

Reflections on the benefits and challenges created by facilitating a multidisciplinary student project

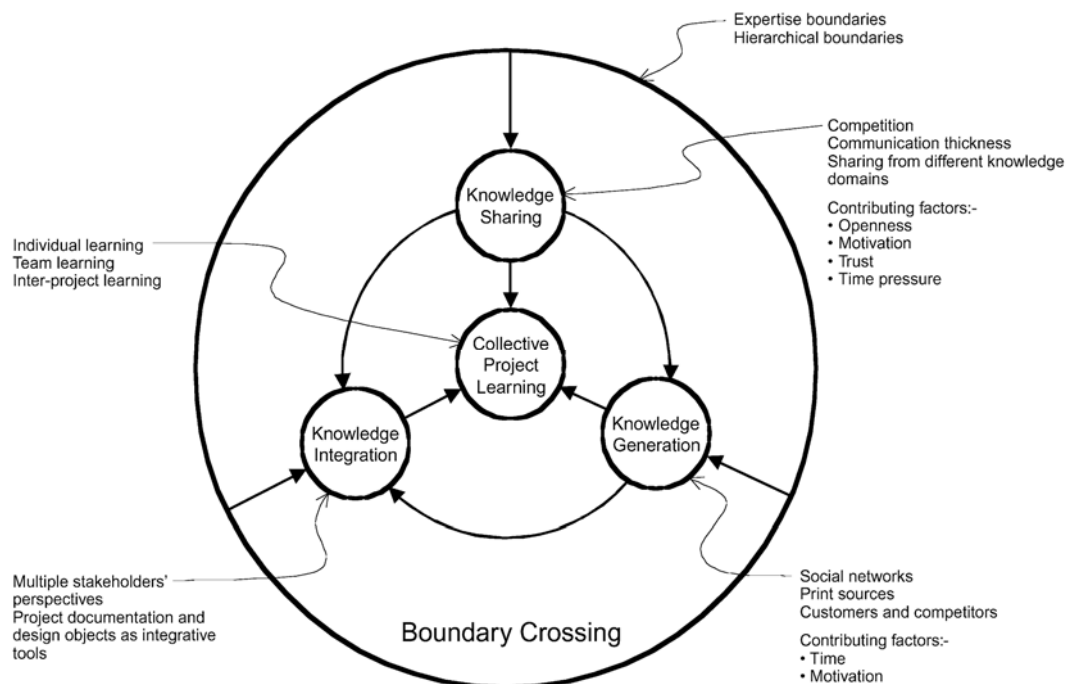
Introduction

The paper presents the facilitators' reflections on the benefits and challenges of developing and facilitating project-based learning for students from different disciplines. It reflects on the staff's initial project collaboration, development and ongoing collaboration on a multidisciplinary student project between Bachelor of Applied Science (BappSci) Physical Activity, Health and Wellness students and students studying for their Bachelor of Engineering Technology.

Methods

Auto-ethnographic, phenomenological methods were utilised. The paper considers the opportunities for multidisciplinary knowledge creation, focussing on knowledge generation and integration, using the conceptual model of knowledge creation disseminated by Fong (2003). It goes on to present the collective reflections of staff involved and lessons for future project collaborations.

Figure 1. The interrelationships between multidisciplinary knowledge creation processes



source Fong (2003)

Findings

The opportunities for diverse knowledge integration were a highlight of approach. Students gained real world experience preparing/receiving a design brief; coming up with/assessing design solutions and building the agreed product. The resources and design parameters evolved to meet the brief/satisfy the needs of the group commissioning the bottle bin.

Complications occurred at various points through the first year of the project. Timely access to resources and the sources of information were fundamental. The incorporation of perspectives from multiple stakeholders added layers of communication, which exponentially increased the amount of time taken to make decisions.

The researchers' reflections primarily centred on communication and ensuring all stakeholders had a clear understanding of progress and expectations. Additionally, it was observed that timely access to funds and resources was essential in ensuring successful completion of the project.