

What Is Public Engagement?

Steve Cross
Head of Public Engagement
UCL

23 March 2010



**UNSURE UNDECIDED VAGUE
UNCLEAR UNFINISHED
INCOMPLETE DOUBTFUL
UNSTABLE BLURRED
IMPRECISE UNDESIGNATED
UNKNOWN INDISTINCT
INDEFINITE UNRESOLVED
AND UNCERTAIN**

Some definitions:

HEFCE:

“'public engagement' means bringing together HE specialists and non-specialists to develop new channels of communication and mutual understanding. The 'public' includes individuals and groups who do not currently have a formal relationship with an HEI through teaching, research or knowledge transfer.”



Some definitions:

UCL Public Engagement Unit:

“The Unit works to support activities which encourage a culture of two-way conversations between University staff and groups outside the University.”



Some definitions:

National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement:

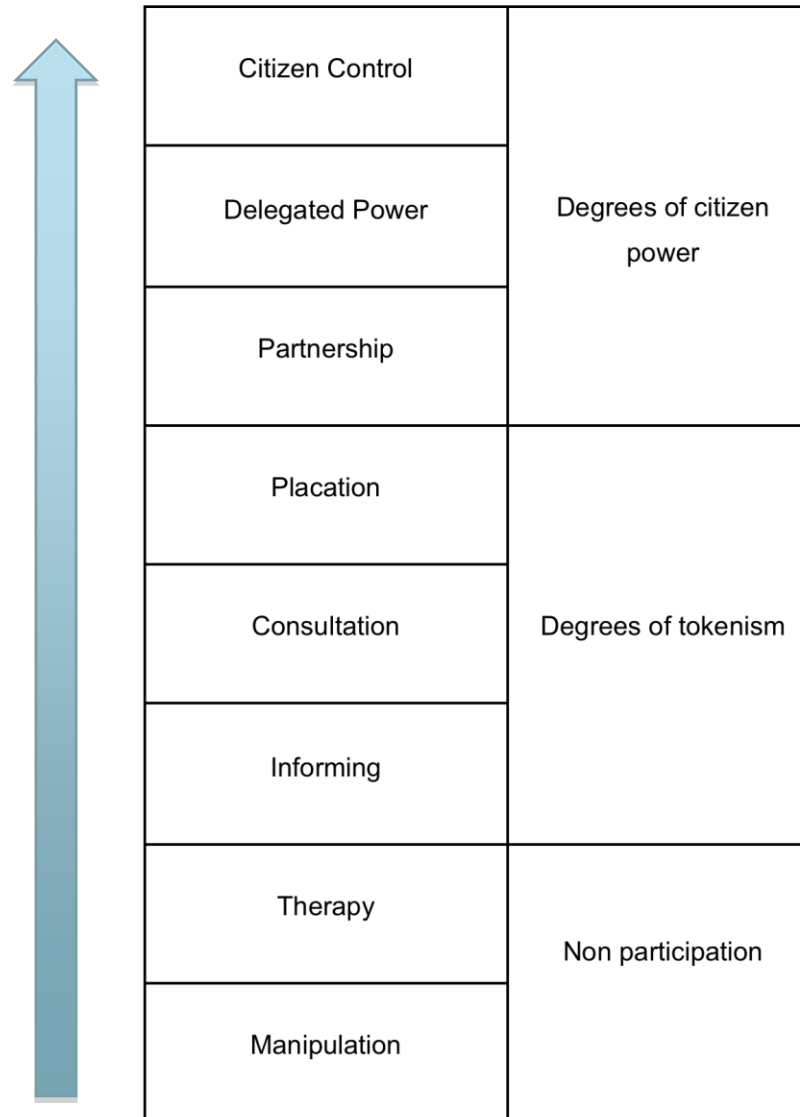
“Public engagement brings universities and the public together, and generates mutual benefit: inspiring, enriching and empowering everyone who gets involved.

Managed effectively, it makes universities more welcoming and accessible, and increases their relevance and impact on society.”

<http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/what-public-engagement>

We recognise six types of public engagement at UCL

- Telling public groups about our work
- Supporting communities with our expertise and resources
- Nurturing a society within which the next generation want to take part in research, teaching and learning
- Encouraging people outside academia to contribute their research and knowledge to our programmes
- Taking part in dialogue about the direction of our research and teaching
- Creating knowledge in collaboration with communities and interest groups outside the University



Why get involved?

- The personal case
- The moral case
- The business case
- The academic case



UCL: London's Beacon for Public Engagement

- Beacons are a 4-year initiative, until July 2011
- Funded by HEFCE/HEFCW/SFC, RCUK and Wellcome Trust
- There are 5 other Beacons: Edinburgh, Cardiff, Newcastle Manchester, Norwich
- The National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement has been established in Bristol



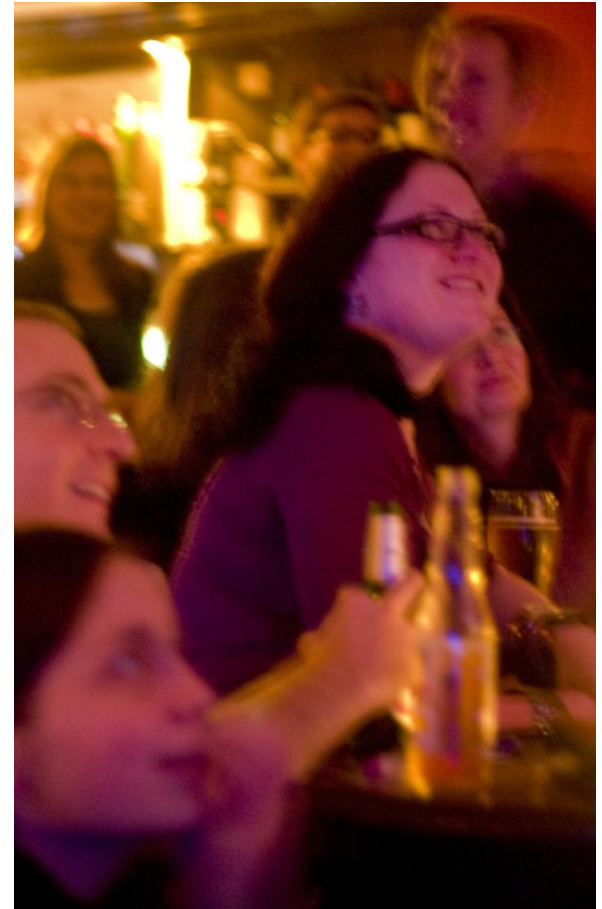
Beacon aims

- Culture change
- Capacity building
- Public engagement at strategic level
- Creating networks
- Experimenting and sharing experience



Supporting staff:

- With strategic funding
- By brokering relationships
- With training
- By generating projects
- By working with management and funders
- By building recognition and reward for PE



What are we finding out?

- Every University and every conversation is different
- Enthusiasm is widespread, from the top down and the bottom up
- “It would be a foolish University that wasn’t putting resources into this right now”
- Change is slow, but it’s real
- Partnerships are incredibly important



Get in touch...

www.ucl.ac.uk/public-engagement

www.brightclub.org

Email: publicengagement@ucl.ac.uk