Partnerships

Linda L. Baer
Minnesota State Colleges and State Universities, USA

Ann Hill Duin
University of Minnesota, USA

INTRODUCTION

The rapidly changing environment in society is cause for higher education to reassess approaches to meeting educational needs. Many key factors are in a dynamic flux: these include growing numbers of students, more diverse populations of students, the need for more responsive educational content and modes of delivery, and the dynamic and unpredictable nature of the economy.

At the same time that new and pervasive demands face higher education, we are experiencing a shift away from high, predictable public support to increased reliance on tuition and outside funding sources. Partnering, now more than ever, is a critical component of success. Partnerships enable people and organizations to support each other by leveraging, combining, and capitalizing on their complementary strengths and capabilities, thereby achieving more than either partner working alone. However, successful partnering demands new ways of doing business and greater understanding of the factors contributing to successful partnerships.

Basic Definition of Partnerships

- **Partnership:** A relationship between two or more entities involving close cooperation where each entity has specific responsibilities.

As described in a set of documents from the United States Agency for International Development's New Partnership Initiative:

Partnerships require common goals, a good fit in the comparative advantages of the groups involved, a commitment to mutual learning, a high degree of trust, respect for local knowledge and initiative, shared decision-making and commitment to capacity building. (Tools for Development, n.d.)

Table 1, from this USAID document, notes four dimensions of partnering.

Figure 1 contains a simple grid that further helps us to understand the various types of partnerships (Duin, Baer & Starke-Meyerring, 2001). A partnership is placed on the grid according to its primary identity (corporate or public) and audience (targeted or general).

The upper left quadrant of Figure 1 indicates that the partnership supports mainly corporate, targeted interests. A program might partner with corporate entities to address needs of specific learners. An example of a corporate targeted partnership is that between Pace University and the National Advisory Coalition for Telecommunications Education and Learning (NACTEL), formed to create and offer an associate degree in telecommunications (see *www.nactel.org*).

In contrast, a program or institution could partner with other public entities (higher education institutions, non-profit groups, etc.) to develop resources for a targeted group of learners. A public partnership (lower-left quadrant) could serve the needs of a specific industry and could work to ensure a timely response to the changing needs of that industry, but it would not be controlled by a specific corporation. An example of a public partnership targeted at a specific industry is the Michigan Virtual Automotive and Manufacturing College (*www.mvac.org,* now located at *www.michman.com*).

Public partnerships that address a general audience (lower-right quadrant) appear to be the most popular types of partnerships in higher education. Here an institution could partner to coordinate the delivery of their programs and extend general access. An example of this type of partnership in the larger higher education scene is Kentucky Virtual University. In contrast to Michigan Virtual Automotive and Manufacturing College, this entity's mission is more general: "To make post-secondary education more accessible, efficient and responsive to Kentucky's citizens and businesses" (Kentucky Virtual University, n.d., paragraph 1).

Table 1. Dimensions of partnering

	Low Partner Diversity	High Partner Diversity
Low Task Specificity	Vision: Agreement on general problems relevant to similar constituents. Organization: Associations or ideological networks that allow loose coordination among similar organizations.	Vision: Agreement on general problems relevant to diverse constituents. Organization: Broad social movements geographically-based networks that allow loose coordination among diverse organizations.
High Task Specificity	Vision: Agreement on specific problems and actions needed by similar constituents. Organization: Issue-based networks, alliances or organizations that coordinate task and resource allocation among similar organizations.	Vision: agreement on specific problems, actions needed by diverse constituents. Organization: Coalitions and partnerships that coordinate tasks and resource allocation among diverse organizations

Figure 1. Types of partnerships
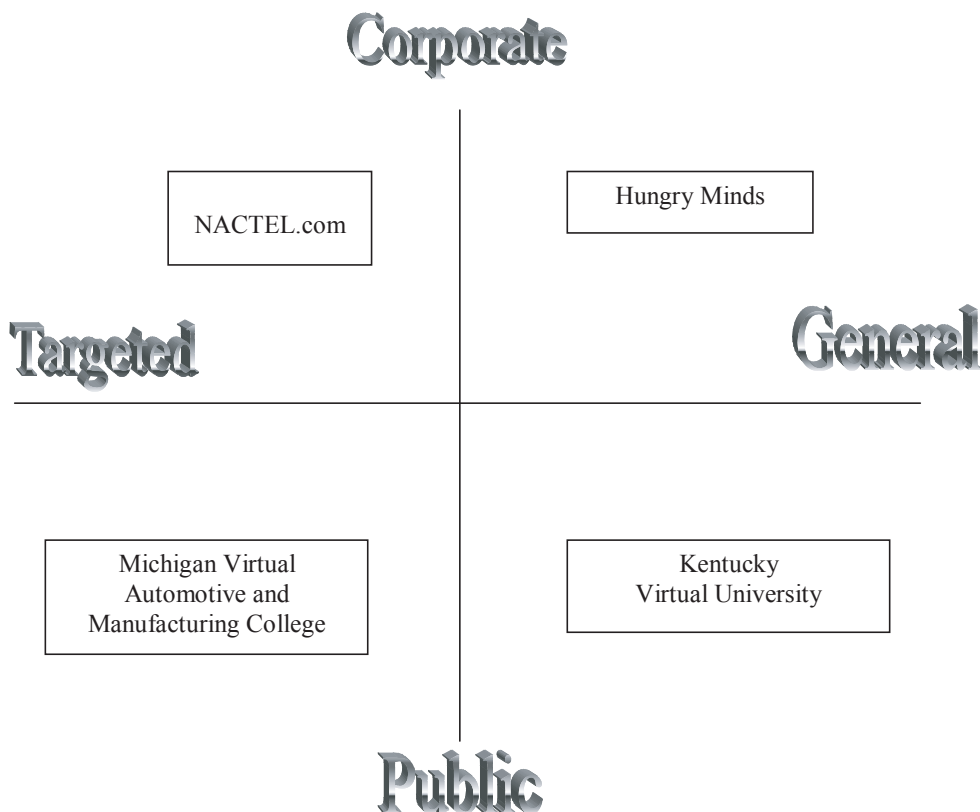
Related Content

Blending Synchronous and Asynchronous Interactivity in Online Education
Kamna Malik (2010). *Distance Learning Technology, Current Instruction, and the Future of Education: Applications of Today, Practices of Tomorrow (pp. 162-184).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/blending-synchronous-asynchronous-interactivity-online/39455

Investigating Student Satisfaction With Online Courses: A Case Study of Uttarakhand Open University
Jeetendra Pandeand Mythili G. (2021). *International Journal of Information and Communication Technology Education (pp. 12-28).*
www.irma-international.org/article/investigating-student-satisfaction-with-online-courses/277376

Blended Learning Space for Primary and Secondary Education: Challenges and Opportunities in Resource-Constrained Contexts
M. Mahruf C. Shohel, Md. Ashrafuzzaman, Farhan Azim, Iffat Naomee, Md Shajedur Rahmanand Mohammad Abu Bakar Siddik (2022). *Designing Effective Distance and Blended Learning Environments in K-12 (pp. 187-222).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/blended-learning-space-for-primary-and-secondary-education/292181

Strategies for teaching students With Exceptional Needs in cyber schools
Shellie Hipskyand Lindsay Adams (2006). *International Journal of Information and Communication Technology Education (pp. 1-14).*
www.irma-international.org/article/strategies-teaching-students-exceptional-needs/2298

Computer-Based Simulation in Blended Learning Curriculum for Hazardous Waste Site Worker Health and Safety Training
Cheryl West, Craig Slatin, Wayne Sanbornand Beverly Volicer (2011). *Online Courses and ICT in Education: Emerging Practices and Applications (pp. 230-241).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/computer-based-simulation-blended-learning/50187