"Indeed far from being a mere method or a priori technique to be imposed on all students, pedagogy is a political and moral practice that provides the knowledge, skills, and social relations that enables students to explore the possibilities of what it means to be critical citizens, while expanding and deepening their participation in the promise of a substantive democracy" (Steinberg & Freire 2013: 155).

Thematic Resource developed by Dr Athena Lathouras and Carey Shaw 2016

Overview

The Social Work staff commenced an action-research project entitled “Exploring the experiences of International Students in the Social Work Program to enhance their social well-being, learning outcomes and retention” in Semester 2, 2013. The project’s various iterations have: built a sense of community across diverse cultural groups within the university setting and beyond; influenced the organisational structure; increased critical pedagogical responses in tutorial spaces; and developed responses within field education to better support students on WIL placements. The critical-relational emphasis of the project have drawn on critical theory and community development theory.

This project then extended to an additional action-research project that developed and explored critical pedagogical themes and actions to enhance student engagement and learning in the social work program. This was a practical and much needed project originating from international student feedback and data from the first action research cycle. International students now make up 50% of the Master of Social Work (Qualifying) (MSWQ) program cohort.

With the support of a USC Learning and Teaching Discovery grant the project extended to an additional action research project that developed and explored critical pedagogical themes. The findings and literature suggested that a range of innovative and creative teaching strategies were needed to better facilitate students’ engagement with social work curricular and positively impact on students’ deep learning.

The proposed project aimed to develop more diverse teaching and learning experiences that would enhance the educational experiences of international and domestic students alike. The hypothesis is that critical pedagogical approaches foster an inclusive form of education. This is a form of education that, Harrison and Ip (2013) argue, ensures every student’s entitlements have been “designed in from the outset”, as opposed to “integration” which implies assisting students to assimilate into existing practices and structures (Simpson, 2009).

A range of theorists in the area of critical pedagogy refer to ‘best practice’ approaches (see, for example, Devlin 2011; and Griffiths 2010). Additionally, significant research in the area of critical pedagogy with students from low-socio economic backgrounds has identified a range of areas that enable improved student engagement and learning. The Social Work action research project has also highlighted similar findings in relation to our international students from South Asia. As the majority of our international students are coming from developing countries similar low-socio economic issues are presenting which impact on their ability to study. Furthermore, Nelson and Creagh’s (2013) recent work in this field on Good Practice for Safeguarding Student Learning and Engagement places emphasis on a social justice framework. Our project also holds to this principle as central, as critical pedagogy removes barriers to learning and is therefore is a more equitable approach for students’ engagement and learning.

The literature in this area highlights interventions such as: enabling student agency through peer learning which is an active pedagogy; the ability for teachers to appropriately scaffold learning, which relates to the lived experiences of international students and the Australian context; and finally, emphasis on reflective practice to support critical examination of an educator’s practice. Our project design is drawing from these best practice strategies.
Critical Pedagogical Resource Themes
Identified in the (MSWQ) International Student action research project.

This ‘thematic resource’ has been an emergent artefact. During the data collection process and dialogue sessions we have hosted with MSWQ international students, the following themes developed. It is these themes we have intentionally incorporated into the tutorial space and have considered and trialled teaching techniques and ideas that may uphold these themes and critical pedagogical intentions.

As this thematic resource is a result of our ‘theory-building’ research, and we would like to engage with users of the resource dialogically as we move forward in a theory-testing mode to see, overtime, how beneficial these resources are/can be in a range of contexts.

- Cultural Biography
- Building Community
- Democracy
- Participation
- Reflection
- The student eyes
- Dialogue
- Power
- Facilitation
- Embodying Theory
- Flipped Classroom
- Blended Learning
Contents

Theme 1 Cultural Biography
1.1 Cultural Biography 6
1.2 Tutorial exercise (Cross Cultural Speed Dating) 8
1.3 Tutorial exercise (Milling)

Theme 2 Building A Learning Community
2.1 Building A Learning Community 10
2.2 Tutorial exercise (Developing the ABC) 12
2.3 Tutorial exercise (Snowballing)

Theme 3 Democracy
3.1 Democracy 14
3.2 Tutorial exercise (Conversational Roles) 16
3.3 Tutorial Exercise (Generating Discussion Ground Rules)

Theme 4 Participation
4.1 Participation 17
4.2 Tutorial exercise (Conversational Moves) 18
4.3 Tutorial exercise (Mobile Discussions) 19
4.4 Tutorial exercise (Peer Instruction) 20

Theme 5 Reflection
5.1 Reflection 21
5.2 Tutorial exercise (Personal Reflection Exercise) 23
5.3 Tutorial exercise (Critical Incident Questionnaire) 24
5.4 Tutorial exercise (Post-it-note Reflection) 25
5.5 Tutorial exercise (Kinesthetic Learning) 26

Theme 6 Seeing Through the Students Eyes
6.1 Seeing Through the Students Eyes 28

Theme 7 Dialogue
7.1 Dialogue 29
7.2 Tutorial exercise (I-YOU-WE METHOD) 32
7.3 Tutorial exercise (Dialogical Relationship Building)

Theme 8 Power
8.1 Power 34
8.2 Tutorial exercise (Critical Debate Instructions) 36

Theme 9 Facilitation
9.1 Facilitation 37
9.2 Tutorial exercise (generating Discussion Ground Rules) 38
Theme 10 Embodying Theory to Guide Practice
10.1 Developing a Personal Framework of Practice 39
10.2 Suggested Processes 40

Theme 11 Blended Learning
11.1 Blended Learning 42

Theme 12 Flipped Classroom
12.1 Flipped Classroom 44
12.2 Why you should Flip 45

Reference List 46
Beginning relationship building through the exploration of cultural biographies within the classroom acknowledges that all students are culturally diverse regardless of their ethnicity, history or socioeconomic status. It is with this in mind that we consider ways in which we can support students and tutors to get to know each other in new and emancipatory ways.

Within the higher education classroom we often introduce ourselves, and attempt to get to know students through the use of patriarchal capitalist culture, and dominant hierarchal markers. By ‘hierarchal markers’ we mean the focus on capitalist or conventional identities such as educational or industry experience, country of origin, or intended career pathway etc. The educator also often feels compelled to introduce themselves firstly and formally only through such hierarchal markers. While this information does form part of our own and our students developing and ever changing identity, we tend to give precedence to these aspects of ourselves and ignore the other significant aspects of our culture and identity. This may in fact disempower or shut down student participation within the classroom.

When we consider that for many social work educators our practice sits within the classroom space and that we are in fact modelling to students our own practice frameworks, philosophical and ideological influences, the practice of building relationships and resisting dominant constructions of identity becomes more urgent. When we acknowledge ‘culture and biography’ front and centre we facilitate a more critical understanding for students around privilege and culture; it becomes not just something that ‘other people have’. Exploring new understandings of identity, biography and culture at the commencement of classroom relationships may help ‘move students from primary defensive responses’ to more nuance and ‘collective social action’ within the learning environment (Helms 1995, cited in Abrams & Molo 2009: 248).

The concept of cultural biographies acknowledges that ‘culture is a power laden relational state of being and cultural difference is therefore an outcome of power-charged social relations’ (Reitmanova 2011: 201). We resist the practice of ‘cultural competence’ in the higher education classroom because this approach only ‘focuses on individual attitudes and does not seek to address institutional racism or oppression’ (Abrams & Molo 2009: 245), and therefore the notion of ‘cultural competence’ has the potential to reinforce stereotypes and
reproduce oppression, when one person claims to be ‘competent’ in another’s culture (Dean 2001).

It is the hope that when we disrupt the ‘symbolic order’ and the predictable ways of getting to know each other within the classroom setting, students and teachers begin to renegotiate themselves and begin to develop and admire new qualities within themselves and others (Nugent & Catalano 2015). A more culturally biographical approach to getting to building relationships will potentially break down some of the barriers experienced by some students within the higher education classroom.

An excellent resource which further explores the complexity around culture and identity is the following TED talk by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, “The danger of the single story”.

http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en

Reflection Questions: How many times your students would have talked about, shared aspects of, or developed new understandings of their individual and collective cultures in standard ‘get-to-know-each-other’ sessions in the first week of your tutorial classes? How else could this be facilitated in the tutorial space within organisational time constraints?

http://www.123rf.com/photo_7031410_culture-word-collage-on-black-background.html
This idea breaks up that class room tension that is often difficult to navigate in the first tutorial or meeting of a group.

Develop three biographical/cultural aspects/questions you want students to exchange in order to begin to get to know each other. These can be adapted to the course area. For example if you are teaching a ‘families course’ you would develop questions that would encourage/challenge students to think about their own and others families in a new way etc.

Take students into an open space and split into two groups and ask them to form an inner and outer circle. Inside circle faces out, and outside circle faces in. So each student is facing another.

3. Students get approx 20-30 seconds each to introduce and talk about themselves using the prompts you have provided. Call change and the outside circle take a step to the right (new person) and the process begins again.

What this activity does is it creates an energy within the group, early on which they take back into the classroom. Getting students moving straight up wakes them up and gets them active. This encourages participation from students who would not speak to each other, would not speak in tutorial etc. This can be adapted to any space, any size group and diverse student populations.

Below are some example prompts/questions but they can be as simple or as complex as you would like and developed to reflect the course/subject area.

(Developed by Carey Shaw 2014).

**Suggested Cultural Interview Questions...**

What is your definition of “culture?”
What a cultural practice that holds significance for you?
How do you define “family?”
Who holds the most “status” in your family? Why?
How do you define success?
What is considered most disrespectful in your culture?
What is considered most respectful in your culture?
What would you say is, from your perspective, the most commonly held misconception about people of your culture?
What does it mean to be...?
The idea of milling is that you walk around the room till the tutor calls 'stop', then listen to the question and each person answers that question within a pair (2 minutes per person, per question). Then, start milling around the room again, and when the tutor calls 'stop', answer the next question with a different person. These questions should be fairly light, and not threatening, but related to the content of the course in some way.

Questions used about “family”:

1. One happy memory of "family" I have is.....

2. My family is a bit unusual because.....

3. When I think of the word "family" I immediately think of these other three words....1).......2).......3)

4. The last thing I hope would ever happen in my family is ..... 

5. One day my family will.......
In community development theory the emphasis is placed on collective practice, where people band together to engage in some kind of mutually agreed upon action.

For the purposes of this research on critical pedagogy, this notion of banding together for action can be applied to the tutorial space, where together we co-create the learning and teaching space to be one that establishes a learning community from which we can all benefit.

The community development theory of Mezzo-method (Lathouras 2010:15) is the process of moving from the private concerns of individuals into public action with others. The aim of Mezzo-method is to build self-help and mutual aid amongst participants, by establishing an A, B, C:

- A = a Shared Agenda;
- B = a Shared Basis for working together;
- C = a Shared Commitment to Action/s

In community development contexts it is usually not too hard to achieve a shared agenda, because people most often come together around some specific need, hope, desire, vision for their community. In relation to our tutorials, the shared agenda is likely to be something such as “to pass the course”, or “learn about x content”, “to become a competent social worker” etc.

Also in community development contexts, it is not unusual to see people jump from a shared agenda to a commitment to action fairly quickly. Often, in the heat of moment, enthusiasm for getting something done in their community is palpable. However, this enthusiasm can often be short-lived. Life gets in the way of good intentions, and it is very important to slow down the process to a pace that is sustainable and importantly, brings everybody on board with the process. A sustainable process is one that everybody feels they can contribute to, and does not end up having just one or two people leading the process and delegating to others etc. This is not community development.
One way to build a commitment to action is to help people feel safe and secure about working with their colleagues. So, taking time to be explicit about HOW we want to work together is important. Focusing on the “B” – how do we want to work together - helps include everyone in the process and slowly builds commitment to action/s. See over, for a tutorial exercise that helps builds the “B” through a ‘working agreement’ to which students and tutors can commit.

Finally, it is helpful to view the “C” – Commitment to action/s - not as a single moment in time (e.g. the first time people get together), but as a gradual process, where people become more and more engaged and motivated to participate over time.

c....C......C......C (increases over time)

**Reflection Question:** The 'how' we work together is a significant learning opportunity for students, as the action of the theoretical commitment is often allusive. This process challenges students to articulate how they will enact their emancipatory aims and commitments. What other pedagogical practices will support the development of a 'learning community' within the tutorial space?

Hopes(expectations, and concerns/fears about the course.

- Reflect on what you hope to get out of this course? Reflect on any concerns or fears you have about this course. Jot some of your ideas down on your notepad.
  Share your ideas with someone else you don’t know well.

Creating a working agreement. Based on the previous exercise, what do you need from....

- your tutor
- your colleagues
- and yourself
(to ensure your needs/expectations are met and your fears are relieved)?

Tutors – use the data generated from the prompt questions to elicit and gain agreement on things that people can commit to. Make sure everyone is on the same page – be explicit. E.g. if someone suggests that “we all should respect each other” you can ask what does being “respectful” mean?

This is a collective analysis process on butcher's paper (in the public space). Take your time to set this up well, as it will help build trust amongst participants and hopefully establish a space where learners can take healthy risks.

Bring the butcher's paper with you for a few weeks to tutorials and draw people's attention to it in Week 3. You can re-visit the agreement half way through semester to see how the group is travelling – the group may wish to added anything new onto the agreement. This revisiting is important, especially if the group has relaxed and behaviours may emerge that might work against the group agreement. (Developed by Athena Lathouras)
One way to illustrate how discussions can be developmental and increasingly inclusive is to use a process called "snowballing" or "pyramiding". Students begin this activity by responding to questions or issues as individuals. They then create progressively larger dialogic groups by doubling the size of these every few minutes until by the end of the activity everyone is reconvened in the large group. At each stage as students move from pairs to quartets, quartets to octets they recap the chief point of difference, or the chief question that emerged, in their previous round of conversation.

Here’s the instructions students follow:

We are going to try something a little different today. It’s called “snowballing” and it gives you a chance to think and talk about issues in a variety of different configurations. Please begin with some private, solitary reflection in which you gather your thoughts about the questions at the bottom of this sheet. Jot down some notes if you wish.

After about 1 minute of solitary thought join with one other person to continue the dialogue. After about five minutes you and your partner should join another pair to form a group of four. As the two pairs merge, each pair should recap the chief difference that emerged, or a question they raised, in their conversation.

The quartets will continue the discussion for another 10 minutes and then they will merge with other quartets to create octets - groups of 8. As the two quartets merge, each quartet should recap the chief difference that emerged, or a question they raised, in their conversation.

The discussion proceeds for 20 minutes this time and continues in 20 minute intervals until the whole class is brought together at the end of the session.

This exercise gets a lot of people talking to one another, while retaining much of the value of small groups. It also contributes to the fostering of a learning community within the class. People mill about excitedly and greet each other warmly as they meet in new configurations.

(Developed by Stephen Brookfield 2006)
The best ways of educating people is to give them an experience that embodies what you are trying to teach. When you believe in a democratic society, you provide a setting for education that is democratic” (Myles Horton 1998: 68).

While education has been historically linked to democracy, the reality is that traditional pedagogical processes and the restrictions of mandated content often reduces democracy to little more than an emancipatory idea.

Within the tutorial space we are all familiar with traditional ‘teaching-to-learn’ models. Alternatively when we are trying to foster democracy within the tutorial space Butchart, Handfield and Restall (2009) advocate that we work with a ‘collaborative engagement’ model, whereby knowledge is genuinely created through student and teacher reflection, participation and action. The idea of democracy in education can be met with resistance from students and teachers as they have become conditioned to respond and engage in their learning with ‘consumer’ ideals rather than constructing themselves as ‘active participants’. The tenants of constructivist education theory speak to the goals of a democracy in the classroom. Constructivism attests the ‘nature of knowledge as a co-construction’ and the ‘collaborative nature of classroom relationships’ (Fiume 2005: 53). Knowledge as a co-construction calls into question the ways in which people interact within the classroom and requires the navigation of often rigid ‘social location’ and ‘social borders’ particularly within diverse groups. Drawing from the work of Freire (1970), democratic education insists neither students or teacher can come to knowledge independent of each other, there must in fact be a collaboration of many voices (Fiume 2005: 54). Students and teachers must share in both knowledge construction and the responsibility for such construction, and therefore the power (Fiume 2005: 54). For educators, when thinking about democracy within the classroom we must be thinking about ‘opportunities’ for participation and collaboration, and our ability to foster the ideals of democracy: liberty, equality and justice within these opportunities. Giroux (1992) suggests that to do this requires a fundamental change in thinking about pedagogy; rather than pedagogy being transmissive, it must be interrogative. If we understand pedagogy through Giroux (1992) then we think about pedagogy as not a ‘language of technique or methodology’, but rather as an issue of politics and power (Steinberg & Freire 2013: 71). It becomes ‘a moral and political practice’, where we attempt to foster the agency of all the actors in the physical and social environment, so that we all feel almost compelled to contribute to the construction of knowledge.
We are in essence attempting to, as Derrida (2000, cited in Steinberg & Freire 2013: 76) suggests, 'make visible a democracy', within the classroom, rather than that which just 'parades as democracy'. We are clearly required to think not just about the theory that underpins our emancipatory aims but about our ‘responsibility as teacher to create appropriate classroom strategies and practices that incorporate the theoretical insights’ (Keesing-Styles 2003, cited in Breunig 2009: 250).

In higher education it is essential that we value democracy in education as part of a broader social movement, as resistance to the commercialisation and commoditisation of the higher education experience.

https://www.pinterest.com/democracyatwrk/quotes/
Practice in playing different conversational roles helps create opportunities for the more tentative students to speak, thereby building their confidence. Any roles assigned must be alternated so that everyone takes their turn. This is a great activity to explore key concepts, ethical dilemma’s, critical questions etc.

**Problem, Dilemma, or Theme Poser**
This participant has the task of introducing the topic of conversation. They draw on their own ideas and experiences as a way of helping others into conversation about the theme.

**Reflective Analyst**
This member keeps a record of the conversation’s development. Every 20 minutes or so, they give a summary of shared concerns, issues skirted, and emerging themes.

**Scrounger**
The scrounger listens for helpful resources, suggestions, and tips that participants have voiced as they discuss how to work through a problem or situation. They keep a record of these ideas that is read out before the session ends.

**Devil’s Advocate**
This person listens carefully for any emerging consensus. When they hear this they formulate and express a contrary view. This keeps group-think in check and helps participants explore a range of alternative interpretations.

**Detective**
The detective listens carefully for unacknowledged, unchecked and unchallenged biases that seem to be emerging in the conversation. As they hear these they bring them to the group’s attention. The detective assumes particular responsibility for alerting group members to concerns of race, class and gender. They listen for cultural blindness, gender insensitivity, and comments that ignore variables of power and class.

**Theme Spotter**
This participant identifies themes that arise during the discussion that are left unexplored and that might form a focus for the next session.

**Umpire**
This person listens for judgmental comments that sound offensive, insulting and demeaning, and that contradict ground rules for discussion generated by group members.

**Textual Focuser**
Whenever assertions are made that seem unconnected to the text being discussed, this person asks the speaker to let the group know where in the text the point being made occurs. (Developed by Stephen Brookfield 2006)
Participation

The idea behind the participatory pedagogies is to present opportunities within the tutorial space for participatory and collaborative learning experiences that are new and more varied than are commonly experienced in more traditional ‘didactic settings’ (Elliott & Reynolds 2014: 312). As educators we are often confronted by multiple dilemmas when thinking about participatory pedagogies. How to support and facilitate students to take more control over the way they work, and with whom they work, while also ensuring that as many students as possible get opportunities to participate and contribute the development of knowledge and work with as many class members as possible throughout the semester. Elliott and Reynolds (2014: 3121) acknowledge this dilemma especially in regard to diverse student groups that include international students from a range of pedagogical experiences and educational backgrounds. Elliott and Reynolds (2014) suggest that racism can be amplified within the competitive classroom setting where students construct others as deficit and detrimental to their own results driven goals and learning. Participatory group work processes can potentially challenge and shift this limiting view of ‘others’ that many students and educators hold. Elliott and Reynolds (2014: 307) contest that group work activities not only ‘enhance students sense of involvement and opportunities to create knowledge from each other’s ideas’, but group work ‘supports the rationales in which participatory pedagogies are seen as supporting democratic values’.

Tutorial Exercise
Conversational Moves

Paste the conversational moves listed below on 3x5 cards and randomly distribute them among participants before a pre-arranged discussion session. Ask students to practice their move during the discussion that follows. When the discussion is over distribute the entire list of moves so people can see the wide variety of ways that questioning, listening and responding can be practiced. Point out to students that virtually all the moves listed are designed to strengthen connections among group members and to reinforce the notion that discussion is truly a collaborative process that facilitates participation. Ask participants to recap how they tried to make the moves they were allocated.

Conversational Moves to be printed on resource cards (Developed by Stephen Brookfield 2006)

Ask a question or make a comment that shows you are interested in what another person says.

Ask a question or make a comment that encourages another person to elaborate on something they have already said.

Make a comment that underscores the link between two people's contributions - make this link explicit in your comment.

Use body language (in only a slightly exaggerated way) to show interest in what different speakers are saying.

Make a comment indicating that you found another person's ideas interesting or useful. Be specific as to why this was the case.

Contribute something that builds on, or springs from, what someone else has said. Be explicit about the way you are building on the other person's thoughts.

Make a comment that at least partly paraphrases a point someone has already made.

Make a summary observation that takes into account several people's contributions and that touches on a recurring theme in the discussion.

Ask a cause and effect question - for example, "can you explain why you think it's true that if these things are in place such and such a thing will occur?"

When you think it's appropriate, ask the group for a moment's silence to slow the pace of conversation and give you, and others, time to think.

Find a way to express appreciation for the enlightenment you have gained from the discussion. Try to be specific about what it was that helped you understand something.

Disagree with someone in a respectful and constructive way.
This activity is an ideal way to encourage participation and engagement with readings of key concept, dilemmas, problems or questions.

1. Construct the classroom into groups. This is where you will have to navigate your own assumptions and beliefs around democracy and pedagogy. The tension is between giving students choice in groups and constructing groups with intention. Culturally affirmative practice suggest that we often need to construct student groups to encourage new conversations and interactions. Wu and Hammond (2011) argue that domestic students, given the choice, will not engage in group work with international students or students from diverse backgrounds because of a deficit view developed from invisible but entrenched institutional and ideological racism. This stems from a Colonialist idea that overseas students are merely ‘guests’ or ‘sojourners’ in our country (Wu & Hammond 2011). So step one – construct groups.
2. On large paper place the question, key concept, dilemma or statement.
3. Ask the groups to respond on the paper.
4. Set a time period and ensure students are aware of the time constraints.
5. Rotate the paper.
6. The groups finish on the question, key concept, dilemma or statement they began on. They then summarise the overall responses and feed back to the class.

Student groups get a chance to respond, brainstorm and debate in small groups which is often more conducive to participation. Students get a chance to see what other groups have discussed and build on this knowledge. This means they are constructing knowledge as they go and is very helpful for students who are struggling to grasp key concepts. The responses often take the discussion in new detections or raise ideas and potions that you may not have thought of.

(Developed by Carey Shaw 2014)
The idea behind ‘peer instruction’ is firstly, democratic citizenship can be purposefully cultivated in the classroom by facilitating opportunities for students to actively shape the content and process (Brubaker 2012: 3). And secondly, that students are often able to explain or communicate key concepts of ideas better than the lecturer or tutor. It is possible to break up the monotony of tutorials and lectures with opportunities for students to participate and engage deeply with the material. It also helps develop tutorials and lectures as more of a conversational dialogue. This simple idea could be adapted to a range of settings.

‘Convince your neighbour’
1. In a hat or container develop a range of open ended questions, or key concepts that have been drawn from the readings, lectures, course content with which you want students to engage deeply.
2. Place students into pairs and have them draw an idea from the hat.
3. Ask student to ‘convince their neighbour’ of their ideas or understanding.

Students could be asked to feedback to the larger group which could be the development of a larger idea. This feedback will help the teacher identify gaps in the understandings, develop new directions and understandings around how students are engaging and interpreting the content, and of course teachers will learn from the students. This is knowledge as a co-construction.

The idea is that the tutorial or lecture session interspersed with a sequence of questions or activities that foster deep engagement, intuitive responses and debate may increase student concentration and participation.
Reflection

Reflection is a highly utilised practice in education and within multiple fields of practice, including nursing and social work. Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) view the activity of reflection in the learning and teaching context as: ‘a generic term for those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciations. It may take place in isolation or in association with others. It can be done well or badly, successfully or unsuccessfully. Most of us are intimately familiar with Freire’s ‘critical reflection’ as it is embedded extensively across our critical social work program and course assessment. But for this week we are wanting to also think about reflection more broadly in all its forms, as both formal and informal, simple and complex arrangements within the tutorial setting.

Critical educator Stephen Brookfield (1995) talks extensively about reflection and claims that it is through critical reflection that teachers can develop an understanding of the ‘worth’ of their teaching.

Brookfield (1995) offers six reasons that critical reflection is important. Specifically, critical reflection about our teaching (a) helps us make informed actions with a better chance of achieving desired outcomes; (b) helps us develop a rationale for practice, and the underlying principles behind our practice; (c) helps us keep perspective about limits to our abilities in the classroom; (d) helps us to ground ourselves emotionally; (e) enlivens our classrooms; and (f) increases democratic trust enabling students to feel safe in their own opinions and beliefs.

Brookfield (1995) also advocates the need for reflection to take multiple forms in order to gain ‘as many different vantage points as possible’. This includes the need for: ‘an autobiographical lense; self reflection (which includes understanding the student experience); peer review and engagement; and finally, ongoing research and publication as a reflection tool (Miller 2010).
The Strampel and Oliver (2007) reading that has been included in the literature summarises the cognitive processes that students often go through when engaging in reflection, but most significantly it reminds us that educators often assume that students know how to undertake reflective processes, when in fact it is something that must be scaffolded, modelled and learned. Indeed Boud, Keogh & Walker (1985, cited in Strampel & Oliver 2007) state: ‘the activity of reflection is so familiar that, as teachers or trainers, we often overlook it in formal learning settings, and make assumptions about the fact that not only is it occurring, but it is occurring effectively for everyone in the group’.

**Reflection Question:** In what ways does your current tutorial space allow students to demonstrate their understanding of course material (outside of assessment)? And then how do you make this accessible for all students in the classroom?
Social work, psychology, nursing and other practice orientated professions have curriculum embedded Work Integrated Learning systems (WILs). The practice experiences and theoretical perspectives that underpin practice are intentionally connected to course work and assessment. Reflection is one way that students link their practice experiences directly to their classroom course work. The following reflection activity is particularly useful for courses with a practicum, but aspects and prompts used in this reflection activity can be adapted to be useful to all disciplines and tutorial settings.

1. Please spend five minutes trying to complete as many of the following sentences as you can. Just say or write the first thing that comes into your head. If you’re stuck on any of them then just move on to the next one. The exercise works best when you have at least 3 or 4 sentences completed.

   What I’m most proud about in my work is my ability to ..........
   I know I’ve done good practice/work when ......
   What I would most like my colleagues to say about me when I’m out of the room is .....  
   The colleagues I admire most are those who are able to ........
   The mistake I’ve made that I’ve learned the most from was when ..........
   If I could give one piece of survival advice to someone starting a job like mine it would be .......

2. Now form a pair with someone at your table. Both of you will take turns in focusing attention on what each of you has written. This is how it works: Person (A) spends a minute or so speaking their responses to the sentences above. No interruptions are allowed while she/he is speaking. Person (B) listens carefully and then tell person (A) what she thinks person (A)’s assumptions are. These are the assumptions that she thinks person (A) has about the characteristics of a good practitioner and what good professional behaviour looks like. If she wants, Person (B) can ask (A) why she came up with the assumptions she did. The assumptions the listener gives can tell someone a great deal about the assumptions she holds about good practice. Spend about 10 minutes on this part of the conversation.

3. Now reverse the roles. Spend about 10 minutes with person (B) speaking their responses to the sentences above. Person (A) will listen carefully and then tell person (B) what she thinks person (B)’s assumptions are. These are the assumptions that she thinks person (B) has about the characteristics of a good practitioner and what good professional behaviour looks like.

TOTAL EXERCISE TIME : 30 MINUTES
(Developed by Stephen Brookfield 2006).
Tutorial Exercise

Stephen Brookfield’s Critical Incident Questionnaire (CIQ)

Critical Incident Questionnaire (CIQ) Brookfield (1995) designed the CIQ to help “embed our teaching in accurate information about students’ learning that is regularly solicited and anonymously given” (p. 114). Brookfield (1995) explains that “its purpose is not to determine what students liked or didn’t like about the class. Instead, it gets them to focus on specific, concrete happenings that were significant to them” (Brookfield 1995: 114).

Brookfield’s CIQ was designed as a single-page form that could be handed out to students at the end of a face-to-face class. The students would complete the CIQ anonymously, taking between five to ten minutes to answer the following five questions:

1. At what moment in the class this week did you feel most engaged with what was happening?

2. At what moment in the class this week did you feel most distanced from what was happening?

3. What action that anyone (tutor or student) took in class this week did you find most affirming and helpful?

4. What action that anyone (tutor or student) took in class this week did you find most puzzling or confusing?

5. What about the class this week surprised you the most? (This could be something about your own reactions to what went on, or something that someone did, or anything else that occurs to you).

(Developed by Stephen Brookfield, 1995)
Post-it note pedagogy - Not only are they cheap and flexible learning tools, the very nature and size of them (varied as they now can be) encourages, even demands, a precise and concise use of language. Rather than pages of notes, students have to be selective, synthesise and exercise higher order thinking to use post it notes successfully – it can be very much a case of “less is more”. Quick, simple, easy, adaptable. Pose a critical question; explore feelings, knowledge or understandings. Named or anonymous. Formative, summative, knowledge creation. This easy reflection tool can be used anytime, anywhere.

The uses are endless.
The Critical Pedagogy element of “Reflection”, asks the questions: *In what ways does your current tutorial space allow students to demonstrate their understanding of course material (outside of assessment)? And then how do you make this accessible for all students in the classroom?*

The course ‘Critical Social Policy Analysis’ helps social work students to explore the highly conceptual idea of “Transcending the Constraints of Social Policy”. A whole tutorial is devoted to dialogue and kinaesthetic learning processes to elicit from students their ideas about how one might ‘transcend’ the oppressive elements of a social policy, that is, what they believe can be done about those oppressive elements that might work towards social justice and human rights.

For this course each student has chosen a different social policy to critically analyse based on his or her experience on social work practicum. The ways to ‘transcend’ every different policy vary widely.

This exercise below has been used very successfully to help students use their imagination, by using ‘found objects’ as a metaphor for both the oppressive elements of the social policy and the more liberating actions that can be imagined.

Many different “Found objects” are brought in from the tutor’s home - objects from the kitchen drawers - utensils (rolling pin, egg beater, cookie cutters, tablecloth etc,) as well as any small toys or objects that might be used as symbols to represent oppression and liberation. Because this tute was before Easter, small Easter eggs were used to represent people, or money (resources allocated to support the implementation of the social policy). Everyone got to eat the Easter eggs and have some fun too.

Using the found objects, students ‘enact’ the most deleterious elements of social policy out to the class, and together we discuss what the liberating actions might be, using the found objects. Together we discuss what ‘principles’ are in play in the transcending part of the story.
Tutorial Worksheet (to give to students)

**Aim:** To develop ideas about how to ‘transcend’ the policy constraints of your chosen policy so you may remain an ethical practitioner.

- “Transcend” (verb) – 1. to go above and beyond a limit, or something with limits; to surpass or exceed; 2. to go beyond in elevation, excellence, extent or degree.
- “This can be improved, and this is how…..”
- “Work needs to be done on this policy to improve it, but meanwhile, we can do this other thing to bring about change; to effect change in people’s lives NOW”

It is impossible to indicate how this can be done for each and every social policy. There’s no ONE WAY to transcend something. Either, it will be pretty obvious what is needed to be done. Or, you may need to think about some **principles** from which you can look at the policy or the policy landscape differently. Think about today’s lecture regarding the multiple ways to exercise agency. Think about the local level and how it may connect to the macro/structural level. Use your imagination and creativity to develop a sense of hopefulness, a vision for a better world.

**Principles** for transcending might seek to confound that by:

- *Moving from ‘Outside In’ thinking to ‘Inside Out’ thinking*
- *Moving from ‘Top Down’ action to ‘Bottom Up’ action*
- *Moving from the ‘Individual’ to the ‘Collective’ (Dialogue; Build Relationships; Form Groups)*
- *Moving from ‘Rules Imposed’ to ‘Rules developed by end users’*
- *Moving from ‘Passive Recipient of a Policy’ to an ‘Active Change Agent’.*

**Exercise:**

Take turns to use the ‘found objects’ in the tutorial room to imagine how your policy might be transcended. Draw on one or more of the principles above, (or others that you can think of) and embody the transcending act by utilising the found objects. Firstly, tell us a little about your policy and any oppressive elements of it that impact on people’s lives, and then what transcending action that could be done to remedy that situation. What could be done?

(Developed by Athena Lathouras 2013)
Seeing Through The Students Eyes

Seeing through the students eyes
“...I like to think that I have two eyes that I don’t have to use the same way. When I do educational work with a group of people, I try to see with one eye where those people are as they perceive themselves to be. I do this by looking at body language. By imagination, by talking to them, by visiting them, by learning what they enjoy and what troubles them. I try to find out where they are because their growth is going to be from there, not from some abstraction or where I am or someone else is” (Myles Horton, cited in Longo 2007: 77).

Talking Circles
A talking circle approach provides the opportunity for every student to participate in discussion, in a safe, non-confrontational and non-hierarchical manner. Although talking circles — or peace circles — are traditional practice for many Indigenous peoples throughout the world, the use of talking circles in higher education is relatively rare (Umbreit, 2003). However, the application of this pedagogical strategy can yield numerous benefits to students and educators, such as inclusion, opportunity to reflect critically, development of deep listening skills, preparedness, and exposure to diversity.

The subject matter can vary, but the approach remains the same. In general, the method for a talking circle has several key characteristics:

- The circle keeper (tutor) provides a brief introduction, sets a tone for interaction in the circle as relaxed and thoughtful, and also reminds the participants of the few ground rules.
- Every student has a turn to talk.
- The order is systematic, going from one student to the next, usually in a clockwise rotation.
- There is no interrupting.
- The student may choose to skip his or her turn. After the circle is complete, the student has the opportunity to contribute if they so choose. No one is ‘forced’ to talk.
- You may like to use a talking artifact (such as a talking stick) that symbolizes the ‘holding of the space’. This develops the understanding that the student who is holding the artifact is holding the floor.

The talking circle approach holds some similarities to the more commonly utilized roundtable approach, in which the tables are configured as a circle and the discussion is more open. Roundtable also is an excellent way to facilitate class-discussion; however, it is important to be cognizant of the importance of opening up space for all students to participate. To ensure all voices are heard, start the class with a talking circle and then transition to roundtable and then small group work.

Developed from - Taking the Frog’s Eye View: How Place-Based Education and Talking Circles Foster Student Retention, Academic Achievement, and Life-long Learning (Norman 2013).
Dialogue

‘The students—no longer docile listeners—are now **critical co-investigators** in dialogue with the teacher . . . education, as a **humanist and liberating praxis**, posits as fundamental that the people subjected to domination must fight for their **emancipation**. To that end, it enables teachers and students to become subjects of the educational process by **overcoming authoritarianism** and an alienating intellectualism’ (Freire 1970).

Dialogue is a widely drawn upon educational concept, with the theories, methods and applications of dialogue permeating the fields of community development, psychotherapy, feminist practice, education and social transformation (Cooper et al. 2013). Dialogue is both a philosophical standpoint about knowledge, power, human relationships and the human psyche and a process for connecting deeply with, other human beings, ourselves and the world around us. At the heart of both the philosophy and process of dialogue is an underlying focus on positive transformation (Westoby & Dowling 2009; Cooper et al 2013). Westoby and Dowling (2009: 11), from a community development perspective, name this “the transformational space of dialogue, where unjust social relations are analysed and challenged through a process of deep questioning”.

**The philosophy of dialogue**

At the heart of the philosophy of dialogue is a humanistic belief in the inherent value of all human beings. In order to enact this philosophy of common humanity, we must have a deep respect for one another (Cooper et al. 2013) and engage with each other, in a way that is mutual (Buber cited in Cooper et al. 2013). Ultimately this is underpinned by the practice of love, where the primacy of the ego is overcome and in its place, where we truly care about the other person, as if they were ourselves (Westoby & Dowling 2009).

How we relate to knowledge is also central to the philosophy of dialogue, which takes a post-modern view of knowledge and truth as being subjective and socially constructed. Dialogue becomes a platform, where the participants actively create knowledge and truth, through their interaction and shared understanding (Cooper et al. 2013). Furthermore, according to this perspective, our attachment to our own knowledge and beliefs, prohibits us from mutually engaging with the other. With this in mind practitioners are encouraged to develop a “passion of not knowing” (Caputo cited in Westoby & Dowling 2009, p.215) and a desire to understand, to try to “see through the eyes of another” (Buber cited in Cooper et al. 2013).

Critical educator and feminist author bell hooks (2010) contests that as educators if we are to pay more than lip service to our emancipatory intentions within the classroom then we need to commit to the maintenance of ‘connection and openness’ that can only be developed through true dialogical processes. Giroux (cited in hooks 1994: 129) refers to dialogue as part of the commitment to combining ‘theory and practice’ within the classroom setting.
So what is dialogue?

‘A respect for the other by virtue of her or his humanity’ (Aloni 2013: 1072). Therefore dialogue is a genuine desire to understand the personality and world view of the other, approached with the understanding and valuing of uniqueness and individuality.

An agreement to begin the process and journey of discovery together. Therefore dialogue becomes a point of departure based on mutual trust and openness (not power games or competitions involving status and prestige) (Aloni 2013: 1072).

A critical conversation. Therefore dialogue becomes a ‘debate or a sense of ideas among the speakers that involves attentive listening and a sense of challenging, exploration of meanings, as well as inviting joint thought and a mutually beneficial exchange of ideas’ (Aloni 2013: 1072).

A coming together of both parties with a genuine willingness to change. Therefore dialogue aims at ‘mutual enrichment and inspiration and transformation’, developed through the exploration of your own ideas and experiences and ‘the lived reality of the other and the circumstances they share’ (Aloni 2013: 1072).
What dialogue is not?

**Casual chat, small talk, checking in** – dialogue always has a purpose, has significant content or statements and it is not what we do in the lunch room.

**An argument, shouting match or a venting arena** – dialogue may meaningfully develop out of concerns, conflict or debate but the significant difference between an argument and dialogue is that we normally enter an argument or conflict space with the intention of stating or cementing our position or attempting to draw attention to our view which we believe to be true or correct. Dialogue implies both parties are always ‘respectful and open to hearing different views or narratives’ (Aloni 2013: 1071).

**Dictatorial or authoritative** – dialogue attempts to navigate binary oppositional power relationships: teacher-student, line manager – worker, worker – service user etc. 'It evinces a non-hierarchal approach and a spirit of democracy, reciprocity and solidarity' (Aloni 2013: 1072).

**An assessment, or the delivery of instruction or essential information** – dialogue is not where we assess or test for knowledge or competency. 'It is a form of shared learning, both about the world of the other and of the new' (Aloni 2013: 1072).

**Technocratic, results or outcome driven** – While it is often the intention of the dialogue to develop shared understandings of meaning and a shared agenda, outcomes can often be hard to gauge or require a more nuanced understanding of the expectations or orientation of the conversation.
Tutorial Exercise
The I-YOU-WE Method

Dialogue: The I-You-We Method

“A deep, challenging and enriching conversation, a mutual process of building shared understanding, meaning, communication and creative action.” (Westoby & Dowling 2009, p.10)

Philosophy of Dialogue - Dialogue is a transformational exchange based on respect for our shared humanity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientation to People</th>
<th>Orientation to Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People are seen as inherently valuable and as an equal part of humanity in spite of the social hierarchy at play. To truly respect and deeply engage with another person is an act of love.</td>
<td>Knowledge is not fixed, it is seen as constructed, multiple and changing. Knowledge is created through the interactions between people. Difference is valued as something that creates new knowledge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Process of Dialogue - Dialogue is a process where a strong relationship is built and where deep learning can occur. It is appropriate for many settings: classrooms, supervision, filed practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal process</th>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tutor</td>
<td>The listener (tutor)</td>
<td>The speaker (the student)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sees the student as an equal with a right to who they are as they define themselves</td>
<td>THE &quot;I&quot; Presenting yourself to the other</td>
<td>1. Present yourself and your ideas/experience/feelings and ask for a response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set’s their own agenda aside/holds it lightly</td>
<td>THE &quot;YOU&quot; Seeking to understand the other deeply, as they see themselves</td>
<td>3. Respond to the students’ experience by ASKING QUESTIONS based on the KEY THEMES you have heard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopta a stance of &quot;not knowing&quot; and is curious</td>
<td>THE &quot;WE&quot; Shared understanding is developed</td>
<td>5. Keep DIGGING DEEPER by ASKING MORE QUESTIONS based on the KEY THEMES as they emerge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shares themselves authentically</td>
<td>Mutual learning</td>
<td>7. CONNECT your own ideas/feeling/experience in with your UNDERSTANDING of what the student has explored with you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is open to being changed</td>
<td></td>
<td>9. CONNECT/STRUGGLE with what the student has said with your own UNDERSTANDING OF YOURSELF.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EXPLORE THESE CONNECTIONS/TENSIONS - Until a shared meaning is developed, learning has occurred or a way forward is found.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Developed by Naomi Wiley and Carey Shaw (2014) for Cross Cultural Supervision Training Social Work USC
Skills for Dialogical Relationship Building

Some of the skills required to engage in dialogical relationships are noted below:

- Co-operation, rather than competition
- An attitude of permanent openness
- Commitment to ‘the other’
- Recognising self as unfinished and always learning
- Com/passion for and faith in the other
- Critical thinking to appreciate the structural nature of oppression
- Responsibility for own behaviour, especially in terms of consistency between own words and actions.
- Courage to love
- Radicalisation - activism for liberation
- Conscientisation practices to debunk the manipulative power of ideology


https://www.dartmouth.edu/~igd/dialogues/
The complexity of power relations within the classroom cannot be overestimated. Educators and students occupy sites and systems in which egalitarian ideals and emancipatory ideas and content are often espoused, but in reality classroom power relations are in fact threatening and coercive (Bizzell 1991: 59). Students are often persuaded through the pedagogy to adapt and adopt the thinking and ideas of others. Giroux (1991, cited in Bizzell 1991: 60) describes this traditional pedagogical assertiveness as oppression.

The question is how do we, as tutors model transformative and more emancipatory power relations in the classroom? These are the sites that we as educators have the most influence and control over.

Critical educator and feminist bell hooks (1994) contests that educators must be courageous enough to surrender power within the classroom through the questioning and challenging of habitual pedagogical processes. It is important that we consider pedagogical processes and acquire skills that foster more horizontal power relations.

hooks (1994: 7) suggests as educators we need to work towards pedagogies that ‘generate excitement’. Excitement is not an idea that is often associated with higher education. These ideas of excitement and experiences of horizontal power relationships are often not comfortable for either educators or students. We know that shifts in power are disruptive and unsettling. Students who see themselves as consumers are often not prepared to be involved in their education in any meaningful way.
“When we try to change the classroom so that there is a sense of mutual responsibility for learning, students get scared that you are now not the captain working with them, that you are after all just another crew member and not a reliable one at that. To educate for freedom, then, we have to challenge and change the way that everyone thinks about the pedagogical process” (hooks 1994).

Pedagogical processes that are exciting and almost demand participation can potentially change the way students view their education, their roles and ability to act, influence and exert power.

Two potential ways of challenging power relations and subverting traditional approaches is by being prepared to have a ‘flexible agenda’ within the tutorial space. This is the idea of letting go of rigid, set ideas in terms of teaching practices and being prepared to interact, respond and adapt according to the ‘needs’ within the classroom as they develop. This idea of adaptability speaks to notions of critical pedagogy that reject rigidly encased ideals and practices, instead understand pedagogy to be an ongoing political and social project (Smyth cited in Steinberg & Freire 2011: 43). The other reoccurring theme is critical pedagogical literature is educators and students having a ‘genuine interest in each other’. For educators this involves finding ways to bring the students lives, experiences, cultures, ideas into the ‘centre of the curriculum (Smyth cited in Steinberg & Freire 2011: 34). Smyth (cited in Steinberg & Freire) goes onto explain that when we do this as educators we can no longer ignore the confronting and contentious political aspects of social lives such as “gender, sexuality, violence, culture, economics”. The political become prioritised and intentionalised in such a way, which results in a genuine shifting and sharing or power with students (Smyth cited in Steinberg & Freire 2011: 34). The aspiration is for students to now envision themselves as co-creators rather than recipients of the knowledge within the tutorial space.

Reflection Question: What power relations between myself and my students are expressed in my teaching practices?

Find a contentious issue on which opinion is divided amongst participants. Frame the issue as a debate motion.

Propose the motion to participants. By a show of hands ask people either to volunteer to work on a team that is preparing arguments to support the motion or to volunteer to work on a team that is preparing arguments to oppose the motion.

Announce that all those who have prepared to work on the team to draft arguments to support the motion will now comprise the team to draft arguments to oppose the motion. Similarly, all those who have prepared to work on the team to draft arguments to oppose the motion will now comprise the team to draft arguments to support the motion.

Conduct the debate. Each team chooses one person to present their arguments. After initial presentations the teams reconvene to draft rebuttal arguments and choose one person to present these.

Debrief the debate. Discuss with participants their experience of this exercise. Focus on how it felt to argue against positions you were committed to. What new ways of thinking about the issue were opened up? Did participants come to new understandings? Did they change their positions on this issue at all?

Ask participants to write a follow up reflection paper on the debate. Here's the instructions...

1. What assumptions about the issue that you hold were clarified or confirmed for you by the debate?
2. Which of your assumptions surprised you during the debate? In other words, were you made aware of assumptions you hold that you didn't know you had?
3. How could you check out these new assumptions? What sources of evidence would you consult?
4. What new perspectives on the issue suggested themselves to you?
5. In what ways, if any, were your existing assumptions challenged or changed by the debate?
Facilitation and facilitating gained ground in adult education, community education, youth work and informal education in part because educators and animators are ‘ Usually at pains to contrast the emotionally congenial aspects of their practice with what they regard as the rigid and conformist nature of schooling’ (Brookfield 1986: 123).

Many who work in higher education come to teaching sometimes as a default, as an extension of their own education and research pathways. Consequentially many are not as skilled or as intentional in the pedagogical process as conventional ‘teachers’. Facilitation of the tutorial space is often overlooked or undervalued. ‘At heart of facilitation is about the process of helping people explore, learn and change’ (Smith 2001; 2009). This then positions facilitation as a core theme and aspect of critical pedagogy and an essential consideration as we seek to teach creatively across diversely.

The theories and practice of facilitation is often interchangeable with group work. While as student many of us cringed at the mention of group work, most educators and teachers can reflect on their own learning being enhanced when group experiences where supported by active, creative and process driven facilitation.

http://www.experientialtools.com/2015/03/03/the-art-science-of-experiential-group-facilitation-and-teaching/
1. Think of the best group discussions you’ve ever been involved in. What things happened that made these conversations so satisfying? Make a few notes on this by yourself.

2. Think of the worst group discussions you’ve ever been involved in. What things happened that made these conversations so unsatisfactory? Make a few notes on this by yourself.

3. Now form a group with 3 other people. Take turns in talking about what made discussion groups work so well for you. Listen for common themes, shared experiences and features of conversation that a majority of you would like to see in the course.

4. Take turns in talking about what made discussion group work so awful for you. Listen for common themes, shared experiences and features of group conversation that a majority of you would like to see avoided in this course.

5. For each of the characteristics of good discussion you agree on, try and suggest three things a group could do to ensure that these characteristics were present. Be as specific and concrete as you can. For example, if you feel good conversation is developmental, with later themes building on and referring back to earlier ones, then you could propose a rule that every new comment made by a participant is prefaced with an explanation as to how it relates to an earlier comment.

6. For each of the characteristics of bad discussion you agree on, try and suggest three things a group could do to ensure that these characteristics were avoided. Be as specific and concrete as you can. For example, if you feel that bad conversation happens when one person’s voice dominates then you could propose a rule whereby once someone has spoken they are not allowed to make a second comment until at least three other people have spoken (unless another group member explicitly invites the participant to say something else).

7. Try and finish this exercise by drafting a charter for discussion that comprises the specific ground rules you agree on. We will make each group’s rules public and see if we can develop a charter for discussion to guide us in the coming weeks.

(Developed by Stephen Brookfield 2006)
Embodying Theory to Guide Practice
Developing a Personal Framework of Practice

Social work and community development both emphasise the practice as working for social justice, community empowerment and the rights of marginalised groups (Forde & Lynch 2014). Their four years of education at university provides students with analyses about why poverty and disadvantage persists in the 21st Century and to gain skills, knowledge and importantly, a commitment to redress these circumstances. These challenges are universal across many professions.

In our increasingly complex world, one that is dominated by disempowering neoliberal discourses, it is essential that students be given tools to embody theory in meaningful ways, to assist them beyond university life and to meet the challenges associated with long-term social justice work in the field.

One way to undertake this endeavour is through processes that assist students to begin to articulate an explicit framework of practice. This works sits within the theoretical tradition in community development called “Implicate Method” (Lathouras 2010:15). This method is where practitioners position themselves into practice assertively and intentionally. They move beyond generic job descriptions and methodically and reflexively explore their unique and individual voice in their social justice work. Reflective processes elicit and explore their self-view and world-view and where these have come from. This reflection helps us to understand how our internal world shapes our actions in the external world.

A personal framework of practice is a tool that helps practitioners to ‘frame the work’ – to analyse situations; make decisions about how to respond; decide what outcomes are being sought; what processes will achieve desired outcomes; and assess effectiveness of that work. A personal framework of practice sits alongside professional frameworks (eg. Australian Association for Social Workers’ Code of Ethics) and organisational frameworks (eg. Queensland Health). It can be considered a guide or compass to point practitioners in the direction they wish to practice, one that aligns values and theoretical frameworks with their actual practice. Moving beyond just an espoused practice theory to an actual theory-in-use (Argris & Schön 1974:24), a personal framework of practice can be a helpful tool for theory-action congruency as it anchors practitioners to what they know to be important, and brings intention to their practice.

Westoby and Ingamells (2012) undertook research with student-practitioners who have undertaken such processes over a 25-year period of course work at the University of Queensland. They argue these kinds of elicitive learning opportunities runs counter to the usual learning style at university. However, these kinds of highly participatory processes for critical reflection and open inquiry support efforts to identify the intellectual and philosophical traditions that inform emancipatory practice. It can also provide the ‘fire in the belly’ or ‘greater personal confidence’ to withstand pressures to confirm to a status quo
or power relations that do not best serve the communities of people in which practitioners work (Westoby & Ingamells 2012:73).

A variation of these processes is taught at USC in *SWK302 Community Development and Social Action*, and assists students to begin the work of developing their explicit personal framework of practice. Processes generate ‘data’ that can be sorted into various dimensions and elements, and then used to give shape and form to an artifact that is their emerging framework.

**Suggested Processes (over several weeks):**

1. **The River of Road of Life Exercise**

   On an A3 piece of paper, draw a ‘road’ or a ‘river’ of your life. On that road/river include any key moments, troubles, junctions, rocky sections, breaks and so forth.

   Use the drawing process to recollect key influencers, moments that have contributed to your life/practice.....to why you are sitting here today? Note those on the drawing.

   Have there been key people who have ‘opened’ (or closed) ‘doors’/pathways for you in your life? Note those on the drawing.

   Write a list of the important things that come out of that exercise for you. Have these experiences shaped the values that drive you today? Write those down.

2. **In dialogue**, and in turn, share something of your journey/river/road with a person in the group with which you feel comfortable. Really listen deeply and help that person elicit the **values, ideals, beliefs** they hold now. Ask them how those values are influencing how they live their lives now, or how these play out in their practice (current or future). Write all these ideas down.

3. **Following on from the “Road of River of Life” task, review your journey to USC Social Work/Human Services / Social Sciences.**

   By now you've drawn your journey highlighting the key moments and key people that meant you are here today.

   Now think about the many social change author-activists (Mahatma Gandhi, Saul Alinsky, Paulo Freire, Vandana Shiva, Joanna Macy etc) that you've heard about during the course. Which activist impressed you or is going to stay with you? Why?

   Think about some of the stories that have been told, or in the DVD stories, youtube clips. What qualities did those practitioners possess or convictions did they hold that resonated with you? Why?

   Think about other people that you've heard about/ from / learnt from in your other courses in your degree. Who and what did they say and why have these resonated with you?
4. Now think about key theories that form part of your framework of practice: Grand or meta theories; and Middle-range theories; and Practice theories. *Note those down. Why are these significant to you?*

*In dialogue,* and in turn, share something of your journey/river/road based on the exercise above with a person in the group with which you feel comfortable. Really listen deeply and help that person elicit (if they haven’t already), the values, ideals, beliefs they hold now. Ask them how those values are influencing how they live their lives now, or how these play out in their practice (current or future). *Write all these ideas down.*

5. Are you involved in a social movement? Why? What analysis do you have that means you put energy into that work? What’s driving you around this?

6. What kind of a practitioner do you want to be known as? What values drive you? (Values = beliefs/ideals). What practice principles do you want to commit to? (Practice principles = ways we are committed to act).

7. **The next steps.** Look at all the ‘data’ that’s been generated throughout the processes. Start to mind-map the various themes (on butcher’s paper or index cards) to see what key dimensions and elements stand out. “Dimensions” are higher order categories of concepts. “Elements” are lower order concepts that sit under those dimensions.

8. **The final steps.** Once all that data is sorted into dimensions and elements ask yourself if there is a symbol or a metaphor that somehow relates to your framework. Draw that shape or symbol and note down those key dimensions and elements on the drawing.

Then, lastly, give your framework a name. The naming and drawing of a symbol/shape will make the framework memorable. This becomes a transportable artifact that can be taken with you and remains a guide to your practice. From time to time review and add to your framework. This is an evolving process as you are exposed to more and more practice opportunities and new knowledge, so too your framework will evolve.
“Blended Learning is inherently about rethinking and redesigning the teaching and learning relationship...It is not enough to deliver old content in a new medium” (Garrison & Kanuka 2004: 96-97).

Blended learning is essentially a holistic redesign that incorporates digital and online instruction with effective face-to-face contact (Dziuban, Hartman, & Moskal 2004: 2). It is an intentional pedagogical shift that ‘endeavours to purposefully and seamlessly integrate online and traditional learning in order to create a distinct, new approach with its own merits’ (Allen, Seaman, & Garrett 2007; Picciano 2006).

To teach more effectively across diversity, educators must be committed to adapting their traditional pedagogies. An openness to blended learning allows educators to enhance their teaching practice. There is some reluctance amongst educators around the potential of digital media to replace face-to-face education. (Carmon, cited in Ayala 2013: 280) reminds educators that ‘people are not single-method learners and tend to perform better when they have a mix of modalities and methods for learning’. Literature around blended learning suggests that students want a variety of ways to connect to the learning material, and that blended learning supports students to be more ‘self directed and flexible, students are less isolated and the online platforms promote community among students; with students achieving higher levels of satisfaction and learning outcomes’ (Ausburn 2004; Garnham & Kaleta 2002; Lim, Morriss & Kupritz 2006; Vaughan 2007, cited in Ayala 2013).
Blended learning supports both educators and students to face current and future learning and teaching challenges (El-Mowafy, Kuhn & Snow 2013: 133).

Two blended learning methods which are readily accessible in most higher education settings through the utilisation of current available digital media platforms are the ‘flipped classroom’ and ‘simulation based e-learning’. In flipped teaching, ‘students are provided with learning material (e.g. course notes and videos of lectures) to prepare themselves for the classroom and/or practical activities’ (El-Mowafy, Kuhn & Snow 2013: 137). Utilising simulation based e-learning ‘the student is able to learn practical skills required at a given workplace through simulation via real-world scenarios’ (El-Mowafy, Kuhn & Snow 2013: 137).

Flipped Classroom

“Flipping speaks the language of today’s students” (Bergmann & Sams 2012)

The idea of a flipped classroom is that content students traditionally hear and see in a lecture is now available to access through video. This leaves more time for learning activities during tutorial class time. “Flipping a lesson means providing students with a video that explains the key concepts, structure and skills, so that when they get into the real tutorial space, after doing a quick recap, they can get into a real workshop way of learning” (Boyer N.D). In this way, the educator is on hand to give practical assistance, check progress, build relationships, respond in real time, and pick up areas that require more attention and exploration. We are focusing on how our pedagogical approaches can be more receptive to diversity, and adaptable and responsive to real time inquiry. The flipped classroom supports the ideas around blended learning and has enormous potential in the traditional higher education setting.

**Why you should flip your Classroom?**

Bergmann and Sams (2012) present a range of arguments as to why the ‘flipped classroom’ is beneficial and adaptable to most education settings, and is particularly suited to higher education. Most importantly the flipped classroom is not to be confused with online learning. Although the flipped classroom utilises key content presentation through a digital platform, the intention of this pedagogical approach is to allow for more direct, small group, in-depth student – teacher interaction.

**Flipping speaks the language of today’s student:** many of today’s students have grown up with digital media and carry around technology in their pocket that surpasses the limited technology available on campus. It does seem to make sense that as educators we embrace this development and incorporate it more holistically into the pedagogy. Many educators are frustrated when they look up from their lecture or tutorial and observe students engaging with digital media rather than the dialogue. The flipped classroom suggests that we ‘infiltrate the video/digital culture instead of fighting it’ (Bergmann & Sams 2012: 21).
Flipping helps busy students: students and their ability to engage in education are often compromised by financial, family, cultural, transport and employment complexities and obligations. The flipped classroom has the potential to better support students through increased flexibility and adaptability, thereby responding more comprehensively to the current political and social environment.

Flipping helps struggling students: Within traditional lecture and tutorial settings teaching time is often devoted to students who respond the most and this is more often than not students who excel in the traditional educational setting. Bergmann and Sams (2012: 23) attest that the flipped classroom has resulted in them being able to spend more time with all students, especially students who struggle. “We think this may be the single most important reason students thrive in the flipped model” (Bergmann & Sams 2012: 23).

Flipping helps students of all abilities to excel: Students can access and process key content at their own pace. This also promotes self directed research as students often engage in further exploration in real time.

Flipping allows students to pause, stop, rewind and fast forward: this approach can make the content more accessible, as students can control the remote, set their own pace. Students disengage in the traditional lecture setting for a variety of reasons. For some it is that the content is being presented too quickly or in a format that is not pedagogically accessible, and for others it is not quick enough. This is supporting self paced and self directed learning.

Flipping increases student-teacher interaction: Bergmann and Sam (2012: 25) are clear that this ‘flipped classroom’ pedagogy is not about replacing ‘face-to-face instruction, but rather creating a collaboration of pedagogical approaches. Tutorials have now become interactive sessions whereby content and questions can be delivered as needed, or just-in-time. Students come prepared with questions, theories, ideas to explore and work through.

Flipping allows teachers to know their students better: Pedagogically the flipped classroom supports the understanding that relationships are central to learning and engagement. The flipped classroom supports educators to spend more time face to face and interactively with students. The filming of the material allows lecturer to bring a more conversational and discussion based style to the presentation of key content, concepts and idea. Educators can pose questions for student to work on and bring to tutorials.

Flipping allows for real differentiation: More time can be spent interacting, therefore the learning environment becomes more personalised. This allows real time adaption of questions, content, areas of enquiry etc to more adequately reflect the diverse needs and understandings of students.

Flipping changes classroom management: while classroom management is something more usually associated with school level education, the higher education classroom often requires ‘management’ for cultural and political reasons, or to better reduce power disparities that occur within tutorial and lecture spaces which disadvantage the more vulnerable students. The flipped classroom does result in educators spending considerably less time talking ‘at’ or ‘to’ students and more time interacting ‘with’ and exploring ‘alongside’ (Bergmann & Sams 2012: 29).


Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) 2010, Code of Ethics, Australian Association of Social Workers, Canberra.


Brookfield, S 2006, ‘The Skillful Teacher’, *Workshop: Assumptions of Skillful Teaching*, University of St Thomas, Minneapolis.


Devlin, M 2011, ‘Bridging sociocultural incongruity: conceptualising students from low socio-economic status backgrounds in Australian higher education’, Studies in Higher Education. Online


University of the Sunshine Coast, Cultural Diversity and Inclusive Practice Toolkit | Staff | University of the Sunshine Coast, <http://www.usc.edu.au/connect/work-at-usc/staff/cultural-diversity-and-inclusive-practice-toolkit>


