to sustain and strengthen partnership culture – resources for facilitation of partnership initiatives. Sharing ideas and experiences

National education sector awards for student partnership achievements

Arnstein S (1969) "A ladder of citizen participation"
JAIP 35(4), 216-224



I hope you will ...



- Join me in continuing the Student Voice Conversation via our Facebook page: *Student Voice in university decision-making* and follow our activities via our web page: *studentvoice.uts.edu.au*
- Contact me: Sally.Varnham@studentvoice.uts.edu.au, or my Fellowship Manager: Ann.Cahill@studentvoice.uts.edu.au

Thank you!