Communication across distance, people and disciplines. A pulse across Taranaki, the energy province.

The Māori equivalent of Wavelength is “Iarere.” From a Māori perspective, “Te Iarere” is a positive way of communicating over vast distances.

Cover: Weta Polychroma pencil on hot press paper
Vicki Catlow

New Zealand is a weta paradise and according to the Department of Conservation weta are older than dinosaurs. Many of them are at risk. Many humans appear to suffer entomophobia, an unexplained fear of insects, showing little compunction when it comes to killing. However these creatures, many of whom are totally harmless, are vital to our ecosystems.

Te Iarere Wavelength
As the Interdisciplinary Journal of Academic Activity at WITT, Te Iarere Wavelength provides a forum for the publication of scholarly articles, points of view and creative works from all academic disciplines and subjects of general interest. Submission Guidelines are found on the following page. Te Iarere Wavelength is published annually by WITT, Private Bag 2030, New Plymouth, www.witt.ac.nz, ph (06) 757 3100.

Te Iarere Wavelength Committee
Christine Fenton, Ian Clothier, Tonga Karena, Andrea Corbett, Vanessa Henley and Barbara Morris. Design, typsetting and layout by Ian Clothier.

Disclaimer
All articles and creative works published in Te Iarere Wavelength are reviewed for accuracy of information (where applicable) and consistency of style and presentation. The views and creative philosophies expressed in this journal, however, are those of the author(s) and artist(s), and should not be taken to represent or reflect any aspect of institutional policy.
SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Aim

*Te Iarere Wavelength* provides a forum for the publication of academic articles, points of view and creative works by current WITT staff members. Co-authored articles, in which one or more of the authors is either a WITT student or a non-WITT employee, will also be considered for publication.

Submissions are not limited to research or scholarly activity that relates directly or indirectly to WITT programmes of study. Any subject of general interest on which sensible and well-informed opinions may be expressed, and creative works e.g. short stories and graphic images, will be considered for publication.

Readership

It is intended that *Te Iarere Wavelength* is published in hard copy at least once a year. Copies will be distributed internally to all WITT faculties, interested staff, divisions, service areas, and nationally to other institutions.

Editorial Committee

An editorial committee drawn mainly from Research Committee members will receive and review each article or creative work submitted for publication. The editorial committee may seek specialist opinion outside its membership where this is deemed to be helpful or necessary.

The editorial committee reserves the right to accept, edit or decline any piece of work submitted for consideration, and to make suggestions for - or seek - clarification of meaning where appropriate. A call for submissions is made approximately three months prior to publication dates.

Articles (including print based creative works)

Academic articles and scholarly views are expected to be formally structured with adherence to academic standards and should aim to be up to 2,500 words (longer ones will be considered). Points of View articles are informal and can vary in length. All submissions selected for publication will be subject to editing.

All articles should be submitted electronically as a Word document. Articles should be presented in single-line spacing in 10pt Verdana font. Headings should be printed in bold type, in 10pt Verdana font. Any footnotes and references should follow the American Psychological Association (APA) format. Copies of the WITT APA Referencing Guide are available in hard copy at the Learning Centre.

Articles should not normally be submitted if they have been published elsewhere. In the case of prior publication, permission must be sought and obtained from the original publisher before the article is submitted to the editorial committee. Articles should be submitted to the Research Administrator (research@witt.ac.nz).

Graphics

Any written text accompanying graphics should follow the same guidelines as per the section “Articles (including print based creative works)”, above. Graphic images should be supplied in JPG or TIF format at no less than 300dpi.
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**Context does matter: The role of context in programme planning and delivery by Jan Brown**
Jan teases out the tensions that exist for tutors between initial programme planning and final delivery of material. Jan is the author of four educational books and is a book reviewer for the Taranaki Daily News under her writer’s name, Jan Treliving-Brown.

**Challenging the collaborative learning paradigm by Vanessa Henley**
Critical attention to a key adult education concept is the focus of Vanessa Henley’s discussion of collaborative learning. Applying a critical lens reveals the inherent power relationships in this learning method, and potential for disadvantaging some learners. Vanessa is both the Disability Coordinator and a Learning Skills tutor at WITT.

**The colonisation cycle by Margaret Smith**
With a combination of work in sexual abuse education, counselling and Te Tiriti o Waitangi education Margaret Smith aims to generate hope for moving past abusive cycles to celebrate the healing potential of empowerment and self determination. Margaret is a pākeha with a passion to support Māori to reclaim tino rangatiratanga. Margaret is and has been the student counsellor at WITT for the past three-and-a-half years.

**Mental illness: What’s it got to do with tertiary education? by Lesley Pitt**
Lesley is interested in mental health because of her own experience which has lead her to explore the experiences of others. This article considers the impact of mental illness on adult learners and explores the potential response of educators from a social justice perspective. Lesley teaches in social work and mental health.

**Resistant learners: What aren’t they telling you? by Christine Fenton**
Christine Fenton has a background in science and has been teaching in the tertiary sector for many years. Noticing how many students hold anxieties towards learning mathematics and science she investigated methods that can be used in the classroom to support their abilities to learn and this formed part of her doctoral studies. She is currently Academic Director at WITT.

**A personal analysis of experiential learning within the context of teaching social work by Tiffany Apaitia-Vague**
Tiffany Apaitia-Vague is a social work tutor at WITT. This article was inspired by a piece of work that she submitted for the Massey Post Graduate Certificate in Tertiary Teaching, which she has recently completed.

**Stepping to a larger perspective: Integral theory in tertiary education by Donna Willard-Moore**
Donna Willard-Moore, BFA., MA., MFA., is both an art educator and practicing artist. Currently Donna is teaching at WITT. Working with Integral Theory since 2001, she is exploring the creation of integral art. Donna is involved in creating both an academic and public awareness of the developmental potential of Integral Theory.

**Architectural photographs by Chris Hill**
As well as teaching photography at WITT, Chris is a freelance photographer specialising in commercial architecture images. A member of the New Zealand Institute of Professional Photographers (Masters Bar), Chris won the commercial/advertising category award as well as one silver and seven bronze awards at the 2011 NZIPP awards ceremony.
EDITORIAL: REFLECTIONS ON PRACTICE

Christine Fenton

As an Institute of Technology, we are required by government to deliver vocational education. We are required to provide skills for employment, assist in the progression of students to higher levels of learning, and undertake applied research that supports this vocational learning and technology transfer. It is fitting therefore that this issue of Te Iaere Wavelength focuses on aspects of all of those.

WITT offers qualifications in a wide variety of vocational and applied disciplines, and developing a research culture in a small, regional tertiary institute can have its challenges. In order to provide the vocational education that provides skills for employment, we often recruit staff from the industries that we serve. The transition from being an industry expert to an expert teacher can be a difficult one, and the journey to becoming an active researcher can be even longer. Therefore we are challenged with building a supportive environment that enables both staff and students to develop their academic and scholarly skills, and the one topic that provides focus to all these activities is teaching.

In this issue then, we provide a voice for our staff to give their perspectives on teaching – both in terms of how we provide students with those skills that are needed for employment, but also how we assist student progression to higher levels of learning through their own intellectual development, and the successful acquisition of knowledge, attitudes and skills. The journey for many students is a bumpy one where they need to learn about themselves as well as a new subject area, and gain resilience and personal skills that will help them compete in, and contribute to the global society. All the articles in this issue show how the reflective thinking of the WITT staff can assist with insights into how to assist students to improve their own lives through learning pathways. We showcase how our staff are comparing, contrasting, critiquing, evaluating and searching for insights into how to help our students.
These skills of comparing, contrasting, critiquing, evaluating and searching are the hallmarks of research activity, and producing writing to publishable standard is an academic skill that is of value in any tertiary institute. Other aspects of this issue include the creative works section, where the same critical attributes and skills are applied to the development of new and unique creative works. The photographs used in this issue are award winning and the cover is from a recent, national exhibition all of which are produced by our own talented and dedicated staff.

It is therefore with great pleasure that I invite you to take your own educational journey through this issue of *Te Iarere Wavelength*. Compare, contrast, critique and evaluate your way through our variety of articles and images – sit back, relax, think ... and enjoy!
Commercial entry Chris Hill. The above image was awarded a bronze medal at the 2011 New Zealand Institute of Professional Photography (NZIPP) Awards.
Commercial entry Chris Hill. The above image was awarded a bronze medal at the 2011 NZIPP Awards.
Introduction

Some writers suggest that context plays a major role in programme planning and delivery and that it "determines what is possible" (Sork, 2000, p. 181). Irrespective of any particular context, all programmes are conceived, written and delivered by people. And it is people who invariably operate within an ideology and whose intricate social interactions need to be managed. Herein lies a slew of ‘tensions’, all the more visible in recent years because in New Zealand, adult literacy and numeracy education is under the policy spotlight. In this article, I will discuss a number of these tensions in the light of what critical theorists have to say about ‘what learning is’, ‘what literacy and numeracy delivery should look like’ and ‘what outcomes are sought’. I will apply these views to my own site of professional practice – the polytechnic, where I am engaged in supporting tutors to embed literacy and numeracy into their vocational programmes. I will argue it is employment acquisition that is of primary importance, and from which flow soft outcomes such as self-esteem and self-efficacy. Therefore, the weighting at our campus is on ‘job readiness’ and it is within this context that we endeavour to embed literacy and numeracy skills while building confident, self-motivated, socially adept, employable citizens of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Even within the very practical arena of vocational teaching that is my day-to-day site of practice, I acknowledge that no part of the education process is neutral. In particular, not a single component of programme planning is devoid of the influence of power relationships. I will discuss a range of these power relationships, from the standpoint of the organisational/social setting, through to the ethical/moral standpoint so often influenced by socio-political structures. After all, planning is a social activity affected by power, interests, negotiation and responsibility. Hence, the key planning question for best professional practice needs to focus on ‘what needs to be achieved?’ and ‘how can we best achieve it?’ Planning therefore requires a mature and all-encompassing way of looking at teaching and learning. Why does planning matter? Because through judicious planning, educators have the ability to actually change lives and change the way learners think, feel and act. The very dynamic
Organisational or social framework

Every system involving people is constrained by the power relations that control it. It is almost impossible to move past such constraints, as they have often existed for decades. In the field of planning, such constraints prevail within the ‘technical domain’ referred to by Sork as the “how-to of planning” (2000, p. 184). Many a promising programme has been halted right here. I concede there is a need to define the learner community and what it wants, explore institutional support along with the practicalities of time, venue and money. However, I agree with Sork’s hypothesis that a preoccupation with these ‘surface’ issues “overemphasises the craft of planning and neglects its artistry” (2000, p. 185). Furthermore, it is management and management alone that determines the distribution of people and resources. In this way, it is management which decides who stays and who goes, which courses are and are not important, which students need more support and which do not. I believe the onus is on management to not only monitor course viability, but also to acknowledge that “learning is a mysterious process, and deciding on, designing and then conducting a programme for a group of adults requires imagination, flexibility and willingness to take risks” (Sork & Newman, 2004, p. 96). Herein lie two problems. Firstly, taking risks in today’s financially constrained tertiary environment is not an option. Secondly, without the acknowledgement by management that planning goes beyond technical ‘nuts and bolts’, people, who are the most creative element involved, could be the first to go.

Ironically, it is Sork’s ‘artistry’, imagination and risk-taking that are right at the heart of what effective professional development programmes should be focusing on. Since the introduction of staff development cluster groups for literacy and numeracy embedding, links between learning and tutor practice are becoming clearer and I have seen tutors beginning to determine the ways that their own assumptions, beliefs and practices affect the learning that occurs in their classrooms. Spurred on by the acknowledgement that from a social contextual perspective, tutors have a key role to play in planning, tutors are relishing the opportunity...
to build on existing good practice, described by Benseman & Sutton (Ministry of Education, 2005) as "deliberate and sustained acts of teaching, clearly focused on learners’ diagnosed needs" (p. 8). Tutors also regularly consult with peers to examine the core question that Timperley (2008) asks: "What do we as teachers need to do to promote the learning of our students?" (p. 11) and this has led tutors to insist that they be allowed to join teams engaged in the planning process. As Graves (2008) says, "successful curriculum planning, enactment and evaluation processes depend on collaboration and mutual responsiveness among participants" (p. 175). Judicious, politically astute planners will take into account the very important sociopolitical domain if they value their programmes’ integrity and credibility.

**Sociopolitical framework**

What denotes the politically astute planner? I believe the planner needs to be able to balance the myriad demands of the institution (which itself is servant to a bigger master) and the wide-ranging requirements of the learners. At my site of practice, the vast majority of these learners have come to a tertiary institution to gain qualifications that lead to employment. They have met entry criteria and they want the qualification that opens employment doors. Research by Ivanic, Appleby, Hodge, Tusting and Barton (2006) has revealed that tutors bring two types of professionalism to this teaching challenge. Firstly, they bring responsiveness to learners as individuals, informed by "an understanding of and commitment to social justice issues" (p. 36). Ivanic et al refer to this as a “responsive professionalism” (p. 36) – a responsibility to listen to learners in a genuine bid to fine-tune teaching, making it relevant to learners’ lives. Secondly, tutors bring training in curriculum content and a professional knowledge relating to institutional requirements such as delivering core curriculum, meeting recruitment and retention targets, and administering formative and summative assessment. Clearly our tutors face enormous tension between these two types of professionalism and programme planning must reflect this.

The challenge here is for tutors to conceptualise literacy and numeracy as social practice within a core curriculum presented in terms of itemised skills, knowledge and understanding. This is not an easy task. Ivanic et al (2006) claim that often the requirements of the curriculum and institutional constraints make it difficult for tutors to remain mindful of students’ individual interests and motivations. I have found that supporting tutors to embed literacy and numeracy into their course delivery has been a high-
ly successful way of addressing this difficulty, but there is even more tension here. Tutors regularly complain of having insufficient time for planning and input, so they have quite justifiably approached their managers for professional development hours to attend clusters. Programmes such as these, designed to help tutors with embedding literacy and numeracy bring the teaching much closer to most tutors’ idea of ‘what literacy and numeracy delivery should look like’ because it is delivered within familiar course context. In this sense, the context determines not only “what is possible” (Sork, 2000, p. 181) but also what is most desirable, because the adult learners themselves dictate the shape of the lesson. Primarily they want employment followed up by the self-respect and self-efficacy that come with it. This implies the need for programmes that address skills and employment as well as confidence and social networking – the pluralistic approach espoused by Isaacs (2005). It also implies the need for tutor involvement in programme planning in order to ensure learners’ expectations are met.

However, as Ivanic et al (2006) observe, individual learners’ interests and wishes are often in tension with the demands of the real world – “people’s need to gain measurable skills if they are to find employment and more self-respect, and Government’s wish to see an economic benefit resulting from the expenditure of taxpayers’ money” (2006, p. 37). I concede there is another tension here, but I firmly believe that an individual’s need for the safety and security provided by regular employment, as in the second level of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (Boeree, 2006), is fundamental. In addition, Maslow’s fourth level needs related to ‘esteem’ can be met through the status, reputation, dignity, competence, mastery and freedom that employment affords. Predictably, there are conflicting views, for example, those of Askov (2000), who asserts “adult education programmes should not have to justify their existence solely in terms of preparing people for the workplace. Literacy programmes should be responsible for demonstrating gains in learning, but not in showing workplace employment impact” (p. 259).

In response to Askov’s views, what I am suggesting is not that the importance of literacy teaching is to fit people into a heartless economic system. Rather, the role is to give people the confidence to take their rightful place in society by having an income in a job that allows them to become part of change for the better. If people cannot afford to buy food for the family or put a roof over their heads, then change is out of reach. The problem is that some foundation tutors have been locked into a tradition where they see their role as first building confidence with learners by
helping them to fill out time sheets or get off parking tickets. Aspiring to Freire’s (1970) initial step, namely to empower people to engage in [political] change has not been part of the equation. These tutors have attempted to build confidence before teaching literacy. Freire is all about building confidence while teaching literacy (the essence of embedding). Askov further concludes, “literacy skills for community involvement as well as individual and family development should be considered just as important as entrance and progression in the workplace” (2000, p. 259). I do not believe that one has to be at the expense of the other. In fact, some adult literacy analysts believe that hard and soft skills are so enmeshed that any attempt to separate them is futile. They choose instead to label such skills and qualities as ‘literacies’ (Sligo, Watson, Murray, Comrie, Vaccarino & Tilley, 2007).

As long as the foundation learning sector is state funded, accountability will continue to drive an emphasis on human capital theory where skills-based learning which is easily assessed and can be seen to produce hard outcomes is favoured. Planners need to remain cognisant of the empowering nature of ‘soft’ outcomes without sacrificing the primary principle of facilitating employment readiness. The gap between what theorists prescribe and what practitioners do is the problem. Planning theorists have long been telling practitioners what they should be doing to plan good education programmes for adults. Meanwhile, practitioners have just as earnestly been figuring out their own novel and innovative ways to plan in the technically, politically, ethically demanding environments in which they work. This sums up my experience in the polytechnic environment.

**Ethical/moral framework**

According to Folinsbee (2009), tutors’ principles need not be sacrificed for a change in practice due to ethical conundrums that invariably emerge. While Folinsbee describes a series of ethical dilemmas faced in the highly contested terrain of the workplace, where tension exists between the needs of workers and management, her conclusions apply to all fields of literacy and numeracy education. “What does it mean for me to be an ethical literacy educator?” (p. 41) she asks. “... I come back to the idea of staying grounded in my principles but adjusting my practice on the basis of new information and experience that makes sense but is still in line with these principles” (p. 41). Folinsbee raises issues such as ‘uneven workplace power relationships’ and ‘mandatory versus voluntary programme participation’. Oftentimes, Folinsbee has found that a well-constructed organisational needs analysis has shifted the focus from micro-issues such as the handful of em-
employees with literacy deficit, to the much more important macro-
issu es which include carefully negotiating programme goals and
content so that workers' needs are met at the same time as
honouring commitment from management.
It is clear from Folinsbee's report that it is difficult, though not
impossible, to appease all stakeholders when planning [work-
place] programmes and her views are backed up by Belfiore
(n.d.), who asserts that as long as workplace educators clarify
to stakeholders which kinds of programmes can serve differ-
ing educational needs, interests and expected outcomes, there
is every chance of avoiding ethical dilemmas. Despite careful
needs analysis, however, ethical dilemmas do prevail at my site
of practice, usually relating to tutors' philosophies on treating
and teaching adult learners. This of course has implications for
planning, which I am finding as I engage in the writing of a
new programme within the National Certificate in Adult Literacy
Education. Some tutors are informed by child-centred pedagogy
and teaching practice and they are committed to adhering to it.
Therefore a fundamental issue of tension is the matter of ap-
proach. If tutors believe that literacy is conscientisation and a
means of empowerment, then focusing on discrete item teaching
is an anathema. Yet people who have taught unchallenged in this
way, sometimes for many years, and see their methodology as
unlinked to politics, i.e. politically neutral, are in direct conflict
with their colleagues who see every act of teaching as an oppor-
tunity to empower the less advantaged. Again, it is the literacy
and numeracy cluster group teaching that I have seen illuminate
this issue and ease the tension for numbers of tutors in the ter-
tiary sector as they hone their embedding skills and reap positive
results such as fewer re-sits. This is one government initiative
which, though lofty in ideals, has already produced enthusiasm
and enhanced job satisfaction for those tertiary tutors choosing
to embrace it.

Conclusion
In this article, I have engaged with a number of tensions within
the planning arena in the light of what critical theorists have to
say about 'what learning is', 'what literacy and numeracy delivery
should look like' and 'what outcomes are sought'. I have exam-
ined key contextual factors in programme planning and detailed
how these contextual factors impact upon the development and
delivery of foundation, literacy and numeracy programmes in
Aotearoa New Zealand. I have applied these views to my own
site of practice where the tension between job readiness and
soft skill acquisition is played out. Details of power, interests, ne-
egotiation and responsibility have been discussed in the contexts within which they occur. These contexts clearly play a major role in programme planning and delivery and without a doubt "determine what is possible" (Sork, 2000, p. 181).

References


Abstract

Despite its widespread use as a teaching method, this is a cautionary tale against the uncritical acceptance of collaborative learning. As a recent student and also in my work as a learning skills tutor, I have observed, experienced and reflected on aspects of collaborative learning that I have found challenging. This has caused me to reflect further on the ideological aspects of collaborative learning. While there are clearly many advantages to this learning ‘model’, some of the disadvantages are outlined demonstrating the need for educators to apply a critical lens to our practices in collaborative class work.

Revealing unequal social power relations and hegemonic practices are goals of critical theory. The concept of alienation is an important one as unequal social relations result in groups who become/remain marginalised or ‘othered’. The ways that adult learners are subject to and exert power is central to an understanding of adult education and the way in which social and cultural knowledge is produced and legitimated. One of the central aspects of critical theory is its implicit contestation of the meta-narratives of modern Anglo-western, capitalism, for example freedom, equality and democracy; all of which serve the interests of global capitalism. In the adult education context we find such concepts as collaborative learning that could be argued serves dominant interests and democratic process or practice.

One of the hallmarks of adult education is collaborative learning (Brookfield, 2005). All learning is collaborative to some degree as at its broadest definition involves learning something together with at least one other. This ‘together’ can also be interpreted in a multitude of ways e.g. computer-mediated or face-to-face. Collaborative learning is also referred to as peer or interdependent learning. Whatever the label, it is a common learning configuration whereby students work together in the pursuit of a shared learning goal, for example in-class group work, or group projects. Collaborative learning activities are widely used in this polytechnic setting, perhaps due to the applied and vocational nature of
programmes taught here. However, despite the widespread use as a teaching method educators must remain mindful of the uncritical acceptance of such concepts. Group based activities may rest on the assumption that students are learning in an active way, erroneously relegating lecture-based teaching to passive teacher-student knowledge transfer. Further, by not challenging the normative assumptions that collaborative learning rests on, educators may alienate or disadvantage some learners.

There are many considered advantages to creating a collaborative learning environment. These include: participation by learners is actively sought; hierarchical teacher/student boundaries are challenged; and opportunities for development of interpersonal skills may be further encouraged - skills which may encourage an appreciation of diversity and difference (Renner, 2005). Collaborative learning promotes students to use their own knowledge, and by providing space for participation and critical analysis further (co)construct knowledge. Collaboration in specific learning tasks such as web searching, for example in technology-based learning environments, has also been found to be valuable by facilitating self-regulatory behaviours (Lazonder, 2005). Collaborative learning also may provide benefits of support and motivation, and also the transferability of some skills (Hugh-Jones & Madill, 2008).

There are, however, disadvantages to collaborative learning. These include: potential difficulties with diverse groups, for example, dominating individuals in groups who may stifle contribution from others; collaborative learning may allow tutors to avoid responsibility of actual teaching of content or development of skills; and, overuse of collaborative learning may not suit learners who are more autonomous, for example those who prefer to read course materials and ponder content alone. Collaborative learning is uncritically viewed as inherently supportive. Hugh-Jones and Madill (2008) found that support from a group was useful with two exceptions; if the reliability of peer advice was questionable, and when peer contribution was unequal. They conclude that collaborative learning may reduce student anxiety about independent work, but it does not necessarily disrupt students’ dependence on authority. Educators must negotiate this tension of successfully transitioning students to tertiary study, promoting independent learning while ensuring that the methods they use transfer content knowledge but do not disadvantage students (van der Meer, 2006).

Collaborative learning cannot be considered a specific method as instructions, settings and other institutional constraints are variable (Dillenbourg, 1999). It is thus not a single mechanism for
learning. Treating collaborative learning as a generalisable or universal concept obscures the plurality of meanings and functions that such a concept represents. Further, an important assumption is that collaborative or participatory group work will work towards “making systems work better, rather than challenging the moral basis of those systems” (Brookfield, 2005, p. 55).

Collaborative learning is structured around team or group work with the implicit aim of reaching consensus through intellectual negotiation and conversation. Each member of the group is expected to have a contributory role, although learners are held individually accountable by the group (and teacher/tutor). A key assumption of collaborative learning is that learners have, or will have, common goals. This assumption often conceals the inevitable asymmetry of knowledge, skills and status within groups (Dillenbourg, 1999). Alongside these factors, the division of labour in a collaborative learning exercise often reflect a hierarchy in tasks, for example, writing up a formal summary compared to making a poster. Depending on the discipline, some tasks or roles performed are considered to have more value. Stratified social relationships or identities can be maintained in this way, for example; the presenter, the scribe, the facilitator, the manager.

There is an interesting tension between the espoused characteristics of the adult learner as self-motivated, autonomous and self-directed (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2005) and the goals of collaborative learning. It is often an assumption that the learner has the ability, skills or desire to apply these to a collaborative context. For example, be able to align personal with group goals, apply problem-solving skills to a group situation, or motivate others to succeed. Collaborative learning requires the adult be responsible for their participation in the group context i.e. self-responsibility to participate cooperatively. What happens when an individual doesn’t exhibit the ‘required’ characteristics in order to be a successful or participatory learner with others?

If a learner has low confidence or self-esteem, cooperative work may be very challenging as it increases the risk of being perceived as inadequate in the eyes of the group. This can act to alienate or exclude members of a group, for example; ethnic minorities (e.g. Rubie, Townsend & Moore, 2004), and individuals experiencing the disabling impact of anxiety-related disorders, or other socially inhibiting ‘conditions’ such as Asperger’s syndrome (see for example, Madriaga & Goodley, 2010). Threats to individual’s competence also mediate collaborative relationships, and impact on performance in a group (e.g. Buchs, Butera & Mugny, 2004).
Other social factors influence the meaning and experience of collaboration in learning, for example, gender and economic status. Gender has a significant impact on contribution in groups, for example, male-dominated groups will influence patterns of interruption behaviour (Karakowsky, McBey & Miller, 2004), and gender stereotypes mediate behaviour in groups (Ridgeway, 2001). A collaborative learning project may provide a site in which gendered patterns of social interaction both reflect and perpetuate gender inequality. Inequitable access to information or resources may also disadvantage (and alienate) students in working collaboratively. For example, a student being assigned a collaborative project involving a PowerPoint presentation without having access to a computer at home.

Cultural differences also impact on the perceived efficacy of group work (e.g. Abdel-Monem, Bingham, Marinicic & Tomkins, 2010; Turetgen, Unsal & Erdem, 2008). Culture may also impact on interaction in a group, particularly in relation to debating a point or putting forward an opinion. The right to speak is a dominant aspect of Anglo-western society, but for those acculturated to be more circumspect (i.e. deferential in the face of received wisdom) this may pose a challenge. Their reticence to challenge or question is often about saving face – their own, and those whom they could challenge (Chanock, 2010). Norms of what constitutes ‘good’ discussion/debate are culturally mediated – the social affects the way we express ourselves. This clearly has implications for group dynamics in a collaborative learning situation, not only in the potential for voices to go unheard, but for the perpetuation of stereotypical ideas of eastern cultures as conservative and unquestioning of received learning.

Successful collaborative learning is dependent on many variables; task required, resources needed, group interaction (Buchs et al, 2004), and role assignment (e.g. De Wever, Schellens, Van Keer & Valcke, 2008;). While role assignment has been shown to be successful, the very way that students are assigned their groups could very well be an exercise in sovereign power masquerading as an attempt to democratise power. For example, putting a ‘bright’ student with a student who is academically challenged, or putting a ‘mother’ figure with a group of younger students. Further, the attempt at matching students can highlight assumptions or stereotypical views of students. As an example, I worked with a group of students who had been assigned together to complete a group assignment. The group comprised of three Māori and two young pākeha women. There was considerable conflict around the subject matter and group processes; not only between the
two ethnic groups, but between the Māori women. Had there been an assumption of homogeneity? Was this a reflection of dominant cultural (mis)understandings? Also, the Māori women did not wish to oppose the pākeha viewpoints. This highlighted how subordinate social positions may be reflected and perpetuated. When assigning group tasks, it is perhaps important to consider: How may I mitigate potential interpersonal issues? Is there a shared goal, and is consensus expected in order to achieve it?

Consensus as part of a democratic process is often a goal of collaborative learning. This process involves all relevant voices being heard, the best arguments accepted and "only the non-coercive coercion of the better argument determines the affirmations and negations of the participants" (Habermas, 1992 as cited in Brookfield, 2005, p. 267). In other words, good discussion, and therefore good democratic process "depend on everyone being ready to give up their position if a better argument is presented to them" (Brookfield, 2005, p. 267). But which voices are relevant? How is relevance determined? How or who decides which arguments are best? That the majority is often viewed as right is a common phenomenon (for example Janis's (1972) groupthink; de Tocqueville's (1848/1956) 'tyranny of the majority') and reflects subtle power relationships. Consensus, it has been argued, stifles individuality and creativity, and encourages conformity by suppressing (or marginalizing) difference (Trimbur, 1989).

Nonconformity is not a universal value either, however. Anglo-western academic conventions encourage or mandate originality, for example, essays. This individualist framework or ideal may not fit with collaborative learning environments, or group writing projects. For example, I recall a Chinese student expressing anxiety when required to critique an academic article for an assessment. The student was uncomfortable about the academic assertiveness required to complete the task. This did not mean that she could not be critical, more, that it did not reflect in her writing from which, of course, she was assessed. Giving 'permission' to be critical, far from being liberating, may require the giving up of aspects of cultural identity (Chanock, 2010). While this example does not relate specifically to collaborative learning, it highlights potential issues that may occur in such learning environments.

While learning collaboratively is espoused as participatory and democratising, we have seen that it also has the potential to alienate individuals or groups within a learning environment. It does provide space for discussion, and potential collective social action. However, Bruffee (1984) suggests that the mainstream
academe is distrustful of discussion as it is not aligned to the individualist-inspired notions of education in western societies in that knowledge is something to be gained, wielded and defended in relation to others. However despite the ideal of knowledge being generated in a negotiated and relational space, it is not necessarily afforded legitimacy. Without challenging the socially embedded power relations that organise the production of knowledge educators may "unwittingly accommodate its practices to the authority of knowledge it believes it is de-mystifying" (Trimbur, 1989, p. 603).

Applying a critical theoretical lens to core concepts within adult education such as collaborative learning may serve to reveal the manoeuvrings of power (e.g. within state institutions) and challenge the ideologies that serve to maintain dominant power structures. Hegemony works as people uncritically accept common-sense notions as in their best interests. Education plays an integral role in people accepting a potentially unjust social order by maintaining and perpetuating dominant viewpoints. Learning is a social process and "collaborative learning models how knowledge is generated, how it changes and grows" (Bruffee, 1984, p. 647). Collaborative learning can reveal to us as educators the socially constructed nature of authority and therefore the nature of knowledge.

As we see an increasing shift away from lecture-based teaching/learning as educators we should further reflect on our different methods of teaching, and continue to critically reflect on these. Lecturing, for example, is understandably not always the best method of teaching behavioural skills, promoting oratory skills, challenging attitudes, or teaching teamwork competencies except at a theoretical level. However, skills that are developed by the learner include notetaking, synthesis of key points, and focused content knowledge (although these are largely mediated by the performance/competence of the presenter). As with any teaching method, effective collaborative learning experiences are more likely when critical attention is paid to the dynamics of groups of learners, the structure and design of the groups and tasks, and relevance or 'good fit' to the desired or expected learning outcomes (see for example Weimar, 2002).
References


The purpose of this article is to explore the process and effects of oppression by considering some similarities between sexual abuse and colonisation in New Zealand society. The particular similarities considered are the entrenchment of abusive patterns over time. The colonisation cycle presented here is drawn from the cycle of sexual offending, which can inform our understandings of colonisation and provide strategies to break these destructive cycles. Many creative processes of healing from experiences of sexual abuse and colonisation have been developed and this article will not review them, rather it will focus on some ideas developed during my years of assisting people to heal from the effects of sexual abuse through education and counselling as well as working alongside Māori on processes of recovery from the effects of colonisation and facilitating Treaty of Waitangi workshops aimed at non-Māori. The healing strategies from these two forms of oppression with the concepts and practices of empowerment and rangatiratanga will be discussed briefly, and will be developed further in a following article.

**Cycles of Abuse**

Sexual offending has been described as an addictive pattern, as a perpetuating cycle that can become entrenched over time. Jonathan Ross (1990) has adapted the addiction cycle for understanding sexual offending as an addictive behaviour. This cycle consists of six stages: 1. Deviant sexual fantasies; 2. Conscious intentions to offend; 3. Victim “grooming”/“setting up” the offense; 4. Engaging in offending behaviour; 5. Rationalising, minimising, avoiding, detection; 6. Shame, self pity, depression.

I propose that colonisation can also be conceptualised as a perpetuating cycle with similar stages. The Colonisation Cycle stages are: 1. Ethnocentric world view; 2. Conscious intention to colonise; 3. Grooming and setting up the indigenous people; 4. Colonisation; 5. Rationalise, minimise, justify; 6. Post colonial shame and guilt.

1. Ethnocentric World View. Ethnocentrism means a belief in or assumption of the superiority of the social or cultural group that a person belongs to. In order to move into another nation
and colonise, the colonising group holds a sense of cultural superiority which supports their actions. English colonisation was no different from any other nation in that the process was predicated on the ethnocentric belief in the superiority of the white, English, Christian cultural world view. Ethnocentrism is a thought process, a world view of cultural superiority.

2. Conscious Intention to Colonise. A territory is explored, named and mapped, then resources are quantified and decisions are made to exploit them. Decisions about how to interact with the indigenous people who occupy the area are considered: to trade with, to civilise, to manoeuvre around, or to eliminate. This stage is a conscious decision to put the ethnocentric ideas into action to benefit the coloniser and to ‘civilise’ the indigenous people.

3. Grooming and Setting up the Indigenous People. Contact is made with the indigenous people to gain resources and new world views are introduced, which are described as of benefit to the indigenous people. This is the stage of setting up the process of colonisation by grooming the indigenous people to receive/accommodate the new ways.

4. Colonisation. Following the more subtle, gentle introduction to the new systems are more aggressive and determined colonising behaviours such as: imposing dominant political structures, legislative manoeuvring, large scale immigration, warfare, forced land alienation, conversion to the new religion, and punishment or shaming for resisting the process. This is the stage of engaging in abusive behaviour.

5. Rationalise Minimise Justify. During the process of colonisation there are rationalisations and justifications like ‘This is good for your people’, ‘There are benefits for you to move from your ignorance/heathenism (old ways) into enlightenment/Christian/technologically advanced (new ways)’ and minimisations such as ‘You still have plenty of land’, ‘Your land was waste land/un-used’. Over generations, the colonisation process is then rationalised by the coloniser who now holds the power in the country with majority population, access to media and political authority to control the nation and marginalise the indigenous people. This is the stage of statements such as: ‘You would still be running around in grass skirts eating each other if we hadn’t come along and saved you’, ‘You chose to sell your land and now you are complaining’, ‘It’s all in the past, move on’ and ‘This is good for you’ and ‘You wanted it’, ‘You had it easy, look what happened in Australia/America’.
6. Post Colonial Shame and Guilt. Some members of the colonising group see injustices as they occur, they may feel ashamed about the actions of their people and attempt to challenge them. The majority, however, support the actions of the colonising power because it benefits them to do so. At the back of many minds is a sense of injustice done regarding colonisation but mostly this is avoided by not hearing the indigenous view. However when people are exposed to some of the negative impacts of colonisation on indigenous people they begin to feel a sense of shame and guilt about what their forbears did. There is a potential at this stage to decide to take action to make changes or to retreat to stage five to justify colonisation and minimise its impact or to simply do nothing.

**THE COLONISATION CYCLE**

1. Ethnocentric world view
2. Conscious Intention to colonise
3. Grooming & setting up
4. Colonisation
5. Rationalise, minimise, justify
6. Post colonial shame & guilt
Similar to the addictive nature of sexual offending the process of colonisation can become cyclic. A large part of perpetuating the cycle can be attributed to the process of minimising, justifying, victim blaming and lack of empathy. The sexual offender continues with inappropriate sexual behaviour by minimising or justifying any harm done and explaining why the victim is at fault or deserved it, this prevents feeling the guilt and taking responsibility for changing it, thus entrenching the deviant behaviour. One aspect of therapy for people who have sexually offended is to help them develop empathy for the pain caused and to challenge the various justifications, to consider another world view, to develop empathy. Over generations the colonising culture often avoids taking responsibility by similar minimising and justifying, which entrenches the colonising behaviour and empathy exercises can shift this avoidance.

Those of the colonising culture may find it difficult to understand how injustices of colonisation that occurred long ago can still have relevance today, so understanding how an addiction cycle can become entrenched for an individual can help clarify how the colonisation cycle can become entrenched for a culture over generations. To enable further understanding of perpetuating colonising cycles over generations and to develop empathy in Treaty workshops I provide a scenario to ask people to put themselves in the shoes of a colonised people.

The aliens exercise

After participants in Treaty workshops have explored ancestry and culture I ask them to imagine that aliens have come to New Zealand from a far away planet. These aliens have superior technology and when we meet we are fascinated by them and interested to forge relationships. We get together with these aliens and make agreements about what we will share and what we will not share. However 30 years later there are millions and millions of aliens who have completely taken over our country and disregarded any agreements we made. I then brainstorm how they would feel in this situation and the responses include: powerless, hurt, angry, frustrated, upset, vengeful, hopeful for a better future, optimistic, hopeless, sorry, regretful. Then I ask what actions they or others might take in this situation and they say: fight, war, assimilate, protest, infiltrate, never give in, join them, leave, learn their systems to overthrow them, lose hope, self harm, alcohol and drug abuse, abuse others, tell children their history, keep the stories alive, underground society, re-build society, adjust. These responses can be categorised into four types
of reactions to many forms of abuse or oppression, whether it be on an individual level like child abuse or on a societal level like colonisation.

The four responses to oppression or abuse are: 1. Assimilation/join them/become alien like; 2. Leave; 3. Give up hope and fall into a cycle of despair or abuse identity; 4. Resistance. For example when a child is abused within the family they may: join with the persona the abuser has given them and assimilate to the abusive culture; the child may run away; the child may sink into helplessness and give up trying to manage life; the child may resist the imposition of abusive culture. Running away is one form of resistance, as is fighting back, or thinking processes that enable the child to avoid taking on the abuser’s conditioning like ‘I’m okay, what’s happening is wrong/the abuser is wrong’, ‘I will never do this to my children’. Resistance is also practiced when the child fights back in some way or manages to tell someone and get help. The various processes of resistance can be viewed as survival strategies to enable the child to maintain dignity or personal power while the abuse reigns. In this way the child becomes empowered and resilient to become a survivor of abuse. A counsellor working with a person who was the victim of child abuse can support this empowerment by elevating these survival strategies as powerful processes of resistance to abuse.

In Treaty workshops the four responses to individual child abuse can aid our understanding of the colonisation process Māori experience in Aotearoa New Zealand. While the aliens exercise is an imaginary scenario the Māori experience can be compared by giving examples and statistics to give a deeper understanding. By using the alien scenario participants put themselves in the shoes of the colonised and experience empathy, which in turn supports learning as well as attitude shift.

Māori responses to the colonisation process can be conceptualised into the following four categories to help non-Māori understand and build empathy for the Māori experience.

1. Assimilation. Through the process of colonisation Māori were expected to assimilate into Pākehā culture. Māori were often physically punished for speaking te reo Māori at school even though it was their first language. When the next generation sent their children to Pākehā schools they wanted to keep them safe from the same punishment and succeed in education so they often told their children te reo Māori is of the past and they must speak English and act like Pākehā to get along in the new world.
2. Leave. After the loss of large tracts of their land and undermining of their cultural systems many Māori left tribal areas to seek work in cities. While leaving tribal areas for work was necessary for survival in the new capitalist system it often detached Māori from their culture. A more recent leaving is evident by the significant Māori population now living in Australia. Māori leave New Zealand for many reasons, but in some cases the leaving is about getting away from the pressures and disadvantages of being Māori in the country that marginalises them.

3. Give up hope. For some people the process of colonisation eats away at the soul, it causes apathy, loss of hope and giving up on life. Slipping away into despair is perhaps the most visible effect of colonisation, seen in oppressed peoples around the globe. For many Māori the will to live was lost with the loss of land and culture, the effect for many families was suicide, alcohol/drug abuse and family abuse. These patterns become intergenerational. There is no need for me to quote the many studies that point to Māori inequities in contemporary New Zealand society as we are bombarded with the various statistics that highlight poor Māori health, education, economic and welfare disparities. The one statistic that does represent the issue clearly is Māori being 15% of the New Zealand population, yet they make up around 50% of the prison population (Johnson, 2010). This high crime rate was not in existence prior to colonisation. It is helpful for people to consider that Māori cultural systems were operating to minimise abusive patterns successfully for hundreds of years prior to colonisation and that colonisation has contributed to entrenched abusive patterns where people struggle to sustain hope for their people’s futures. Mereana Pitman (1996) has referred to the effects of this loss of hope as post colonial shock, similar to post traumatic shock experienced by sexual abuse victims.

4. Resistance. Māori have engaged in varying forms of resistance to colonisation all the way through the process. These forms of resistance include: requests for England to take responsibility for the crimes committed by Europeans prior to the Treaty signing; Hone Heke chopping down the flag pole in response to the governor undermining his territorial authority; warfare; refusing to send their children to Pākeha schools; petitions to England to honour Treaty promises; combining Christian and Māori spiritual philosophies; medical training in the Pākeha system to help their people; the Kingitanga movement; Māori
parliaments; people of Parihaka engaging in deliberate acts of non-violent resistance like ploughing and fencing the confiscated lands; refusal to accept land lease money; marches; protests; occupations; deciding it’s not Māori who are failing in the Pākeha education system it’s the system failing Māori so designing alternative education; creating Kōhanga Reo, Kura Kaupapa and Wānanga across the country to save te reo Māori, educate with Māori pedagogy and retain Māori knowledge; challenging Pākeha to address racism in New Zealand and not only focusing on racism in other nations; developing cultural safety and Treaty training; lobbying to change racist legislation; stating ‘honour the Treaty’; keeping their stories alive by passing them down the generations; working alongside Pākeha to design and implement culturally relevant models; Māori political parties; Māori arts re-vitalisation. This is by no means a complete list, but what it represents is Māori claiming their right to rangatiratanga, to self determination, to the power to manage their own lives based on their own cultural practices. Often Pākeha ask ‘Why are Māori going on about all this now, when it wasn’t a problem before?’ and it can be useful to show how the resistance is not new, it is a continuation of many years of struggle carried through the generations against the oppression of colonisation. It is resistance that has kept Māori knowledge alive. Without the various forms of resistance Māori wisdom would be lost to the world today. What would this loss mean for New Zealand society?

At the stage of recognising the damage caused by colonisation and that Māori knowledge could be lost from the world we have the potential to continue to think in colonising ways such as ‘Oh well it was the past and not relevant to the modern world’, to do nothing, or to take action for supporting the recovery from colonisation and the reclamation of Māori knowledge and processes.

As patriarchy has been a discourse behind the oppression of women, ethnocentrism has given a basis for colonisation of indigenous people around the world. The historical belief that non-Christian non-white people are of less intelligence and in need of saving from ignorance and heathenism has served to justify the destruction of cultures and the pillaging of resources by colonising nations. In New Zealand missionaries arrived often with good intentions and holding a strong belief that English cultural values were the most valid and Christian teachings would benefit all who were touched by them. There was a sense of superiority of culture and religion, an ethnocentric world view that elevated white races above those of colour and perceived indigenous wisdom as inferior.
People often argue that the practices of patriarchy and colonialism are things of the past and we have moved on from them; 'Look, women have the vote and Māori have equal access to the trappings of modern society'. Many may rise above an abusive history, but in a number of ways we are still living with the legacies of our past. Cultural values and practices are not magically erased by the change of a law or by good intentions alone, the statistics of family abuse and Māori position in New Zealand society attest to this fact. Understanding our history with empathy, openness to exploring alternative world views to one's own and developing power sharing strategies are required to fully shift cultural inequalities. The mis-use of power is the basis of oppression/abuse and empowerment is a key to recovery from it.

All of us stand to gain by peoples' empowerment/liberation from oppressions, the oppressed and the oppressor, the powerful and the marginalised, and all in between. While we have oppressed, marginalised peoples we have cycles of poverty, crime, abuse, peoples living with bags over their heads, unable to live their full potential, while liberation from oppression, or better still prevention of oppression, creates people in society who can contribute fully. Empowerment is an accepted concept in supporting people to recover from the effects of sexual abuse. Honouring the Treaty promise for Māori retention of rangatiratanga is essential to recovery from the effects of colonisation and this recovery is good for all New Zealanders.

Mā tōu rourou
Mā tōku rourou
Ka ora te iwi.

With your contribution
With my contribution
The people will be well.

References


Introduction

Underpinning what follows is the proposition that adult educators should know about mental illness, not just to assist them to meet the needs of their students, but as a matter of social justice. Society, encompassing tertiary education, continues to ignore mental illness and as a consequence those who experience it find themselves on the margins. Adult education can be part of recovery from mental illness and a way of combating injustice and marginalisation or it can maintain the status quo. Without education as a means of obtaining employment and social status, students (and potential students) may remain on the margins of society; isolated, invisible and poor.

Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator, dedicated his life to the education of the oppressed (Darder, 2009; Findsen, 1999; Roberts, 1999) and used education as a means of liberation (Freire, 1993). Freire’s work has resonance for students with mental illness as education can be used to liberate. This kind of emancipatory education has been defined by Leach (2003, p. 112) as “working together to change the world, to remove oppression and injustice”. Palmer (2007) postulates that teaching is about guiding students to “more truthful ways of seeing and being in the world” (p. 6). Adult students who have experienced mental illness report that this is the case, their education assists them to see their experience in a wider context and is liberating (Hammond, 2004; Lapsley, Nikora & Black, 2002; Unger, 1997). Education also has the potential to politicise students, helping them develop skills to look critically at the “actions which are taken in relation to themselves” (Dowie & Gibson, 2006, p. 240) enabling them to link their personal experience to the political context.

Embedded within the Freirian ideal of liberation through education is a commitment to social justice (Wehbi & Turcotte, 2007). This is a belief that all members of society have a right to have their basic needs met, to have opportunities and that resources will be delivered fairly (O’Brien, 2008).
Corrigan, Watson, Byrne and Davis (2005) state that a social justice view of the world means that all people are considered fundamentally equal and have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. The concept of social justice is vital to those with mental illness who want to be treated fairly while experiencing a kind of education which meets their needs, as opposed to discriminating against them. Freire (1993) in discussing social justice posited that teachers’ “efforts must coincide with those of the students to engage in critical thinking and the quest for mutual humanization” (p. 56). Adult educators who are cognizant of mental illness, who actively work to counter societal stigmatisation and whose practice is underpinned by a belief in social justice work towards mutual humanisation.

French philosopher, Michel Foucault, wrote extensively about psychiatry and mental illness and, like Freire, challenged the status quo. His ideas challenged notions about what constitutes a mental illness and the ‘knowledge’ which surrounds psychiatry (Brew, 1999; Fook, 2002; Foucault, 1972). Foucault (1965) describes the power of psychiatrists, driven by positivism, as “quasi-miraculous” (p. 273). By this he means their power is treated as almost divine and without question. Things have changed since Foucault wrote this in 1965, the growth of the consumer movement has challenged the medical model (underpinning psychiatry) resulting in more use of social models of mental illness and the recovery model which focuses on wellness rather than ill health. Despite this the medical model continues to dominate psychiatry and discrimination is still an everyday reality for people experiencing mental illness (Bland, Renouf, & Tullgren, 2009; Lapsley et al, 2002; Peterson, Barnes & Duncan, 2008).

Foucault’s (1972) ideas inform us of the multiplicity and fluidity of subject positions encouraging the recognition of diversity and difference among learners (Fook, 2002). It challenges us to accept a wide range of students in our classrooms and understand they will change within themselves over time which is fluidity. Adult educators need to be aware that students’ mental health is also fluid, changing over time. So, while a student may be unwell today and not able to function in a group learning environment, next week they may be highly competent.
What is mental illness?

Mental illness is difficult to define. Trying to define mental illness is notoriously difficult and is part of an ongoing debate about its nature (Hinshaw, 2007). Defining it can be seen as reductionist when there is no one mental illness, just as there is no one physical illness (Leibrich, 1999). At one end of the spectrum is the definition espoused by exponents of the medical model which views mental illness as an organic dysfunction of the brain and at the other end of the spectrum is a social constructivist view that it is a breach of the ideas about what is considered normal in a society (Cockerman, 2011). Foucault (1965) discusses the use of power by psychiatrists to decide what is acceptable behaviour in society and discipline and regulate those who are not ‘behaving’ (McLennan, McManus & Spoonley, 2010).

The medical model is supported by the use of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV (DSM-IV) which defines mental illness as a clinically significant behavioural or psychological syndrome or pattern that occurs in an individual which is associated with present distress or disability or with a significantly increased risk of suffering, death, pain, disability or an important loss of freedom (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). DSM-IV presents a clinical perspective on mental illness and does not describe the complex and fluid reality of mental illness. The categories in DSM-IV are “static, consisting of symptom lists and commonly associated features” (Hinshaw, 2007, p. 7). The DSM-IV is used in Aotearoa/New Zealand by psychiatrists and other medical practitioners to diagnose mental illness (Bland et al, 2009).

An example of a social constructivist view of mental illness is a study carried out in Aotearoa/New Zealand by Lapsley et al, in 2002. They spoke to people who had experienced mental illness and described their experience of it as acute emotional pain, distressing symptoms, terror and loneliness. Respondents in this study had a number of problems to deal with including difficulties with sleep, mood, appetite, how they felt about themselves and others, how they felt about their bodies, physical symptoms and more. This is a way of discussing mental illness “in terms of human experience” (Leibrich, 1999, p.7) rather than a clinical approach.

It is estimated that 20% of New Zealanders experience a mental disorder in any given year (Gendall, 2006; Oakley Browne, Wells & Scott, 2006) and Te Rau Hinengaro: the New Zealand Mental Health Survey found that “39.5% of the population had met...
criteria for a DSM-IV mental disorder at some time in their life before interview” (Oakley Browne et al., 2006, p. 23). Some of the population are more likely to experience mental illness; the young, economically deprived and less educated.

In relation to adult education this means that in any classroom it can be assumed some learners will have a recent or current experience of mental illness. Teachers may not be aware of this as students may not discuss their mental health history. As Peterson (2007) states, people who have experience of mental illness prefer not to disclose and will only do so if they believe the tutor is likely to be accepting and the culture of the classroom is inclusive.

What students who have experienced mental illness need as learners is similar to those accommodations which would be made for students who have a physical disability. Thornicroft (2006) argues that people with mental illness should have parity with students with physical disabilities. If students who have an experience of mental illness become distressed or display unusual behaviour such as talking to themselves it can be dealt with gently and calmly checking out if they are alright and having a safe place for them to have a break (Wellington City Council and Kites Trust, 2008). Unger (1997, p. 88) says “many students find it helpful if there is a quiet place on campus where they can be by themselves or with their peers”. This kind of support is not costly or difficult for institutions to establish but requires an acknowledgment of the existence of mental illness and a willingness to engage with students who have experienced it.

**Human rights**

Human rights are a cornerstone of a social justice perspective and are relevant for people who experience mental illness as they are vulnerable to discrimination (Barnett & Barnes, 2010; Corrigan, Watson, Byrne & Davis, 2005; Dowie & Gibson, 2006; Gendall, 2006; Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand, 2008; Thornicroft, 2006). Breaches of human rights of people who have experienced mental illness are common in tertiary education, 10.3% of total complaints about discrimination to the Human Rights Commission are about education (Mental Health Commission, 2007).

The Human Rights Commission states it is unlawful to treat people differently because they have a mental illness now or have had in the past (2008). This is in keeping with the World Health
Organisation who issued a statement on the rights of people with mental illness including their right to education.

Countries should adopt appropriate mental health policies, laws and services that promote the rights of people with mental disorders and empower them to make choices about their lives, provide them with legal protections, and ensure their full integration and participation into the community (World Health Organisation, 2005).

In reality this is not always the case. Kean (2007) describes an example of discrimination in relation to social work education in Aotearoa/New Zealand. A statement was made by a programme accreditation panel reviewing a social work degree that the institution was required to “establish a process whereby students must disclose any mental health issues they may have or have had, for reasons of ‘safety’” (Kean, 2007, p. 38). So, in entering this programme students are asked to identify themselves as ‘others’ and expose themselves to potential discrimination. This view of mental illness as a safety concern perpetuates the myth of dangerous mentally ill (Cockerman, 2011; Gendall, 2006; Kean, 2007).

Thornicroft (2006) argues that people who have been diagnosed with a mental illness are systematically discriminated against and that it permeates all aspects of their lives. In a study by Peterson et al (2008) discrimination was described by the participants as judgemental behaviour, rejection, reinforcement of negative stereotypes, bullying and ‘well meaning’ people being patronising and overbearing. Potential social work students in the above example experience judgemental behaviour, rejection and the perpetuation of negative stereotypes.

By taking a starting position that people who have experienced mental illness are full members of society who have rights and responsibilities as do others, adult educators are practicing in keeping with the Human Rights Commission stance on what is the base line of acceptable behaviour (Peterson et al, 2008).

**Societal stigma**

Discrimination and stigma are often used interchangeably in literature and there is debate about which word should be used. Discrimination tends to be favoured in Aotearoa/New Zealand literature with the argument being that stigma focuses on the individual where as discrimination puts responsibility for the be-
behaviour on those who discriminate. In this instance discrimination is being used in relation to human rights and societal stigma will be used to describe the impact the behaviour of others has on people who have experienced mental illness.

Stigma is an ancient Greek word for a brand or scar which marks out people as slaves or criminals, hence they are stigmatised (Leff & Warner, 2006). This was a harsh practice where members of castigated groups carried a visible sign of their disgrace (Hinshaw, 2007). In this century stigma is an unjust labelling process which misconstrues the character (Bland et al, 2009) of those who are psychiatrically unwell.

Stigmatisation is a threat to a person’s identity and is related to low self esteem and a lower quality of life (Gendall, 2006). As opposed to people with physical illness, people with a mental illness “are more likely to be seen as less trustworthy, less productive and less employable” (Gendall, 2006, p. 7). Criticism and rejection are common experiences of people who have experienced mental illness (Gendall, 2006; Lapsley et al, 2002; Peterson, 2007; Peterson et al, 2008).

Peterson et al (2008) state the societal stigmatisation takes place when the following are present:
- Labelling of human differences.
- Labels being linked with negative stereotypes.
- People being ‘othered’, that is, put in categories which are different from the majority in society.
- Loss of status of the stigmatised.
- Labels are related to differences in power in society.

These factors take into account the systemic nature of stigmatisation and in adult education it can be seen when students are alienated and excluded. Referring to adult learners, Unger (1997, p. 88) reports “stigma remains the greatest barrier to recruitment” and this was evidenced in the above example from social work education.

The move to a market model in the tertiary education sector exacerbates this. With pressure on tertiary institutions to operate as businesses selling products and funding following successful student completions there are likely to be more potential students with mental illnesses ‘shut out’ and students with mental illness encouraged to withdraw from courses if identified as struggling. As Dowie and Gibson (2006, p. 232) state “in a context of limited support, understanding and flexibility, students who have
mental health problems are more likely to drop out and be left with a sense of personal failure”. Continued consumerism in adult education brings with it marginalisation and exclusion of students who have experienced mental illness.

Adult educators can work towards social inclusion, liberation and empowerment using a Freirian approach. Teachers can facilitate students to “reconnect to the power within” (Dowie & Gibson, 2006, p. 238) and gain a voice and control over their lives. The classroom can be a place in which students reflect on their own oppression and develop skills and knowledge with which to challenge the social structures which marginalise them. When students can make links between their personal experiences and the political world, they are able to understand their experiences as a social construction and can externalise it, providing protection from self stigmatisation (Dowie & Gibson, 2006).

Poverty is one of the “central characteristics of people with the more severe types of mental illness” (Thornicroft, 2006, p. 371). There are high levels of unemployment among people who have experienced mental illness (Horwitz, 2010; Peterson, 2007). Adult education is a way for people who have experienced mental illness to get out of poverty (Pilgrim, 2009) and improve their situation through obtaining employment (or better paid employment). This is part of the Tertiary Education Commission’s (2008) mission, that through education people can “meet their full potential and contribute to New Zealand’s ongoing development and well being” (p. 4). Employment is identified as an important part of recovery from mental illness, a way of increasing social networks, growing confidence and social status (Peterson, 2007; Thornicroft, 2006).

Self stigma

Societal stigma threatens the identity of people who have experienced mental illness. A person’s identity is impacted when they take ‘on board’ external social constructions which can result in self stigmatisation. This is when “people with psychiatric illnesses begin to view themselves as inferior to others” (Leff & Warner, 2006, p. 4) and become reduced to their label (Hinshaw, 2007). Lapsley et al, (2002, p. 42) describe stigma as a “pervasive consequence of mental ill health”. In their study of people in recovery from mental illness they found that participants felt ashamed that they had become unwell and their self esteem lowered. This was especially the case if they had been hospitalised. Leff and Warner (2006) and Corrigan, Watson, Byrne and Davis (2005) also com-
ment on the negative impact stigma has on peoples’ self image and self efficacy which results in social withdrawal, loss of motivation and blocked life goals.

Peterson et al, (2008) state the effects of self stigma are far reaching. Among their participants was a strong sense of ‘otherness’ and they were socially excluded on a number of levels, from their most intimate relationships which became fractured to being unable to participate politically in society. Foucault (1965) discusses the invisibility and silence of people with mental illness describing it as absolute and saying the “language of delirium can be answered only by an absence of language, for delirium is not a fragment of dialogue with reason, it is not language at all” (p. 262). One of Peterson et al’s (2008) participants described their experience as being “on the edge and out of anyone’s interest” (p. 34) which is a place of no language at all.

Adult education is a way people can combat self stigma. Hammond (2004) carried out research on lifelong learning and emotional resilience and found that education can contribute to recovery from mental illness as well as improving general well being and confidence. Her respondents commented on three key areas which helped them to succeed in education; support and encouragement from tutors, the right level of challenge and supportive class mates. Freire’s (1993) ideas about empowerment through a person understanding their situation was also supported by Hammond’s research. Her respondents were able to put their experiences into a wider context and this understanding made it easier to cope (Hammond, 2004).

Silent and invisible

When students put their experience in a wider context they are taking themselves out of the margins, the place of silence and invisibility. When adult educators talk with students about their experience it is a validation of their reality; however these conversations require respect and sensitivity. Disclosure can be helpful as long as the receiver of the disclosure genuinely hears what they are being told. To disclose and be ignored is cruel and likely to result in withdrawal and ongoing silence (Leibrich, 1999). If a person feels heard this may normalise their illness and put it in context. Being around supportive and encouraging people is helpful in the recovery of people experiencing mental illness (Hammond, 2004; Lapsley et al, 2002).

Disclosing a mental illness is an act of courage. As Leibrich (1999, p. 5) states “sometimes we are afraid to tell them in case people
won’t understand. Sometimes we have tried but nobody listened and the words got lost. Sometimes we are simply silenced”. Noble (2005) refers to keeping mental illness a secret as a “mental closet” (p. 46) and says this is where many people who have experienced mental illness remain. In a classroom situation if a student discusses their mental illness the support of both tutors and peers is crucial to their sense of emotional safety and to keep the closet doors open.

Mental illness is harder to detect at a superficial level than some physical disabilities where there are visual reminders of an impediment. This can result in mental illness being ignored in adult education as there are no visual prompts. In tertiary institutions there is a risk that hierarchies of disabilities organically develop which results in discrimination. It can be easier if students have a disability for which there is equipment and a known process. Teall (2001) found in her research that tertiary educators “showed patchy awareness of mental health issues and a lack of coherence in responding to student need” (p. 23).

Ambivalence towards students results in a reproduction of social inequalities. If we allow it to continue we are complicit in perpetuating the silence and invisibility of students who have experienced mental illness.

**Recommendations**

Adult educators have a responsibility to act in socially just ways and actively include students who have experienced mental illness rather than perpetuate social exclusion and marginalisation. The following recommendations are ways adult educators can work in congruence with a social justice perspective.

- Understand the impact of societal and self stigma in order to be sensitive to student experience.
- Spend time hearing narratives from students who have experienced mental illness. This increases understanding of the lived experience.
- Be open to, and initiate, conversations about mental illness. This names ‘the elephant in the room’ and demonstrates an open and inclusive attitude.
- Be mindful of the effect a mental illness and medication may have on students learning, for example, cognitive impairment, difficulty getting up early or reduced motivation.
- Awareness that student behaviour may be a symptom of their illness rather than a personal attribute.
• Showing grace and compassion towards students and colleagues experiencing mental illness.
• Being vigilant about discrimination and ‘speaking out’ about it.

To finish is a quote from Julie Leibrich’s (1999) collection of personal narratives of those who have experienced mental illness. This is what Jonathan Rodgers, in his narrative, says about what adult education means to him:

I started art school with much trepidation and anticipation. In the short four months I have been there, the anticipation has been more than fulfilled and the strength that I am gathering at art school is more than I could have hoped for. The trepidation has faded into insignificance and turned to relish for the challenge. I look forward to completing my degree – with honours! (p. 151).

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Commercial entry Chris Hill. The above image was awarded a bronze medal at the 2011 NZIPP Awards.
Christine Fenton

We have all had them in our classes. Those students who seem to struggle with concepts that others manage easily, those that seem to have so many distractions in their lives that you wonder why they are in class, those that will hold you personally responsible if they do not learn, and those that no matter how much encouragement you try to give them, you can’t seem to get through to them. I call them resistant learners.

They are easily identifiable by the language they use in class – “Do we have to do this?”, “This is too hard!”, “What relevance is this?” and “I don’t get it”. They struggle, fight, put up barriers, and can often be impervious to our attempts to help, and are sometimes outright defiant.

What is going on with them? We assume they enter our classes to gain knowledge or a qualification, to improve or prove themselves somehow, to gain access to a body of knowledge or a type of employment – they come willingly, they even pay fees, so why are there so many barriers? Why can it be so difficult?

The answer is in the word “andragogy”. Often as teachers, we talk about pedagogy and it is used to refer to how and why we set up a teaching activity. However, pedagogy, literally translated is “child leading”; therefore the term really is about teaching activities that are planned for children to lead them into learning opportunities. These teachers will take into account the development level of the child, and current theories of how children learn. With adults however, “andragogy” is the more accurate term as it forces the teacher to remember that we are dealing with adults.

It is a mistake to think that we should teach children and adults the same way. It is a mistake to think that adults learn like small children do. Understanding how an adult can present as a resistant learner can assist us in knowing how to help them overcome their barriers and become life-long learners in any topic. Be clear, resistant learning is not the same as having a learning impairment which needs specialist techniques and assistance.
Resistant learners may be adults who have performed very well in other subjects but for some reason, they are resistant in your subject.

An adult person's personal background has a large influence on subjects or topics that may manifest as resistance in your learner. By the time a person is an adult, they have formed a particular way of understanding the world, and these associated values, and worldviews can be hard to alter. Adults come with life experiences, opinions and views that are often mediated and confirmed by other people. That is, conversations in the home place, the workplace, the community and even throughout school can confirm to the adult that the world is in fact, how they see it.

Hence, sometimes what we teach can be in direct opposition to their worldview, or their own beliefs or values. For instance, when teaching science to nursing students, some commonly held scientific values such as objectiveness and non-emotive decision making, may be in direct contrast with a nursing student who may value emotion and subjectivity more (and in fact, these values may have attracted them to wanting to be a nurse in the first place). There is also a significant gender influence where women's career aspirations are often heavily influenced by family, school, media and culture (Hackett & Betz, 1981; Jacobs, 1989) and as such, many female students may not perceive some topics as being something that they can be successful in, or even should be studying. Women more than males are more likely to be have their perceptions of careers influenced by their parents or the opinion of others. What this means is that often women students can be more challenged than men students if a topic is unexpected, or not relevant in some manner to what they perceive is important knowledge for them to learn. Taking the nursing example again, this might be maths, or science – potentially aspects that are not obviously about what they perceive as "nursing". If, due to their worldview, they actively avoided a subject at school (for example, choosing to focus on more humanistic subjects instead, working from a worldview that those subject areas are more relevant and aligned to their perception of what nursing is or what nurses do), then they may be challenged in trying to understand why the science topic you are teaching is relevant. It may be that people they know who are working in that field, will also tell them that it is irrelevant and they would never use that knowledge. Hence, barriers to learning and resistance set in. Adults do not arrive in our classrooms with empty heads; often they are full of very set expectations and perceptions.
If you examine constructivism as a theory of learning, the basic premise is that, through experience, a mental model of 'knowledge' is revised and altered. However, it is known that for adults, the constructs that they have already built up from their lived experiences can be pretty firm, and they can be very hard to alter, and it can be very hard to change an adult's attitude to some aspect. However, if we know this when we teach them, then we need to find out first what their expectations, perceptions and worldviews are. This will help you to understand what they need to do to be able to succeed in learning.

The ability of the learner to sustain a motivation for learning, and to continue revising their mental constructs, to continue reformulating, rebuilding and testing their version of reality, is very dependent on their own motivation and confidence. This suggests that if a student has a personal judgement that something is boring, hard or irrelevant (and they have formed this opinion during their own lived experiences or through social mediation of others), then you will have great difficulty changing their attitude, and helping them become confident and motivated in the subject that you teach.

What can we do?

If someone lacks confidence in their own ability to learn a subject or perform a task, then they are unlikely to revise their mental model (construct) and learn. Self-efficacy is a term that refers to an individual's belief in their own capabilities to execute an action required to manage a particular situation (Bandura, 1995). It suggests that a person's efficacy beliefs influence how they think and feel about themselves, which in turn, influences their likely action. This is not related to self-esteem or personal confidence, and is directly related to the particular situation. In a classroom, this can be in regard to teaching a subject that the student has resistance to.

Bandura suggests that such beliefs contribute significantly to motivation and hence achievement. Bandura also suggests that a person's self-efficacy can be enhanced by four forms of influence: mastery of experience, vivacious experience, social persuasion and by an understanding of the physical state.

Hence you can increase a student's self-efficacy towards learning by providing authentic opportunities to enable the student to build up a history of success (Bandura, 1982; Gist, 1989). This
enables the student to realise that they do have the ability to succeed in that particular situation or topic and can start to see that they can do it, and that success in this area is possible for them. If the learners have had positive experiences they are more likely to manage problems or activities and then continue to revise their constructs, and hence learn. These internal influences of competence are often more powerful for an adult learner than external rewards, acknowledgments or punishments (which is a technique often used at school).

However, it is important to realise that this should happen in small steps. Students who are resistant can be classified as ‘novice’ learners in your topic area – that is, they do not necessarily have the required underlying mental models that others would have, making building of knowledge more hesitant (as they can not necessarily “confirm” the new information as readily as students who already hold knowledge or mental models that align with the topic being taught). Care must be taken to ensure that the learning opportunities provided enable them to succeed – resistant learners who are hesitantly engaging in activities can be easily discouraged if it gets too hard. Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development is relevant here where you need to set activities near the student’s ability level, until the student has encountered enough success that they have gained some resilience (Vygotsky, 1978). These students do not benefit from less structured, active learning and facilitated teaching approaches (Mayer, 2004). For example, problem-based learning techniques which often have no clear right or wrong answer can be very detrimental to a resistant student as it does not allow them to confirm their mastery. Mayer does suggest that students need to be cognitively active during the educational sessions but that teacher guidance is required. Teaching activities need, then, to provide guidance to the novice or resistant learner, and be well designed to enable them to encounter success. This is the reason you would assess-for-learning instead of perhaps assessment-of-learning, and provide questions and answers under guided activities so that they can also self-check. Providing mastery experiences involves cognitive, behavioural and personal tools (self-regulations) for managing appropriate actions in a particular situation. Once mastery has been noted, motivation and confidence can be enhanced by decreasing the guidance, and increasing the level of complexity (Sweller & Cooper, 1985).

The other way you can increase a student’s self-efficacy towards learning includes providing vivacious experience – that is, vigorous, animated, charming, light and enthusiastic learning experi-
ences. This can be enhanced by mediation by social models, for example, the use of role models such as previous students and the use of stories. This helps the students identify with someone who may have experienced similar issues as them, but have become successful. When people see similar people to themselves succeeding and persevering, they may become convinced that they too can succeed and that the activity and the knowledge is in fact worthwhile, and that others find it worthwhile. Be careful not to expose students to successful students or stories that the resistant student cannot relate to – exposure to people who are not perceived as being peers or similar can have the effect of undermining self-efficacy and confirming to them that they cannot do it, or it is not something that needs to be done (irrelevant).

Social persuasion is another way of improving a persons’ perception of their own ability in a given situation. People who are encouraged (even by verbal feedback) tend to give the situation more effort, compared to people who have self-doubts and little support. This feedback however needs to be realistic as inflated encouragement can lead to disappointment.

The final way to increase a student’s self-efficacy towards learning is to make them aware of their own physical expectations. The influence of emotion on the physical state has a significant impact on resilience. A student who feels anxious before an assessment task may find the feeling so overwhelming that they choose not to engage with the activity. Informing the student of how they might feel during the learning journey helps them to realise that it is normal and expected. Support them to interpret their own bodily signals. Some people interpret their stress reactions as a validation of poor performance. People need to know what they are in for. A person who is training for a marathon needs to know that initially, the physical exercise will be difficult, that the muscles the next day will be sore, but that it is temporary and there are things that can be done to help. Mood has an obvious influence on resilience – a person in a positive mood may be more motivated than a person who is despondent (Kavanagh & Bower, 1985). In the learning environment, help students know that sleep deprivation due to study habits may negatively affect their mood. People’s beliefs in their own coping abilities can affect how much stress they feel in difficult situations.

To improve self-efficacy, it is important to raise people’s beliefs in their own capabilities but also to provide structure where they can experience success, and measure their own success in terms of improvement (not necessarily against others).
We know that some adult students can come to us with barriers – not able to see themselves as being able to engage with the learning, not being able to see themselves as successful and perhaps holding attitudes or worldviews that are in conflict with your teaching or that place barriers to the student being able to progress. Four activities can help:

- Provide opportunities for mastery (within capability levels)
- Provide vivacious experiences (that students identify with)
- Provide opportunities for social persuasion (positive but realistic feedback)
- Provide realistic expectation of the journey (physical and emotion)

References


A PERSONAL ANALYSIS OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF TEACHING SOCIAL WORK

Tiffany Apaitia-Vague

One of the reasons that the concept of experiential learning interests me is because I am a parent. I like to teach my own children and rather than rely on books, or just talking to them, I like to make the most of our shared experiences, where they can have visceral responses to the activities we undertake in our time together. For example:

Recently I bought a whole gurnard to cook for dinner. I have a two year old and six-year old, both very active learners. Before preparing the fish, I encouraged them to not only look at the fish but to touch it and to really examine the fish. We talked about the fish’s gills, and how they breathe. My six year old prised the mouth and gills apart to show my two year old what mechanisms the fish might use to breathe. They felt the difference between the bone and the cartilage. Then my six year old went off to research fish.

As a social work educator, I then began to wonder if any of the strategies that I use to parent and educate my own children (learning by experiencing), are effective techniques for adult learning in the formal classroom environment. As such, I started a personal analysis of experiential learning within the context of teaching social work.

Kolb developed his theory of experiential learning in 1984, in a book called *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. In this book, he introduced the central thesis of his theory of learning:

Learners, if they are to be effective, need four different kinds of abilities - concrete experience abilities, reflective observation abilities, abstract conceptualization abilities and active experimentation abilities. That is, they must be able to involve themselves fully, openly, and without bias in new experiences. They must be able to reflect on and observe their experiences from many perspectives. They must be able to create concepts that integrate their observations into logically sound theories, and they must be able to use these theories to make decisions and solve problems (p.30).
For adults, many opportunities for learning occur in the workplace, within family activities and the community and often these activities are not part of the formal education system. The term "experiential learning" therefore is often referring to the non-formal aspects of education. Within the formal education system however, teaching techniques such as kinaesthetically directed teaching activities, workplace projects, critical analysis or reflection of events and even group work, is often described as experiential learning.

Kolb (1984) perceived that:

The key to learning lies in the mutual interaction of the process of accommodation of concepts or schemes to experience in the world and the process of assimilation of events and experiences from the world into existing concepts and schemas (p. 6).

Dewey (1916) (in Itin, 1999, p. 92) discussed links between experience and education, particularly in relation to linking experience without reflection suggesting “it was insufficient to simply know without doing and impossible to fully understand without doing” (Itin, 1999, p.92). Hence experiential learning relates to doing or experiencing an activity or phenomenon in order to gain understanding of it.

However, Fenwick (2003) critiques the concept of experiential learning as assuming a perpetuating mind/body dualism in which the social location of the body, and any oppression that the learner experiences, is minimised. Fenwick also states that within reflection, there is a tendency for the teacher to “colonise” the learner’s experience.

Upon reading this, I felt confused. I had made the assumption that experiential learning complemented social constructivism, which is the antithesis of what Fenwick describes experiential learning as. I was also surprised by a quote in Passarelli and Kolb’s article (2009):

Ultimately lifelong learning shifts responsibility from the system to the individual whereby individuals are responsible for self-emancipation and self-creation. It is the discourse of autonomous and independent individuals who are responsible for updating their skills in order to achieve their place in society (p.223).

I was perturbed by the extent to which this aspect of experiential learning aligned with a neo liberal discourse, negating the fact that the ability to learn and the way that knowledge is constructed and privileged is inherently gendered, racialised and affected.
by class. Feminist theorists of workplace learning also criticise that experiential learning as a euro-centric and masculinist view of knowledge creation (Hart (1992) and Michelson (1996) in Fenwick, 2003). Furthermore, Fenwick (2003) states that the type of experiences that are generally considered appropriately rich learning experiences are those that only the middle classes have access to.

It is also discomforting to see that in his work with Pasarelli, Kolb (2009) talks about the influence of Freire (2006). This discussion seems to only link to a very superficial interpretation of Freire, and ironically seems to posit that learners need to take the primary responsibility for being an agent of change of their self-perception of oppression, ignoring the changes in society that Freire champions (2006).

The Association for Experiential Education (AEE) (2011) provides the following definition of experiential education: "Experiential education is a philosophy and methodology in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills and clarify values".

Experiential education therefore differs from experiential learning in that it places a significant amount of responsibility on the educator to create an environment whereby learners have the greatest opportunity that have experiences that lead to reflections. Itin (1999) states that:

Learning is best considered as the process of change that occurs for the individual. Learning is an individual experience. Education on the other hand, is best considered as a transactive process between an educator and a student. This transactive experience may also include the larger institutional forces (e.g. the educational system (p.91).

To these ends I believe that experiential education is a field that is more suited to my teaching aspirations as it acknowledges those vital, structural tensions that are key to social constructivism which is a theory that I value, and the awareness that I need to have of myself as an educator, as part of the transactional process.

Workplace learning is a significant part of experiential learning and experiential education, and in social work, the concept of placing students in fieldwork (placement) is the most obvious example of experiential learning and education. However, there are
less obvious aspects of social work education that I will discuss that could fit within the concept of experiential learning, namely developing the student’s self-awareness and helping them deal with sensitive issues. I have often used reflection as it is stated in Kolb’s model interchangeably with other reflective models that I use and teach myself. Many of the insights into the advantages and limitations of Kolb’s model are equally applicable to Schön (1983) or Gibbs (1988). While I acknowledge the limitations of treating the idea of reflection in this way, explorations of what being reflective, reflexive or reflecting (D’Cruz, Gillingham & Melendez, 2007) is beyond the scope of this article.

Learning about ‘self’ is a learning outcome that is integral to the professional journey of social work students, but is very often taught in an incidental way: “Educators face a considerable challenge in not only teaching about this notoriously elusive concept, but also in actually enabling students to embark upon and sustain that journey of professional and personal development which we must assume is required” (Ward, 2008, p.67).

As a social work educator I find that I have to balance having too many hypothetical examples with the fact that the classroom is so much smaller than the world in which the students will be expected to operate as social workers. One of the first year courses that I teach is called “Working with Difference”. In short, it could be described as a combination of applied sociology, oppression and self awareness. Throughout the course, students keep a journal in an on-line environment. The students create a 300-word journal entry for the first five classes, where they discuss their responses to things that have occurred throughout the class. When facilitating this exercise I emphasis that I was not so much concerned about what they were writing, but more about the level of self awareness and the degree of honesty that they were willing to demonstrate when writing this.

On reflection I don’t know if I was as mindful as I could have been about the implications for students of keeping a journal such as this. In discussing the self evaluation that students did as part of their course work in a Master of Social Work programme, Ward (2008) writes that:

For some people the process of recollection was far from tranquil, as they recalled experiences of anxiety, humiliation and probably in some cases abuse. Even if such experiences were not directly disclosed to the group, nevertheless the individual might feel re-exposed to their own pain, and thus potentially vulnerable in the public setting of the classroom (p.78).
Keeping this in mind I think that I would be more gentle with the students into the future, and be conscious not just about what they are experiencing, but what kind of “holding environment” (Ward, 2008) I am creating in the classroom. I am by nature a relatively open person, and I may have a tendency to expect that students will find it as easy as I do to not only reflect but also to be open around that. It is also important to be aware that ‘openness’ is a value that exists in my cultural paradigm as a Pākeha, where it is seen as socially acceptable to discuss personal and family issues, even those which may seem to portray my family in a less that positive light. I do this with the confidence that my family does, and will, continue to occupy a position of privilege.

I think that into the future my instruction would be this:
- **Focus on one moment in the class, and how you felt in that moment.**
- **What do you understand about what led you to feel that way?**
- **What do you understand about how that feeling will make you act into the future?**
- **How do you feel to be thinking about that moment right now?**
- **Represent those feelings so that I can see them, either through writing, through a drawing, or through another creative enterprise.**

As well as knowing the self, social work graduates are expected to competently work with a large and diverse range of clients so should be capable of working with difference. In the class that I discussed above, when teaching religion I divided the students into three groups. I arranged for one group to meet with a Hindu family, one group to meet with a leader in the local Muslim community and one group to meet with a Catholic priest. On reflection, I believe that in my attempt to not be overbearing (and also not to socially construct the situation too much!) my instructions to the representatives were very brief, and I told them to talk about “whatever aspects of the religion that they value”. All of the leaders chose to present this as a talk, or lecture style. While the students found this to be a really interesting and informative activity, I question if I provided enough parameters for them to be truly reflective and for them to think about how it might affect their practice into the future.

I am inspired by an experiential learning strategy specifically for developing students’ cultural competency. Sachdev (1997) found that rather than learning from lectures from people from different countries that students learnt more by engaging with everyday activities alongside those from a different culture, where incidental conversations would occur.
They jointly participated in activities such as feeding children and play activities. The students made puppets for children, helped women in their embroidery work and in cooking, which provided an excellent vehicle for interaction between these groups. Involvement in these activities helped break the ice and psychological barriers and often resulted in dialogue ... through these interactions the students directly learnt and understood the relative meaning of poverty in cultural contexts and the factors such as religious beliefs, family system and class structure that sustain it (Sachdev, 1997, p. 6).

I think that in the past I had simply been swapping class style learning from me, for class style learning from a representative from a particular religion. Ironically, although I had been attempting to avoid constructing the situation through providing guidance about what would be useful – I had ignored the fact that a ‘talk’ is something that operates very much from a Western paradigm anyway. Next time I will try to find activities that students can involve themselves in, in an appropriate way, such as a Dipawali Festival of Lights Celebration, or a Ramadan feast. I would then provide more parameters for their reflection on the topic.

One of the reasons why I think that experiential learning is very well suited for social work practice is because of sensitivity of some of the issues that social workers will be confronting – rape, racism, violence, child abuse (Zastrow, 2009). In one teaching session I decided to broach the issue of abortion in class. I talked with my colleagues about whether or not this would be too controversial or if it might create some triggers for students who have been in a decision where termination is an issue. However, after talking with my colleagues I felt that students are entering a field where it is highly likely that they will have to deal with issues around abortion, and it is better that they confront this in class rather than once they are working within the community.

This session gave the students a chance to not only ‘test’ their reactions to being confronted with the issue of termination, but also for them to reflect on that. Furthermore it gave them the ability to determine how they might deal with the issue if they encountered it in practice.

Another strategy that I’ve used to discuss issues that are both about self, difference and sensitive issues are “Public Conversations”. The Public Conversations Project (PCP) was developed in 1989 for “facilitating dialogues on a wide range of contentious issues including abortion, forest management, homosexuality and faith, biodiversity, the use of animals in research, the Israe-
li-Palestinian conflict, and many others” (PCP, n.d.). The Public Conversations Project also provides guidelines for anyone who wishes to hold one. For example:

**Exploratory rounds following guidelines from the Public Conversations Project.**
There will be two rounds where each participant will have the opportunity to respond to the same question.
- Each speaker has 2 minutes to speak.
- The following speaker is not to begin speaking before the time allotted for the first speaker has elapsed.
- If a speaker is still speaking at the end of two minutes a timekeeper will ask them to stop.

In the past, I considered that this process complemented the concept of experiential learning because the students would have a chance to experience having a difficult conversation with somebody with whom they disagreed about a sensitive issue. I had imagined that students would experience having a difficult conversation, then reflected on how they found that discussion and that this caused them to become better at having a difficult conversation. However in the future I would focus on what reflection is going on between the rounds, and what change this reflection caused for the student. Hence, I would be encouraging more reflection not only about how they felt once the conversation was over, but also how they felt throughout the rounds.

There are aspects of experiential learning and experiential education that are appropriate for social work education; in particular the opportunity to guide students through visceral responses, a period of reflection and their conceptualisation of how this might lead them to practice into the future. However in its pure form I also see that some aspects of experiential learning are potentially damaging for my students, and are the opposite of those ideologies which I value, in particular social constructivism. While into the future I hope to more consciously incorporate more experiential education theory, I think that to a large extent the critiques have influenced me just as much as Kolb’s original theory in terms of their practical application.
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Steel Store Chris Hill. The above image is taken of a little known part of WITT - the interior of the former Steel Store.
STEPPING TO A LARGER PERSPECTIVE: INTEGRAL THEORY IN TERTIARY EDUCATION

Donna Willard-Moore

Integral Theory is a philosophy suggested by Ken Wilber which attempts to be a theory of everything (MacDonald, 2010). It offers an approach that draws together a number of existing paradigms from Western and non-Western philosophies along with concepts from the biological, mental and divinity realms. Integral theory has started to emerge as an alternative way of thinking about concepts or activities where development occurs. In this article I postulate that Integral Theory provides a useful framework for educational concepts such as grading of assessments.

Ken Wilber, when developing Integral theory recognised an ‘evolution to involution cycle’, which places all transformations into a larger perspective, while at the same time placing all human development inside on-going change. Previous definitions of evolution suggested that it occurred in vast amounts of time or was occurring to somewhere else, without human input. Wilber through ‘all quadrants and all levels’ (AQAL) and related concepts, placed human experiences inside the continuous/diverse experiences of involution and evolution (Wilber, 2000). The quadrants deal with ways of knowing or beliefs about reality at the various levels of cognitive development. AQAL is conceived by some integral theorists to be one of the most comprehensive approaches to reality, and potentially a meta-theory that attempts to explain how academic disciplines and different forms of knowledge may fit together coherently.

Ken Wilber in a conversation with Bill Harris, discusses movement through quadrants: "What it comes down to is what’s called challenge and support: that the individual needs to be exposed to things in their environment that challenge the level they are at, and supports responses for the next higher level" (Harris, 2008).

Integral theory intends that the whole range of levels be taught; it is not an "either or" approach. It requires the individual to see his or her worldviews as developing and changing. If successful, the student will become aware of nested holons of worldviews (Wilber, 2000). The New Zealand education system recognises
Figure 1. New Zealand Qualifications Framework Level Descriptors aligned with Integral Theory Worldviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Integral colours &amp; levels</th>
<th>NZQA Level descriptors</th>
<th>LEARNING DEMAND</th>
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<td>PROCESS</td>
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<td>1: NZ Year 11</td>
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<td>4: Foundation</td>
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<td>USA= Sophomore</td>
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<td>USA=Lunar year</td>
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<td>USA=Saturn year</td>
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<td>10: Doctorate</td>
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There are ten levels involved in a qualification – 1 is the least complex and 10 the most. Levels depend on the complexity of learning. They do not equate to 'years spent learning' but reflect the content of the qualification.
Figure 1. New Zealand Qualifications Framework Level Descriptors aligned with Integral Theory Worldviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>NZQA Level descriptors</th>
<th>Integral Theory Developmental Sequence of Worldviews</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:NZQA Year 11 High school</td>
<td>Responsibility: Applied in directed activity, under close supervision, with no responsibility for the work or learning of others.</td>
<td>Integral Theory Developmental Sequence of Worldviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:NZQA Year 12 High school</td>
<td>Responsibility: Applied in directed activity, under general supervision and quality control, with some responsibility for quantity and quality, with possible responsibility for guiding others.</td>
<td>Integral Theory Developmental Sequence of Worldviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:NZQA Year 13 High school</td>
<td>Responsibility: Applied in self-directed activity, under general supervision and quality checking, with significant responsibility for the quantity and quality of output, with possible responsibility for the output of others.</td>
<td>Integral Theory Developmental Sequence of Worldviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:Foundation USA=Freshman year</td>
<td>Responsibility: Applied in self-directed and sometimes directive activity, within broad general guidelines or functions, with full responsibility for the nature, quantity and quality of outcomes, with possible responsibility for the achievement of group outcome.</td>
<td>Integral Theory Developmental Sequence of Worldviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:First year degree USA=Sophomore year</td>
<td>Responsibility: Applied in managing processes, within broad parameters for defined activities, with complete accountability for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes.</td>
<td>Integral Theory Developmental Sequence of Worldviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:Second year degree USA=Juniors year</td>
<td>Responsibility: Applied in planning, resourcing and managing processes, within broad parameters and functions, with complete accountability for determining, achieving and evaluating personal and/or group outcomes.</td>
<td>Integral Theory Developmental Sequence of Worldviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:Third year degree USA=Seniors year</td>
<td>Involves skills and knowledge that enable a learner to:</td>
<td>Integral Theory Developmental Sequence of Worldviews</td>
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<td>8:Masters</td>
<td>Provide a systematic and coherent account of the key principles of a subject area; and</td>
<td>Integral Theory Developmental Sequence of Worldviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:Masters</td>
<td>Undertake self-directed study, research and scholarship in a subject area, demonstrating intellectual independence, analytic rigour and sound communication Demonstrated by: The completion of a substantial research paper, dissertation or in some cases a series of papers.</td>
<td>Integral Theory Developmental Sequence of Worldviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:Doctorate</td>
<td>Involves knowledge and skill that enable a learner to:</td>
<td>Integral Theory Developmental Sequence of Worldviews</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide an original contribution to knowledge through research or scholarship, as judged by independent experts, applying international standards.</td>
<td>Integral Theory Developmental Sequence of Worldviews</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
levels of development formulated from several sources: Maslow’s hierarchy of need, Piaget’s child development, Bloom’s Taxonomy and other developmental theories in education. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority publishes a chart of the thinking that students should be exhibiting at each level which is described as “Level Descriptors”. These level statements hint at integral translations and thus can be restated into integral theory by adding the colour codes and integral terminology (see Figure 1).

Conventionally, students are not informed of where they are in their own developmental sequence, so students may be unaware of their own learning processes. It has been suggested that fifty percent of adults tend to operate from one particular platform worldview – but depending on the concept, could be a step higher or one step lower within a given context; both behaviours being created by demands and support from their environment. Thus if a tutor demands “rule and role” (see Figure 1) approach, a student will comply (an easy step backward) but if a tutor expects more independent research and problem solving, the student will struggle because this is a step up from the student’s operational platform. Thus, supporting the advancement of worldviews has the potential to support the student’s long-term development (i.e. life-long learning).

What would be necessary for students to begin functioning in an integral manner? It is the knowledge of general integral structures, developmental levels, and their ability to select and move between these levels or stages that will make the difference.

To demonstrate the transition that a student might experience if they were enabled to move through the various worldviews, I have created dialogue (indicated in italics) from the hypothetical viewpoint of a student studying art, and therefore thinking about their grades, using each worldview as a framework for narration. I use the context of art because this is where my experience lies, but the comments would be relevant in other contexts.

The first three worldviews (instinctual, magical and power god) are not represented in Figure 1 (as this discourse is within a tertiary environment) but they are still relevant as there will be students in tertiary education who may function at these levels.

**Instinctual worldview**

Instinctual worldview (also referred to as archaic/survival worldview) is only concerned with survival.
An art student would be thinking:
*Survival is the key. Making marks and playing with colour is kind of interesting because when I do something, something happens. Maybe there’s more to this.*

Grading for an instinctual worldview art student:
*I just have to survive this; I know it will come out badly.*

**Magical worldview**

In the magical worldview all things are created by magic, and what is not real appears to be real. Fantasy art and symbolic art are examples of magical art.

An art student would be thinking:
*Through my art and ritual, I make this magic thing; I can see the magic by my art’s surprise, drama, or power.*

Students in group behaviour functioning at this level believe that activities at morning tea and outside of class are most important. *My tribe is best, and if I do not have a tribe, I will create one.*

Grading for a magical worldview art student is about luck and being in the right place at the right time. *I hope the tutor will give me a good grade.*

Tutor beliefs about students operating at magical worldview: Students have natural talents and it is those natural talents that tutors are seeking. They also believe that cohorts bond to make stronger student groups.

**Power gods worldview**

In the power gods worldview all decisions are made for the display of power.

An art student would be thinking:
*My art celebrates or re-enforces power – mine or my leader’s. I can have power by my control over my art. My art will make me famous. I will sign my name to everything – they will know it is me and that will give me power.*

Grading for a power gods worldview art student:
*How can I have power in this situation? The teacher seems to have all the power. I hate this! Perhaps I can make friends with the tutor and have power that way. I will talk with them a lot,*
they will feel favourable towards me, and this will give me power. Alternatively ... The only power I want is with my friends; social power not educational power. I don’t have power and this is frustrating. Or ... I can do all my art at home and never let the tutor see it until the last minute – then the art is in my control – I have power!

Tutor beliefs about students operating at power god worldview:
Students are not interested in learning and therefore are forced to learn by the threat of lower grades.

Rule and role conformist worldview (NZQA levels 1-3/Integral Theory amber)

In the rule and role conformist worldview the students believe that in following the rules and assuming the correct role, they will be rewarded.

An art student would be thinking:
I can follow the rules and be successful. The rules define my role in the art community. I receive the grade from a master. A teacher should be able to tell me the rules, so I can get it right.

Grading for a rule and role conformist student:
What are the precise rules that I must follow to get an ‘A’? Is there a particular role I must play? How do I behave like a successful student? What marks me for success – my looks, how much I participate in class? Give me a precise model for a paper and I will follow it completely so I can have success.

Tutor beliefs about students operating at rule and role conformist:
Their lesson plans must be very accurate with no loopholes that a student can weasel through; and all paper work must be approved by superiors and comply with regulations.

Scientific rationalism worldview (NZQA levels 4-6/Integral Theory orange)

Scientific rationalism comprises two halves. The scientific half is the accurate observation of nature; and the rational half is the simplification of the logic/rational mind.

An art student would be thinking:
At first, my art looks real but to be considered successful I mustn’t forget to include additional value like symbolic or abstract ideas.
But then these additional value items become the most important part of the art.

Grading for a scientific rationalist worldview art student:
The scientific rationalist student is only interested in achieving 'A's, thus to position themselves to be successful in their future career. 
What is the logic of each assignment? How is this going to help with my long-term goals? Are these the steps to maximise my individual potential? The best experts available are my teachers, so my status is improved by their standing.

Tutor beliefs about students operating at scientific rationalism worldview:
If a student can reduce and simplify their work, while adding understanding, the student is making good art. Furthermore, the validation of the tutor’s expertise in field is proved through publication (or perishing).

Pluralistic-relativistic worldview (NZQA levels 7-10/Integral Theory green)

Pluralistic refers to the multiple parts that exist simultaneously. Relativistic refers to the forming of relationships between these parts. The positive aspect of this worldview is variations of possibility; however, often there is little evaluation thus a negative aspect. Pluralistic-relativistic art forms demonstrate complex layering – performance, happenings, and film. In particular, films’ ability to run multiple plots, sub-plots, and subtexts create a very pluralistic and relativistic media.

An art student would be thinking:
A student positively goes into a project by thinking ... I must make lots of things and then group or edit them into final artworks. 
However, the negative of the student viewpoint is ... How can you judge my art – I like it!

Grading for a pluralist-relativistic worldview art student:
The most important thing is the experience in the classroom and not so much the grade. In my ideal classroom I would be part of a team that’s learning and interacting. Each of us would learn more from interactive activities than from the knowledge of the teacher. The activities are valid because they are experiences from which I gained new understanding.
Tutor beliefs about students operating at pluralistic-relativistic worldview:
Grades evaluate group activities, and thus a student can demonstrate problem solving learning. However, group activity is very hard to grade because in pluralistic-relativistic thinking all relationships are valid and equal. Thus the tutor falls back to grading from other worldviews.

Integral worldview

In the context of Integral Theory, integral art can be defined as art that reaches across multiple quadrants and levels or it may also refer to art that was created by someone who thinks or acts in an integral way. An integral art education does not exist at this time. Yet, the level descriptor chart (Figure 1) published by New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) holds unstated but important integral concepts. This chart shows students move through a developmental sequence in a particular order. Students can move up and down this list but are not conscious that they are making choices. Downward in worldview when under stress and upward when defining how they want education to be.

What if we explain the educational structures that exist in this chart (Figure 1). The purpose of the NZQA chart is for tutors to seek evidence that a student is functioning or exhibiting performance expected at each level and is particular applied to teaching and grading. What if we made this part of the students' education content? Integral theory – a theory of multiple worldviews and students’ own status as consciously changing developing individuals and potentially recognising the multiple levels and worldviews of students.

Integral theory adds the recognition that all of these worldviews are going on at the same time, and that people move between them. The inherent problem is that the general public currently thinks that whatever worldview they are at, is the only one that exists and is also the only right one. Most conflicts are a mismatch of worldviews, because each worldview is specific in its goals, definition of rightness and even truth. For example, the worldview of a scientific-rationalist student requires that the tutor explain precisely how to succeed – achieve an ‘A’; but the worldview of a pluralistic-relativistic tutor devising educational experiences is to move students to collaborative skills and evaluation of group activities. Yes, it is the next step. We as tutors went through it. Why not let the student in on this developmental path. Why not create education that lets a student consciously
select how they are graded, or how they will be rewarded based on the level of challenge they accept.

In the integral community, the question of how do you help a person or a country move up the developmental levels, is a hotly debated topic. In education, we have been doing it all along – with a goal of life-long learning. Currently, because we do not see this as influencing all aspects of a person’s life, we created the developmental sequence as a chart for tutors and administrators; and we limit development to education alone. Extending its application will have its benefits as we as educators know that we change students’ lives for the better; it might be getting a job but, it is also thinking in new ways or deciding to change one’s life. Let us give students the fuller picture, more choices and a frame of reference in integral worldview. This might just be the best way to accept the confusion around us in education and the world, while making sense of ours and our students’ developing worldviews.

References


Commercial entry Chris Hill. The above image was awarded a silver medal at the 2011 NZIPP Awards.