Difference and Diversity as a Resource for Learning

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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pu0efvgEzgA>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58veEHr7RTg>

Imagine there's no heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky
Imagine all the people
Living for today...

Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too
Imagine all the people
Living life in peace...

Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger
In a brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world...

You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope some day you'll join us
And the world will be as one

Imagine John Lennon

Transcultural Social Practice

An elective course within Master of
Social Practice Programme

A detailed scanning electron micrograph (SEM) showing a variety of microorganisms. The background is dark blue. There are numerous spherical particles, some with spiky surfaces (yellow and red) and others smooth (green). There are also elongated, green, textured structures, some with internal patterns. A prominent, large, green, spherical structure with a complex, porous surface is in the center. A red, elongated, and somewhat irregular structure is on the right side. The overall composition is dense and diverse, representing a wide range of microbial life.

A range

- The course attracts social practitioners from a range of professional and cultural backgrounds, affinities, personalities and experiences.

This diversity is utilised as a main asset for the course

Course content and process have been adjusted to suit a particular student group still retaining prescribed learning outcomes for the course

- Each group is unique but all are very diverse**

Invitation to co-create the course via Academic Co-creative Inquiry

- **Students are sent an introductory letter to collaborate and co-create the course utilising their unique abilities, experiences, values, skills, knowledge**
- **Mutuality and reciprocity in learning**

Focus

- Exploration of concepts of transcultural social practice
- Multiplicities of cultural identities
- Development of cultural respectfulness in a bi-cultural context of Aotearoa/New Zealand

Bi-cultural context

- Biculturalism is based on a founding document between the British Crown and Tangata Whenua (Maori tribes of Aotearoa) Te Tiriti O Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi) signed on 6th of February 1840
- In contemporary society, the treaty as a living document has evolved to relate to Tangata Whenua (Maori) and Tau Iwi (everyone else)

- To critically analyse theories of cultural construction and development in relation to indigenous and non-Western migrant communities in Aotearoa New Zealand
- To critically analyse data and policy on the wellbeing and needs of cultural communities in Aotearoa New Zealand
- To demonstrate understanding of the diagnostic and healing practices of different cultural communities

Prescribed learning in a multicultural classroom????

- *Are learning outcomes really important to facilitate the learning process?*
- *Do we need them?*
- *Are they destructive to facilitate creativity and innovation?*
- *Are there other ways to tell our students what we should expect from them?*
- *Do we need to be more creative in the way we express learning outcomes?*

Do Learning Outcomes Kill
Originality and Creativity?

Alternatives?

This is how LOs get transformed when students personalise them into inquiry questions:

- I would like to create a general understanding of the cultural needs of indigenous groups of New Zealand.
- I am going to explore the construction of a New Zealand Bujutsu (Martial arts) identity, and also the traditional cultures that underpin the development of that identity.
- I want to create a general awareness of the cultural needs of the Indian migrant community in relation to gender and ethnicity in the bicultural context of New Zealand.
- How to critically analyse the practise of New Zealand Bujutsu (Martial arts) and the support, laws and policies which may affect the practice of Bujutsu in a New Zealand context?
- I would like to compare and contrast the impact on the Maori culture on three different migrant communities in New Zealand
- Present and explain Chi/ Ki philosophies and how this has related to healing myself and others.

Tensions between....

- Commitment to biculturalism and student assumptions about multiculturalism
- Negotiables and non-negotiables
- An external need to pass the course and the internal need to learn new concepts
- Domestic and international students
- Various academic competencies and prior knowledge – academic vs. life experiences
- Promise of dialogue, a romantic idea about co-creation and egalitarian approach and importance of academic rigour

These tensions are addressed through a process where:

- Students create learning contracts to personalise learning outcomes into inquiry questions
- Presentations in pairs/trios with a person/s of a different culture to their own
- A written assignment addressing LO from their cultural and theoretical perspective reflecting on their transcultural social practice

Future of transcultural practice

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- A photograph of two young children, a Black girl on the left and a White girl on the right, both smiling and peeking over a brown leather surface. The girl on the left has dark hair in braids, and the girl on the right has light brown hair in a bun. They are both looking directly at the camera.
- Why?
 - How?
 - Invite the other to lunch (Elizabeth Lesser)
 - Open secret Rumi
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLDQ0HbhrzY>

RUMI

**“Every object and being in the universe is
a jar overflowing with wisdom and beauty,
a drop of the Tigris that cannot be
contained by any skin.**

**Every jarful spills and makes the
earth more shining, as though
covered in satin.”**