5-2017

Rescuing Emotion from the Margins of Social Work Education

Judith Mary Hoy
St. Catherine University

Follow this and additional works at: http://sophia.stkate.edu/dsw

RESCUING EMOTION FROM THE MARGINS OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

Banded Dissertation
Presented to
The School of Social Work
St. Catherine University-The University of St. Thomas
St. Paul, Minnesota.

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Social Work

Judith Mary Hoy
05/20/2017

Abstract

Based on advances in brain imaging technology that provide evidence that emotion plays a

critical role in learning and integrating new knowledge, this dissertation presents three articles to

assist social work educators in developing an understanding of the emotional processes of

learning and how they impact students.

The first conceptual article provides a brief overview of findings from brain science that

demonstrate the importance of emotion in learning, challenging the enduring cognitive bias in

higher education. Barriers to engaging student emotions are identified and discussed, and the

philosophy of Humanism is used to articulate the connection between emotional expression and

personal empowerment.

The second article uses the research method, Scholarly Personal Narrative (SPN) to reflect upon

my own experiences of marginalization and how these experiences ultimately impacted my

teaching. Central to this narrative are the ways that emotion goes underground making it

difficult for both teacher and students to use their voices in social work education. The four

major components of SPN – pre-search, me-search, research and we-search are also explicated.

The third article describes an experiential learning technique, the "invisible consultant" that

helps students experience and manage their emotions during in-class role plays. This technique

is congruent with social work values and also helps students develop practice skills.

Using the humanistic paradigm and experiential learning theory as its' conceptual framework,

this banded dissertation provides practical tools for educators as well as a conceptual foundation

for attending to emotion in higher education, thus rescuing it from the margins.

*Keywords: emotion, brain science, humanism, experiential learning, scholarly personal
narrative*

Dedication

With gratitude to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart for continuing to compose even after being told he was using "too many" notes.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my parents Tom & LaDonna Hoy, with deep gratitude for their courage, integrity, grace and goodness. Love always, love no matter. Thanks to M.J. Gilbert for your brilliance, compassion and humor; you have my eternal regard. Finally, I want to acknowledge Mari Ann Graham who would not allow me to abandon myself in the process of writing this dissertation even when it created more work and frustration for both of us. I have learned so much from you. I am so grateful.

Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures

Tables

Figures

Introduction

In a very real way, this dissertation became a metaphor for the journey I have been on to find my place in social work education. Although I have been teaching social work courses for over 15 years, I have been uncertain about where I belong in the world of higher education. Research has never been my strong suit, and although I have learned how to design a research proposal, write a grant and align course objectives with CSWE competencies, none of these tasks come easy for me or provide much satisfaction once completed. I love reflection, process and group dynamics or what some in education would refer to as the "soft skills", but what I love most of all is teaching. I love those moments when the classroom becomes a sacred space, large enough to hold both reason and passion and where, by staying still, both students and teachers experience the transformative power of a learning community.

It is difficult to use quantitative language to describe the interaction of variables that create transformational learning. Still, I started out this dissertation attempting to do just that. I began by writing a conceptual article that makes a case for greater integration of findings from affective neuroscience in social work education. I found support for the importance of this topic in my review of the literature as Ikebuchi & Rasmussen (2014) note, "There is a paucity of literature in social work education focused on how emotions are dealt with in the classroom or how the development of emotional competence is facilitated by social work education" (p. 285). Maybe brain science could provide the empirical support I needed to demonstrate (in no uncertain terms) the important role that human emotion and interpersonal relationships play in creating new knowledge.

Completing the first article of this banded dissertation was much harder than I had ever anticipated. My writing was initially fueled by righteous indignation over the historic

marginalization of emotional domains of learning in higher education. Now I had scientific evidence to back up my argument that emotional components of learning are equal in importance to cognitive ones. Although I didn't realize it at the time, the strength of my desire to locate "hard" evidence to support my argument only led me further from myself and from what I hoped to accomplish with this dissertation. For this reason, I decided in the second part of this this dissertation I needed to write a Scholarly Personal Narrative (SPN).

SPN is an innovative research methodology created by Robert Nash of the University of Vermont. The most compelling reason for my decision to write an SPN was that the format supported keeping my narrative voice or "self" present in the scholarship. According to Nash & Bradley (2011) the goal of personal narrative writing in the academy is "to find ways to incorporate the full body of human experience into more traditional forms of research and scholarship" (p. 20). I used the SPN research method to help me write a more balanced account of the impact my personal and professional experiences of marginalization were having on students. According to Nash & Bradley (2011), "the key is to find a way to connect the personal and the professional, the analytical and the emotional, and most important to show the relevance of these connections to other selves." (p. 57). Interestingly, the knowledge obtained through SPN writing becomes generalizable only when an empathic connection is formed between the writer and the reader (Nash, 2011).

The third component of this dissertation is an article that describes a technique I have used for many years to teach social work students how to simultaneously experience and manage emotions as they arise during classroom role-play activities. This intervention is based on the Containing Double (CD) technique developed by Hudgins, et al. (1997) to help trauma survivors manage overwhelming emotional experiences and stay present to new learning that can be used

to create healing and motivate change.   The anxiety that students experience in response to experiential activities like classroom role-plays can temporarily prevent them from accessing cognitive functions needed for new learning to develop. Over the years, students in my courses have aptly named the technique the "Invisible Consultant" (IC) because it helps them reflect on and balance feelings and thoughts that arise during simulated practice exercises in the classroom. In addition, the technique assists students to become more consciously aware of the dynamics of transference and counter-transference that can occur when interacting with clients. This technique when used during experiential classroom activities engages peer support to help reduce anxiety and prepare students for direct practice.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this banded dissertation involves two theoretical orientations: the humanistic paradigm and experiential learning theory. Although some might suggest that humanism and experiential learning theory (ELT) are one and the same, the experiential learning *model* is being used here to illustrate *how* the humanistic world view can be actively implemented in the classroom.

Humanistic paradigm

The humanistic paradigm emerged during the 1960's and emphasized the importance of subjective experience, personal growth and self-actualization. Humanism rejects deterministic explanations for human behavior and avoids viewing human struggles through a lens of pathology (DeRobertis, 2015). Past exemplar theorists associated with this strength-based, person-centered, developmental approach include Carl Rogers, Fritz Perls, Irving Yalom and Jacob Moreno. Current humanistic practice integrates "client-centered and Gestalt therapy traditions into an emotion-focused approach that emphasizes both the relationship and the

process of reflection on aroused emotions to create new meaning" (Greenberg, 2013, p. 133).

For these reasons, the humanistic paradigm fits well with the theme of this dissertation.

Humanists consider the emotional domains involved in learning to be equally as important as and dynamically interconnected with cognitive domains involved in learning (DeRobertis, 2015). It is worth noting that a number of the propositions of humanism are similar to those of educational neuroscience:

a. emotions play a critical role in learning and human development
b. motivation for learning is derived from each person's needs, subjective feelings about self and the desire to grow and create meaning
c. meaningful knowledge requires conscious integration of physical, spiritual, affective and cognitive domains
   (Brady-Amoon, 2011; Cozolino, 2014; Immordino-Yang, 2016; Lewis, et al. 2000).

Some writers have credited neuroscience for creating a "Humanistic Renaissance" as noted by DeRobertis (2015) "advances in neuroscience are creating a significant theoretical rapprochement between neuroscience and humanistic psychology" (p. 323). Interestingly, brain science appears to be lending support for what social work has felt challenged to quantify – the power of relationships to create healing and change.

Experiential learning (ELT)

A number of different definitions of experiential learning theory have been described in the literature (Dernova, 2015; Hedin, 2010). Some studies suggest that experiential learning ought to be the exclusive domain of field education; others maintain that experiential learning ought to be utilized in the classroom (Fink, 2013). Examples of experiential learning activities commonly used in social work education include client scenarios, role-plays and simulations as will be shown in this paper. Examples of experiential learning that occur outside of the classroom include internships and field observations (Fink, 2013). Despite differing definitions,

ELT emphasizes the centrality of subjective experience for learning. This proposition fits well with the overall theme of this dissertation.

David Kolb's (1974) experiential learning theory is based on the proposition that in order to learn, students must:

a. have the desire and motivation to actively engage in the learning experience
b. have the ability to reflect on the experience
c. possess the analytic skills needed to help conceptualize the experience and,
d. have problem solving skills that help make use of new ideas gained from reflection on experience
(Joy & Kolb, 2009; Manolis, Burns, Assudani & Chinta, 2013).

Findings from educational neuroscience (Immordino-Yang, 2016) offer support for Kolb's ideas by demonstrating: a. subjective experiences motivate the desire for students to learn and, b. learning requires engagement of both cognitive and affective domains.

The third article appearing in this dissertation describes an innovative teaching technique that can be used to support students through a process of learning not unlike the one that Kolb describes with ELT. Both involve a process of experiencing, reflecting, skill building and active utilization of new learning. The technique being described in the third article appearing in this dissertation uses brain science findings to address disruptions in the process of learning that occur when students' anxiety overwhelms the learning process. Kolb did not directly address disruptions that occurred in the learning process.

<div align="center">Summary of Banded Dissertation Products</div>

Each component of this banded dissertation makes an argument for more active and intentional engagement of students' emotional experience in social work education. Emerging brain science has provided a wealth of evidence demonstrating the critical role that emotional processes play in readiness for learning, creation of new knowledge, integration of learning and the development of empathy. Understanding these processes is important for both educators and

students. Educators need to understand them in order to more effectively engage students'

emotions in the learning process. Students need to understand how these processes impact them

in order to recognize the impact they have on clients.

The first article lays the conceptual foundation for this dissertation. Findings from brain

science and their implications for teaching and learning are presented. Common barriers to

engagement of student emotions in the classroom are also discussed. Next, two experiential

classroom strategies designed to engage students' emotional or affective experience are

presented.

The second component of this dissertation uses an innovative form of inquiry called

Scholarly Personal Narrative (SPN) to explore the connection between emotion and personal

voice, and how each can become marginalized in higher education. Beginning with reflection on

personal experiences with marginalization of emotion, I provide narrative examples of how

environmental factors contribute to silencing of voice and development of self-doubt. Then, I

reflect on my own experiences as a community faculty member for over 15 years and provide

narrative examples to demonstrate how marginalization occurs in the academy. Moreover, using

this methodology, I also include my observations about how the marginalization of my emotion

and voice as a teacher member impacted my students. This research shows that when faculty

voice and emotion are marginalized, so too are students' emotions and voice. It stands to reason

then that when faculty are able to reclaim personal voice and emotion, so too are students.

The third article describes an innovative teaching technique called the Invisible

Consultant, based on the earlier work of Hudgins et al. (1997). This technique has been used to

help students to experience and effectively manage the emotions that arise during classroom

roleplay activities so that student can effectively balance them with cognitive domains involved

in learning. This article includes an example of implementation of the technique and identifies skills students develop as a result of using the method. Challenges to implementation of this method are identified and discussed. The benefits of using the Invisible Consultant technique to train social work students for direct practice are also presented.

Discussion

Social work is a profession that is deeply invested in the empowerment of marginalized individuals and groups. This dissertation contends that when social work education fails to engage emotional domains involved in learning, students' experiences or voices are marginalized and learning is interrupted. Talking about or reflecting on feelings that arise in the classroom is very different from actually experiencing them. Recent findings emerging from brain science have demonstrated that emotions are what *drive* learning – we are motivated by our interests, biases, fears and longings. Educational neuroscience has also demonstrated that without emotion, cognitive learning does not develop and cannot be integrated for the long haul. Finally emerging brain science is demonstrating social-emotional processes that occur in the classroom play a role in mediating arousal levels of students. In other words, relationships support us to experience, express and effectively use emotions to create new learning.

SPN methodology provided an opportunity to deeply attune to the truth of my own internal experiences prior to considering external sources of knowledge. In this way, my personal voice became a part of knowledge development rather than something I needed to suppress or compartmentalize. Reflection on my own internal truth forced an encounter with shame and self-doubt that sensitized me to painful experience of marginalization. Teaching strategies described in this dissertation demonstrate how educators can lead students to their own

internal truth and, at the same time, help them manage uncomfortable feelings long enough for new learning to develop.

Implications for social work education

Social work educators would benefit from developing a greater understanding of the emotional processes involved in learning – their own and their students. Developing an appreciation of these processes could provide the motivation needed for educators to consider using or creating innovative teaching techniques to enhance students' learning. Scholarly personal narrative research is one effective method that social work educators might want to consider using as a way to deepen their appreciation of the value of subjective experiences for learning. Educators who engage in the process of SPN research will learn how to guide students to the wisdom of their own subjective truths. In addition, SPN directly supports the social work values of inclusivity and empowerment by creating space for multiple voices to participate in the construction of new knowledge. There is a powerful parallel process between social work education that engages the full experience of students, and the manner in which students will engage the full experience of the people they serve in practice.

Implications for future research

Although brain science has highlighted the important role that emotion plays in learning, little empirical evidence exists to support the effectiveness of teaching strategies designed to engage students' emotions. Research designs with the capacity to articulate the complexity of learning processes could help social work instructors to articulate and measure learning outcomes. Mixed-method research for example, could be a particularly useful tool because of its ability to collect and analyze both quantitative and qualitative data in the same

study. This design is particularly appropriate for a study seeking to demonstrate how thinking

and feeling functions work together and have equal value in the creation of new knowledge.

CHAPTER ONE

Engaging Emotion to Enhance Learning in the Social Work Classroom

Abstract

Recent findings to emerge from neuroscience are particularly relevant for social work education. Science is now demonstrating that emotion plays a key role in motivation for learning and the development of empathy. Integration of findings from neuroscience have however, been slow to develop in social work education. Limited information is available describing how to effectively engage emotional experiences in service to learning. Experiential learning theory provides a conceptual framework which supports the call for greater attention to emotional domains of learning in social work education. Barriers to engagement of emotional domains involved in learning are discussed. Examples of two experiential learning strategies that integrate emotion in the process of creating meaningful learning are described.

Keywords: affective neuroscience, experiential learning theory, social work education

CHAPTER ONE

Engaging Emotion to Enhance Learning in the Social Work Classroom

Abstract

Recent findings to emerge from neuroscience are particularly relevant for social work education. Science is now demonstrating that emotion plays a key role in motivation for learning and the development of empathy. Integration of findings from neuroscience have however, been slow to develop in social work education. Limited information is available describing how to effectively engage emotional experiences in service to learning. Experiential learning theory provides a conceptual framework which supports the call for greater attention to emotional domains of learning in social work education. Barriers to engagement of emotional domains involved in learning are discussed. Examples of two experiential learning strategies that integrate emotion in the process of creating meaningful learning are described.

Keywords: affective neuroscience, experiential learning theory, social work education

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to create a conceptual bridge between findings from brain science and the practice of social work education. Specifically, this article will emphasize findings from *affective* neuroscience, a sub-group of brain science which has affirmed the central role of emotion in learning. The explicit focus on affective domains is intended to address the well documented marginalization of emotion in classroom instruction. Social work education has not escaped the influence of a *cognitive bias* historically present in higher education. Despite growing evidence from neuroscience demonstrating its importance, "There is a paucity of literature in social work education focused on how emotions are dealt with in the classroom or how the development of emotional competence is facilitated by social work education." (Ikebuchi & Rasmussen 2014, p.17). Emotional competence is one of the most important skills a social work student needs to develop in order to establish effective and empathic helping relationships. This article asserts that a basic understanding of the brain processes involved in learning is needed to support the development of emotional competence in students and instructors alike.

Experiential learning theory (ELT) will be used in this article as a conceptual framework for discussion of the critical role of emotion for learning. The propositions and assumptions of ELT are compared with findings from brain science in order to illustrate their relevance and alignment. In addition, this article describes two experiential teaching strategies that demonstrate how findings from brain science can be used to effectively engage emotions for learning in the social work classroom.

Conceptual Framework

Experiential learning theory (ELT) provides a fitting conceptual framework for discussion of the critical role of emotion in social work education. ELT is a person-centered, developmental approach which seeks to understand people in their environmental contexts (Dernova, 2015). Social work's person-in-environment perspective also emphasizes the importance of the environmental context in shaping human development. Common factors can also be identified between ELT and educational neuroscience.

Experiential learning theory

Carl Rogers, one of several twentieth century scholars associated with ELT, has been credited by some as the first to articulate the core assumptions and propositions of the theory (Dernova, 2015). Rogers proposed that subjective experience was at the core of learning and he believed that the role of instructors and educational systems was to place experience at the center of the learning process (DeRobertis, 2014; Dernova, 2015; Hedin, 2010). Rogers operated from the assumption that all human beings have an innate desire to learn, grow and change. The role of the teacher is that of a facilitator of student learning. In an experiential classroom environment, the educator seeks to create a positive climate for learning by: a) being attuned to the students' interests in the learning, b) providing resources and opportunities to support these interests and, c) balancing cognitive and affective processes involved in learning (DeRobertis, 2014; Dernova, 2015; Hedin, 2010).

Concepts from ELT align well with social work's core professional values including: a) dignity and worth of the person, b) importance of human relationships and, c) integrity and competence. Findings from affective neuroscience that share similarities with the basic assumptions and propositions of ELT are shown in Table 1. These similarities provide a

rationale for use of ELT in a discussion of the necessity to engage students' emotions in the

classroom.

TABLE 1
Conceptual Similarities

Affective Neuroscience	Experiential Learning Theory (ELT)
Emotion is most effective at facilitating the development of knowledge when it is relevant to the task at hand	Learning is most significant when it is relevant to the personal interests of the student
Neuroscientific perspective can be used by educators to create a classroom environment that is conducive to feeling subtle emotional signals that drive learning	Learning which is threatening to the self (e.g., new attitudes or perspectives) is more easily assimilated when external threats are at a minimum
The brain structures involved in the emotional processes of learning are also involved in the most primitive human response to danger or threat	Learning proceeds faster when the threat to the self is low
Emotion drives learning and shapes future behavior	Self-initiated learning is the most lasting and pervasive

Note. Adapted from a. *Emotions, learning and the brain: Exploring the educational implications of affective neuroscience,* by M.H. Immordino-Yang, 2016, New York: W.W. Norton & Company and, b. Experiential learning theory as one of the foundations of adult learning practice worldwide, by M. Dernova, 2015, *Comparative Professional Pedagogy*.

Both affective neuroscience and ELT assert that learning must be relevant to the learner, occur in

a non-threating environment and actively engage emotional domains of learning.

Several different definitions of experiential learning have been described in the literature

(Dernova, 2015; Hedin, 2010). Some studies suggest that experiential learning ought to be the

exclusive domain of field education; others maintain that experiential learning also has value for

use in the classroom. Examples of experiential learning activities commonly used in the social

work classroom include client scenarios, role-plays and simulations as will be shown in this

paper. Examples of experiential learning activities that occur outside of the classroom include

internships, field observations, and other active forms of learning, (Fink, 2013). In either case,

ELT emphasizes the importance of subjective experience as a motivator for learning that when integrated with course content create significant and enduring knowledge. The review of the literature that follows describes past and current research relevant to the purpose of this paper – engaging emotion in the social work classroom.

<div align="center">Review of the Literature</div>

A recurring point of emphasis appearing in the literature reviewed for this article was that brain science continues to evolve and has experienced rapid changes in conceptualization within a very short period of time (Cozolino, 2014; Immordino-Yang, 2016; Sousa, 2009). Concepts emerging from social and affective neuroscience as few as ten years ago are now being referred to as "neuro-myths" by numerous experts in the field (Immordino-Yang, 2014; Cozolino, 2014; Sousa, 2011). Despite the ever changing landscape of brain science, broad consensus was found among experts (in education and neuroscience) that meaningful learning must engage somatic, affective and cognitive domains, is activated by social interactions and influenced by cultural context (Cozolino, 2014; Immordino-Yang, 2016; Olson, 2014; Sousa, 2009). These findings are of particular importance for social work education.

A number of articles described the social-emotional benefit to students when classroom instruction engages affective domains involved in learning (Gerdes & Segal, 2011; Matto & Strolin-Goltzman, 2010; Shapiro & Applegate, 2000). One particularly significant study conducted by educational neuroscientists Immordino-Yang & Damasio (2007), provided evidence highlighting the need to create a balance between students feeling and thinking processes. The focus of this study was on patients who had experienced damage to the regions of the brain associated with emotion or affect. These patients had not experienced damage to portions of the brain associated with IQ or executive brain functions such as logic, problem

solving and rational thought. Neurobiological testing of these patients showed that, although

they were able to problem solve in the controlled "non-social" setting of the research laboratory,

"out in the real world and in real time, they could not access or use emotional information to

make decisions about best course of actions - to consider risks and rewards or analyze events for

their emotional consequences" (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007). This study clearly

demonstrates the interdependence of cognitive and affective processes involved in learning.

There is a gap in the social work literature describing teaching methods that actively

engage student's emotional experiences in service to create meaningful learning (Ikebuchi &

Rasmussen, 2014). Although a number of articles did acknowledged the important role of

emotion for learning, their primary focus was on teaching students to *compartmentalize* rather

than actively experience and effectively manage emotions that arise in the classroom (Gerdes &

Segal, 2011). Very few studies described experiential teaching strategies intentionally designed

to engage student's emotions in support of their learning and professional development.

A final theme appearing in the literature reviewed for this article was that social-

emotional processes that occur in the classroom play an important role in mediating arousal

levels of students (Cozzolino, 2014; Immordino-Yang & Faeth, 2010). Interestingly, it is

relationships in the classroom that serve to activate interest while at the same time, help contain

arousal at levels that optimize learning. Learning then can be considered a social phenomenon

that involves educators and classroom peers alike. Cozolino (2014) has used the term

"sociostasis" to describe the social processes involved in learning which "reflect the basic

interconnectedness of our brains, minds and bodies and point to the sometimes unseen reality

that we are far more interdependent than our individualistic philosophies would lead us to

believe" (p. 257). It is important to note that sociostasis does not require uniformity of ideas.

Rather, it is viewed as a relational process that creates the conditions necessary for each individual to discover his/her own subjective truth. In this way, learning empowers students and the classroom becomes an inclusive environment.

Attitudinal barriers

Despite powerful findings from social and affective neuroscience that validate the centrality of affect in learning, emotion in the classroom is frequently dismissed or disparaged as "touchy-feely", "irrelevant" and even "unprofessional" (Barlow & Hall, 2007; Ikebuchi & Rasmussen, 2014; Immordino-Yang & Faeth, 2010). In one study of the role of emotion in social work education, field instructors described students' emotional responses to client problems as "signs of immaturity", "excessive-emotionality" and attributed them to "unresolved personal problems" (Barlow & Hall, 2007, p. 411). Negative attitudes about the emotions evoked in the classroom created an invalidating environment and a missed opportunity for students to develop conscious awareness of their own emotions and what could be learned from them: "When emotions are dissociated from rational thought, reason, decision making and learning are compromised" (Immordino-Yang & Faeth, p. 6). Failures in empathy that arise from a lack of understanding of the role of emotion in learning, have implications for students who will be called upon to respond to the emotional experiences of their clients in their future practice.

Discussion

During the past two decades, findings emerging from brain science have provided empirical support for the centrality of emotion as a motivator for learning and in the development of empathy (Immordino-Yang, 2010; Sousa, 2009; Thomas, Amini, & Lannon, 2000). Affective neuroscience, an area of brain science specifically interested in emotional

processes involved in learning lends particular support for the centrality of emotion for learning: "It is literally neurologically impossible to build memories, engage complex thoughts or make meaningful decisions without emotion" (Immordino-Yang, 2010, p. 18). From a neuroscientific perspective the innate drive to learn is viewed as a function of the human "seeking system" or neurological system that drives learning and motivates growth (Olson, 2014). Educators who are able to engage their students' emotional drive to learn may have a distinct advantage in the classroom.

The human drive to learn emerges from the same brain structures and neurological processes associated with human survival. Both the demands of survival and the demands of learning activate stress hormones in the brain that cause emotional arousal. Too little arousal decreases motivation to learn, too much impairs cognitive or meaning making processes (Thomas, Amini & Lannon, 2000). It is important therefore that social work educators learn teaching strategies that arouse emotions and motivate learning without creating so much anxiety that students become overwhelmed and no new knowledge can develop.

Barriers to integration

One barrier to integration of findings from affective neuroscience in social work classrooms has been identified as a lack of instructor awareness of the basic brain processes involved in learning. There is also a gap in the literature describing methods educators can use that to facilitate a classroom learning environment that effectively engages student emotions. In the absence of such training, educators are likely to experience some anxiety when emotional experiences do arise in the classroom. In response to this anxiety and in order to create safety, teachers may under-value or de-emphasize emotional domains needed for learning. One cost of creating safety through avoidance of emotional experience is that it limits curiosity and openness

to diverse ways of viewing the world (Cozolino, 2014). Because the social work profession places a high value on inclusion and empowerment of diverse and/or marginalized populations, openness to difference is of critical importance.

Holistic learning

Neuroscience suggests that emotional domains cannot be understood separately from somatic (body) and cognitive (thinking) domains involved in learning. Rather, learning is viewed as an outcome of the dynamic integration of somatic, affective and cognitive domains (Cozolino, L., 2014; Olson, K. 2014). American neuroscientist, Paul McLean coined the term "triune brain" to describe the composition of three dynamic and interconnected brain centers involved in learning: a) the amygdala, b) the limbic brain and, c) the pre-frontal cortex. In simple terms, the amygdala is associated with somatic domains, the limbic with emotional domains and the pre-frontal with thinking domains. Together, these three centers enable human survival and self-expression (Lewis, Amini & Lannon, 2000). Only the pre-frontal or rational portion of the triune brain is capable of higher order processing such as the ability to reason, problem-solve and use words (Cozolino, 2014, Sousa, 2011). Teaching strategies that engage only a student's pre-frontal or thinking capacities fail to bring to conscious awareness other important subjective experiences necessary for social and emotional learning.   As has been stated in a previous section of this paper, an important conclusion from brain science research is that when feelings become disconnected from thinking, problem solving and learning are compromised.

The next section of this paper describes two teaching strategies I have used in a social work classroom to effectively engage students' emotions and support holistic learning.   The first strategy described is called the *Triune brain check-in* and the second strategy is one that

encourages a student to speak in her native language in order to make learning more personally relevant.

Teaching strategy 1

Triune-brain check-in

The purpose of the triune brain check-in is to guide students to conscious awareness of essential, non-verbal processes involved in learning. The triune brain exercise begins with the instructor inviting students to get comfortable in their chairs, relax, close their eyes and take a deep breath. Students are told that participation in the exercise is voluntary. There are three steps to the exercise that are intended to help students become consciously and simultaneously aware of their somatic, affective and cognitive experience in the moment. The teacher guides students through each of the three steps of the technique by instructing students to: 1. "Bring your attention to your body. Notice any physical sensations you are feeling in your body". 2. "Bring your attention to your emotions or any feelings you might be having and pay attention to where in your body you are feeling your emotions" and, 3. "Now bring your attention to what you are thinking about in this moment." Students are then paired with a partner and invited to share what they experienced physically, emotionally and cognitively.

I have used the triune-brain exercise as a normative activity over the past ten years. It is introduced at the beginning of class sessions to help students' warm-up to themselves and the group in preparation for learning. Student feedback about this exercise has revealed several common themes. First, students frequently report that until they participated in the check-in, they were unaware of uncomfortable physical and/or emotional sensations they were experiencing. By bringing students to conscious awareness of these experiences, they were empowered to make choices that could support learning. For example, students who become

aware of their own anxieties about upcoming assignments could ask for further instructions and may discover that others in the class are having a similar experience. Once provided with instructions, students' anxiety can be lowered to a level that does not impede learning. In addition, students who engage in the triune brain check-in exercise may become aware of the fact that they are thinking about something that occurred before class or will occur after class. In this case, conscious awareness empowers the student to take steps to become more fully engaged in the present moment.

Teaching strategy 2

Sun, a 26 year old Hmong student completing her MSW degree at a large metropolitan university was in the process of acquiring English language skills. In addition, she was further challenged by cultural norms for classroom communication that were very different from her own. A few weeks into the semester, Sun became withdrawn and disengaged from her classroom peers. An initial assignment in the course required students to complete an oral presentation in front of their peers in class. When Sun's turn to present arrived, she began to falter with her English and became anxious. The course instructor prompted Sun, "It's okay to present in Hmong". Confused, Sun replied "But no one will understand". The instructor stated "You will and right now that is what's most important". Sun began to present in Hmong and when she did a transformation occurred. Her entire affect brightened and she spoke with energy and confidence. Her classroom peers were observed leaning forward, nodding, attending and offering non-verbal encouragement. When she completed her presentation, students applauded. Visibly touched, Sun's eyes filled with tears. She asked if she could try again to present in English. This time, she spoke with greater fluency and when she faltered on a word she laughed and asked a peer for help.

Sun's story illustrates two important ideas discussed throughout this article. First, by supporting her to speak in her native language the material became personally relevant, thus increasing her energy and motivation for learning. Second, even though her peers were unable to comprehend the content of Sun's presentation, they helped mediate her anxiety by providing non-verbal support and empathic attunement as she presented. Interestingly, students reported feeling more connected to Sun as a result of her speaking in Hmong and Sun reported feeling more connected to her peers as well.

Conclusions

In light of evidence emerging from current brain science, continued inattention to affective domains of learning has become increasingly problematic:

> Students and teachers socially interact and learn from one another in ways that cannot be done justice by examining only the "cold" cognitive aspects of academic skills. Like other forms of learning and interacting, building academic knowledge involves integrating emotion and cognition in social context (Immordino-Yang & Faeth, p. 69).

Social work education would benefit from developing innovative teaching strategies that simultaneously evoke, connect and balance students' thinking and feeling processes. It is important to note that reflecting on feelings is quite different from actually experiencing them - a critical distinction for educators who want to create learning experiences that are relevant, experiential and relational. The optimal conditions needed for meaningful learning also require that educators allow themselves to feel and learn from their own emotions – even when they are uncomfortable. Course instructors who choose to engage students' emotions in the learning process benefit from the support of peers and administrators equipped with a basic understanding of affective brain science and its implications for learning.

Direct social work practice often requires social workers to engage with people who are experiencing deep emotional pain. Students who are disconnected from their own emotional

responses are likely to encounter difficulty supporting clients' to reflect on, safely experience and make meaning of feelings needed to mobilize healing and change. Integration of brain science findings can be used to strengthen students' emotional capacities - both in service to classroom learning and in the development of empathic helping relationships.

References

Barlow, C. & Hall, B., (2007). 'What about feelings'?: A study of emotion and tension in

 social work field education. *Social Work Education*, 26:4, 319-413. doi:

 10.1080/02615470601081712

Cozolino, L. (2014). *The neuroscience of human relationships: Attachment and the*

 developing social brain, 2nd ed. New York: W.W. Norton Publishing.

Dernova, M. (2015). Experiential learning theory as one of the foundations of adult learning

 practice worldwide. *Comparative Professional Pedagogy,* 5:2, 52-57. D oi:10:1515/rpp-

 2015-0040

DeRobertis, E.M. (2015). A neuroscientific renaissance of humanistic psychology. *Journal*

 of Humanistic Psychology, 55:3, 323-345. doi: 10.1177/0022167814536617

Sousa, D.A. (2011). *How the brain learns, 4th ed.* Thousand Oaks CA: Corwin Publishing

 Company

Gerdes, K.E. & Segal, E. (2011). Importance of empathy for social work practice: Integrating

 new science. *Social Work*, 56:2, 141-148. doi: 10.1093/sw/56.2.141

Greenberg, L. (2013). Anchoring the Therapeutic Spiral Model into Research on Experiential

 Psychotherapies. Chapter 4 from: *Healing World Trauma with the Therapeutic Spiral*

 Model: Psychodramatic Stories from the Frontlines, Hudgins, M.K. & Toscani, M.F. eds.

 Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Hedin, N. (2010). Experiential learning: theory and challenges. *Christian Education Journal*

 7.1, 107-117. Retrieved Feb. 26, 2016: http://go.galegroup.com.ezp1.lib.umn.edu/ps/i.do

Hudgins, M.K., Drucker, K., and Metcalf, K. (2000). The containing double: A clinically

 effective psychodrama intervention for PTSD. *The British Journal of Psychodrama and*

Sociodrama, 15, 1, 58-77.

Ikebuchi, J. & Rasmussen, B.M., (2014). The use of emotions in social work education. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 34, 285-301. doi: 10.1080/08841233.2014.909378

Immordino-Yang, M.H. (2016). *Emotions, learning and the brain: Exploring the educational implications of affective neuroscience.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Immordino-Yang, M.H. & Faith, M. (2010). The role of emotion and skilled intuition in learning. In Sousa, D. (Ed), *Mind, Brain, & Education,* 69-83. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

Lewis, T., Amini, F. & Lannon, R. (2000). *A General Theory of Love*. New York: Random House.

Lynn, R. (2010). Mindfulness in social work education. *Social Work Education*, 29:3, 289-304. doi: 10.1080/02615470902930351

Matto, H.C. & Strolin-Goltzman, J. (2010). Integrating neuroscience and social work: Innovations for advancing practice-based research. *Social Work*, 55: 2. doi: 10.1093/sw/55.2.147

Olson, K. (2014). *The invisible classroom: Relationships, neuroscience & mindfulness in school.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Pugh, G.L. (2014). Revisiting the pink triangle exercise: An exploration of experiential learning in graduate social work education. *Journal of Teaching in Social* Work, 34:1, 17- 28. doi: 10.1080/08841233.2013.863264

Ryan, A. A. (2012). Integrating experiential and academic learning in teacher preparation for

    development education. *Irish Educational Studies*, 31:1, 35-50.

    doi:10.1080/03323315.2011.596667

Shapiro, J.R. & Applegate, J.S. (2000). Cognitive neuroscience, neurobiology and affect

    regulation: Implications for clinical social work. *Clinical Social Work Journal,* 281:1,

    doi: 10.1023/A:1005139123963

Sousa, D. (2011). *How the brain learns. 4ᵗʰ Ed.,* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing

    Company.

CHAPTER TWO

Nobody to Somebody and Back Again: Exploring Marginalization through Scholarly Personal Narrative

Abstract

This scholarly personal narrative (SPN) is an exploration of one social educator's personal and professional experiences of marginalization and subsequent participation in the marginalization of self and students. A particular focus of the article is how "personal voice" or subjective knowledge has been undervalued in the academy because it does not meet the criteria of conventional standards of scholarship. Social work education is embedded in institutions that have historically embraced positivist approaches to teaching that contend absolute truths do exist, can be measured and exist independently from the learner's subjective experience. This article advocates for the use of approaches to teaching where knowledge development includes personal voice and learning is viewed as a relational outcome. CSWE Educational Policy 2.1.4 "Engage diversity and difference in practice" compels social workers to intervene in structures that perpetuate marginalization. This policy supports social workers to "gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups." The writer concludes that SPN writing offers a powerful method for achieving this goal.

Keywords: scholarly personal narrative, marginalization, constructivism, diversity

Introduction

I'm Nobody! Who are you?
Are you - Nobody - too?
Don't tell! They'll advertise - you know!

How dreary - to be - Somebody!
How public - like a Frog -
To tell one's name - the livelong June -
To an admiring Bog!

Emily Dickinson (1898), *I'm Nobody! Who are you*?

One drowsy Sunday afternoon in early October, 1962 my mother read Emily Dickinson's "I'm Nobody Who are You?" to me. I was six years old and had just begun first grade. The poem delighted me. Even at that young age, I could appreciate a small bit of its irony – after all, if a frog says it's *Nobody* isn't it really saying it's *Somebody*? How silly! My mother encouraged me to bring the poem to school to share with my class and my beloved first grade teacher. Mrs. Olson reacted to the poem with lively enthusiasm. She read it to the class and then together, we all croaked like frogs. Later that afternoon we drew smiling, crayon self-portraits. The next morning, as I walked the long hallway to the girl's bathroom, I came across the first floor display case. Mrs. Olson had posted Dickinson's poem in the center surrounded by all of our self-portraits. That was the day I fell in love with Mrs. Olson. And, for reasons I didn't understand until many years later, I also felt anxious, exposed and vulnerable.

Being "outed" as a Nobody, made me a Somebody. Being a Somebody meant that I was part of a learning community whose membership required compliance with certain norms and expectations. Six-year-olds are big on rules. By learning how to "be" in a classroom I could successfully navigate this place called "school". Compliance with the rules however, exacted a price. As a student, I have often wondered why it is that just when I begin to get interested in a discussion the teacher warns "we are getting off topic". Why do I feel like I am dying a small

death every time this happens? Who decides which topic is the most important one anyhow? If I am not interested in the most important topic, what does that say about me? I'm going back to being a Nobody.

Recently, I was introduced to a research method called Scholarly Personal Narrative (SPN). This method was developed by Dr. Robert Nash, Professor of Sociology and Education at the University of Vermont. Nash describes a method of scholarly inquiry that is different from more conventional research. He maintains that all research begins with and is motivated by the personal beliefs, biases, feelings and experiences of the researcher. In fact, with SPN it is the writer's subjective experience that Nash (2011) regards as the "pivotal variable" (p. 58). Interestingly, Pipher (2006) refers to an individual's subjective experiences as "the library of the self" (p. 46). Knowledge is discovered through personal self-reflection, communicated and analyzed through narrative writing and can interact with findings from the "hard" sciences. Generalizability of findings relies heavily on the authenticity of the writer's voice and when empathic connection is formed between the SPN writer and reader.

I have chosen to use SPN because it is a methodology that fits well with the focus and purpose of my dissertation. My narrative inquiry begins with these questions: What personal and professional experiences have affirmed or denied my subjective experience as an important source of knowledge? How do these experiences influence my teaching pedagogy and practice as a social worker? How have I allowed my own voice to become marginalized in the academy and how have I subsequently contributed to the marginalization of the voices of my students? My hope is that the act of writing an SPN in and of itself will reveal some of the answers to these questions as well as inspire others to similarly reflect on the truth found in their own narrative voice.

Review of the Literature

In reviewing the literature pertaining to SPN writing, I discovered a method of inquiry well suited for exploration of my research questions. First, SPN legitimizes the subjective experience of the writer by treating it as a valid and critical source of knowledge (Nash, 2004; Nash & Bradley, 2011; Nash & Viray, 2013; Nash & Viray, 2014). Second, SPN provides an avenue for the expression of the subjective truth or the voice of the writer. Third, by recognizing the existence of multiple realities, SPN becomes a conduit for the expression of diverse and marginalized voices. Finally, SPN aligns well with constructivist and social-constructivist pedagogies; both highly influential in the development of my own approach to teaching and learning (Graham, 1997; Hussain, 2012; Keaton & Bodie, 2011; Liu & Mathews 2005; Nash, 2004; Nash & Bradley, 2011; Nash & Viray, 2013; Nash & Viray, 2014). In the next section of the paper, I present an overview of SPN literature in order to expand upon the rationale for its use in this study.

An innovative research method relatively new to the academy, SPN is supported by a small but growing body of literature. Much of the existing SPN literature has been written by the genus's originator, Dr. Robert Nash, along with his associates (Nash & Bradley, 2011; Nash & Viray, 2014). Nash is a professor in the College of Education and Social Services at the University of Vermont where he has taught for the past 44 years. His method appears to have broad, interdisciplinary appeal as evidenced by the fact that SPN articles were located in journals of education, nursing, psychology, social work and even information systems literature (Heidelberger & Uecker, 2009). At the same time, questions about the legitimacy of SPN as a valid form of scholarship abound.

Nash (2004) provides examples of the critique of SPN found in higher education;

"Researchers in schools of education have grave doubts about the rigor of SPN scholarship. Some have called it soft. Others think it touchy-feely. Still others describe it as easy. A few think it is anti-intellectual. Some question its reliability and validity." (p. 4).

The literature suggests that critique of SPN is driven by epistemological differences about the very nature of knowledge. SPN is highly influenced by "constructivism", a "theory which emphasizes on providing opportunities to students for making their own judgements and interpretations of the situations (they come across) based on their prior knowledge and experience (Hussain, I., 2012, p. 179).

My teaching pedagogy

My personal belief is that knowledge is phenomena – ever changing as new knowledge is integrated with old leaving the learner transformed and enlightened. Knowledge is not a static but dynamic reality – a mystery of sorts that we humans perpetually seek to quantify. Meaningful learning gets "anchored in" for the long haul when we engage cognitive, affective, somatic and spiritual domains of human function. Obtaining phenomenological knowledge causes discomfort because it lacks the security afforded by the certainty of facts and "right" answers. Learning is experiential and flourishes in community. It does not happen because one person transmitted certain knowledge to another who accepted it unquestioningly. Knowledge is a co-creation that requires *relationship*.

Interestingly, recent findings to emerge from the field of interpersonal neurobiology have led to changes in approaches to teaching. These approaches emphasize the importance of narrative story-telling for learning as Pipher (2006) describes:

Research shows that storytelling not only engages all the senses, it triggers activity on both the left and right sides of the brain. Because stories elicit whole brain/whole body responses, they are far more likely than other kinds of writing to evoke strong emotions. People attend to, remember, and are transformed by stories which are meaning-filled units of ideas. (p. 11).

It is our relationships with others and the sharing of our personal narratives in community that create new knowledge.

Clearly, SPN writers use different "truth criteria" than that of conventional forms of research. Constructivist teaching pedagogy describes a method of teaching and learning that I found helpful in understanding the relationship of the SPN writer to the reader and how this relationship creates knowledge that that can be generalized. According to Graham (1997) for constructivist teachers "objective reality does not exist, only multiple, subjective constructions of it. Constructions of reality are socially and experientially based, and therefore, depend wholly on the persons who hold them" (p. 40). Generalizability of findings does not require the SPN writer to abandon knowledge gained from self-reflection on subjective experiences. Nor do the writer and reader have to construct identical narratives for the SPN to have validity.

I believe that when we characterize SPN as an *adjunct* to the *real* objective truth found in conventional research formats, we participate in the marginalization of subjective wisdom and worse yet, the silencing of personal voice. SPN is a holistic form of scholarship that embraces subjective experience as a source of knowledge equally as important as external sources of knowledge.

Harvesting subjective data

Scholarly personal narrative writers do not seek to repudiate more conventional forms of scholarly inquiry. According to Nash (2011) "The key is to find a way to connect the personal and the professional, the analytical and the emotional, and most important to show the relevance of these connections to other selves" (p. 57). Recently, I came across the following headline in the Thursday, August 25th, 2016 edition of the Minneapolis Star-Tribune: "Earth-like planet is virtually next door." The article was fascinating and detailed scientists' discovery of a planet

with a climate similar to and relatively close to earth in astronomical terms. After having

reported this news, the writer added:

> "The team of astronomers that announced the discovery did not actually see the planet
> but deduced its existence indirectly by using telescopes to spot and precisely calculate the
> gravitational pull on the star by a possible orbiting body – a tried-and-true method of
> planet hunting" (page A12, Seth Borenstein, Associated Press).

Even a "hard" science like astronomy can embrace the validity of truths not visible to the naked

eye.

Larsson & Sjoblom (2010) write that "personal narratives give us the truth of experiences

that are neither open to proof nor self-evident, and can be understood through interpretation, by

paying very careful attention to the context that shapes them" (p. 272). This point of view fits

well with the social work professions' unique and defining person-in-environment perspective.

When we decontextualize ourselves or our students' voices in scholarly inquiry, we lose access

to an important source of knowledge. When the subjective voice and emotions of educators and

students are not represented in the development of a knowledge base, it can only represent partial

truth. My teaching and practice are *informed* by evidence rather than *based* on evidence. I don't

think that most academics require absolute certainty to remain believers. Why then, do we work

so hard to achieve it?

Space for marginalized truths

While an undergraduate social work student, I was given a copy of David Kolb's (1981)

Learning Style Inventory which asked a series of questions designed to assess my preferred style

of learning. Kolb identified four major learning types: "diverger, assimilator, converger and

accommodator." My survey results clearly identified me as a "divergent learner", a conclusion I

wholeheartedly agreed with. According to Kolb (1981), divergent learners depend on concrete

experience and reflective observation, tend to be emotional and creative and enjoy brainstorming to come up with new information.

The tyranny of purpose

As a divergent learner, SPN writing provides a method of inquiry that fits well with my learning style. At times, as a student, I have felt hurried into moving away from brainstorming, self-reflection, emotion and creativity for the purpose of "getting the job done". When the demand for production and action are visited upon me too soon, I lose my motivation and interest in learning. In the data driven, outcome based environment of higher education, I have often felt as if the bus has left before I had a chance to get on board. Sometimes, I feel as if my ideas have been marginalized by the demands of other types of learners who can quickly move to consolidation, plan formulation and action. In order to accommodate the needs of divergent learners, educators must be willing to set aside traditional teaching styles and teachers need the support of administrators when they do depart from the norm.

Methodology

SPN methodology provided a sound and fitting format for exploration of my research questions. As stated earlier, I wanted to identify personal and professional experiences that had either affirmed or denied my subjective experience as legitimate and vital sources of knowledge. I was curious about how those experiences had influenced my teaching pedagogy and practice as a social worker. I wondered if there were ways that I had allowed my own voice to become marginalized in the academy and subsequently contributed to the marginalization of the voices of my students. Finally, I hoped that my findings might have some universal meaning that would resonate to readers and perhaps inspire them to consider SPN writing.

Nash & Bradley (2011) have identified four methodological components of SPN: "pre-search, me-search, research and we-search" (p. 6).   In this section of my paper, I will present and describe each of these components.

Pre-search

Nash & Bradley (2011) describe "pre-search" as both "the internal and external actions of the SPN writer before even one word is put on the page" (p. 36). My pre-search began with the process of discerning a research focus for my dissertation. What was my research agenda? What ideas excited passion and motivated me to deeper exploration? I wondered if what I came up with would be relevant. Would my findings have any value to the reader? Given that the "critical variable" being examined in SPN research is the voice of the writer, these questions left me feeling particularly vulnerable. At the same time, these questions served as a warm up to a process of critical self-reflection and ultimately, the decision to use SPN research.

I liken the concept of "pre-search" to the concept of *pre-contemplation*. Pre-contemplation is viewed as the first of five stages in Prochaska, Norcross & DiClemente's (2004), Trans-theoretical model of change. In this stage, knowledge is believed to exist but is not yet consciously available. How one transitions from pre-contemplation to the second stage called contemplation is through a type of "warm up" that begins with questions designed to start a process of self-reflection.   One example of the type of provocative question Nash (2004) asks students to help them warm up to self-reflection is: "If you could write about anything, without fear of academic rejection or ridicule, what would you write about?" (p. 37).   The internal action of pre-search allowed for the space and time I needed to reflect on my inner experience in the data collection process. What I discovered during this stage was my own authentic experience – the subjective "data" that drives so much of how I feel, think and make meaning.

My *external* process or step two of "pre-search" began with action steps that helped to familiarize me with SPN as a method of academic inquiry. I completed a course that introduced me to constructivist, social-constructivist and narrative theories. I conducted a review of SPN literature as well as literature from related fields of study: autobiography, ethnography, hermeneutics, narrative writing, auto-ethnography, personal narrative essays. I read numerous SPN journal articles, books and published SPN dissertations. I found a network of supportive, kindred spirits who shared my growing enthusiasm for SPN as a research method. Pre-search activities prepared me to engage in "me-search" the second component of SPN writing.

Me-Search

Nash & Bradley (2011) identify the second component of SPN methodology as "me-search" (p. 6). Me-search took me beyond identification of compelling themes to deep self-reflection on my own experiences in the context of that theme. Rather than beginning with related research of others, I entered into a process of discerning how I had made meaning of these experiences. This act in and of itself became an affirmation of internal voice as a source of knowledge. The greatest challenge for me however was to "stay with" this process once started. Upon self-reflection I discovered that I had internalized the devaluation of voice as an important source of knowledge and this had created a sense of shame and self-doubt. The SPN process became a very real struggle with my own self-doubt in order to "insert myself into the center of my scholarly writing" (Nash & Bradley, p. 6.).

Me-search was hard. To those who would question the *rigor* of a method of inquiry that requires deep and honest reflection on one's own experiences I would say "give it a try!" Self-reflection rarely led me to the comfort of definitive answers. As I embarked on this new form of research, I found myself gazing longingly at the stack of books and journal articles I compiled in

preparation for writing. What's wrong with finding comfort in someone else's certainty? I resist this inclination adhering to the admonition I have frequently been known to give my students "I haven't met anyone yet who died of discomfort". Only after searching for my own sources of knowledge did I engage in the "re-search" component of SPN.

Re-search

According to Nash & Bradley (2011) the re-search component of SPN responds to the question "What scholars and researchers have informed my writing?" (p. 7). At this stage, I broadened my focus to consider other sources of knowledge in the process of inquiry. I became curious about the possible similarities and differences between internal and external sources of knowledge. How had other scholars and researchers approached the topic of marginalization of personal voice in the academy? How were my experiences with marginalization similar to and different from others? Responding to these questions was my process of data analyses. How readers connect personally to my SPN findings is what supports their generalizability.

We-Search

The final component of SPN methodology is called "we-search." At this stage of the SPN process, the writer moves from the solitude of self-reflection to an awareness of her/his relationship with the reader. According to Nash & Bradley (2011) it is the "*I-we*" relationship, that assists the SPN writer to make choices about which of his/her subjective experiences might be generalizable to others (p. 7). Not surprisingly, I struggled with this step in the SPN process. How could I possibly discern which parts of my narrative might be meaningful for others? I was asking the wrong question. The more helpful question was "How do I write my SPN in a way that is clearly understandable and supports the reader to develop greater insight into their

own?" This question assumes that knowledge develops in a relationship that creates space for the expression of multiple truths.

Throughout this article, I share reflections on my own experience with marginalization that also help to illustrate the methodological components of SPN writing. In the next section of this article I present the findings that emerged from use of SPN methodology.

<div align="center">Findings</div>

In this section, I present and analyze data discovered through the process of intentional and focused self-reflection or "me-search" (Nash & Bradley,). I begin by presenting reflections on my own personal and professional experiences with marginalization. I describe how these experiences created a barrier in my own effort to construct a coherent and honest self-narrative. Second, through story-telling, I describe the connection between my own experiences of marginalization and the ways I have participated in marginalizing my students' narrative "voices". Finally, I present results from my inquiry that lend support to the argument that knowledge discerned through personal reflection be weighted equally with more conventional methods of research.   One is no substitute for the other and neither can claim a hold on absolute truth.

The SPN process emboldened me to take a leap of faith like I'd never taken before as a student – to recognize my own subjective voice as a valuable source of knowledge. As a clinical social worker and teacher, I regularly work to engage and be present to the narrative voices of my clients and students. Being present and staying present with myself was so much harder. Perhaps this is because as Pipher (2006) asserts: "Unlike delivery, presence is not a set of skills, and it cannot be learned in a linear way. Presence can be cultivated by self-exploration, focus,

and attention." (p. 202). Who would have guessed that by being present to myself I would begin to discern some of the answers to my research questions?

In the margins of absolute clarity

I was born with strabismus in my right eye. This was a condition commonly referred to at that time as a "lazy" or "crossed eye". Underdeveloped muscles in the "bad" eye caused the pupil to "wander" and weakened my vision. The treatment of strabismus required that I wear a patch on my "good" left eye from the time I was 18 months until I was 9 years old. The patch was heated in a frying pan to bring out its adhesive quality. Warm and smelly, it was placed over the eye with normal vision first thing every morning and taken off right before bedtime every night. The hope was that it would force me to use my "lazy" eye therefore strengthening its' muscles and improving my vision. I remember simply hating the patch because it blurred my eyesight. Sometimes, I pulled the edge of the patch up when I wanted to see something in greater detail. Perhaps this early experience explains my introversion and my ability to tolerate the discomfort of uncertainty. That being said, at times the SPN writing experience felt a lot like wearing that patch on my eye.

Being different

I grew up poor in a wealthy community. For an extended period of time when my father was ill, my family survived on public assistance. Awareness of my "non-privileged" socio-economic status didn't develop until I was in middle school. Although the standard school uniform worn by students at the Catholic school I attended served as a visual equalizer I had begun to recognize the markers of socio-economic privilege. My peers arrived at school wearing expensive winter jackets with ski lift tickets attached, they wrote essays about summer vacations in exotic and faraway places, they had colored televisions and attended gymnastics, piano and

hockey lessons. I was not a part of that world. Through relationships with friends and interactions in the community I was exposed to the idea that if you had privilege, you had greater personal value. Somewhere along the line I internalized the idea that the haves were better than the have nots. Nash contends that personal narratives "provide unique insights into the connections between individual life trajectories and collective forces and institutions beyond the individual" (p. 3). The narrative process aligns well with social work's person-in-environment perspective. SPN writing empowers the writer to resist the impinging environment through the creation of a new, more meaningful narrative. New narratives can affirm individual worth and support self-efficacy. Narratives also need to be witnessed by others in a supportive environment.

Growing up, my father often talked about Muhammed Ali. My father appreciated the great boxer's athleticism and personal integrity. Interestingly these were two qualities that characterized my dad as well. When I was in 5th grade, my teacher started a discussion about the war in Vietnam. Among other things, she explained that Ali chose not to fight in the Vietnam war because he was a "draft dodger". I remember raising my hand, gathering my courage and in a faltering voice disagreeing out loud with the teacher. I said, "No, Muhammed Ali is a conscientious objector. He is not fighting because his religion says it is wrong to kill". The teacher dismissed my comment as "inaccurate" and seemed annoyed with me. Two days later during parent-teacher conferences the teacher communicated my "misunderstanding" to my father. When he came home that evening, my father sat me on his lap, relayed the conversation he had had with my teacher and said, "I'm so proud of you for speaking your truth". This experience and others like it were what later empowered me to "come out" as a gay woman.
Professional experiences

Several years ago, while teaching a graduate level family therapy course, I presented a case study of a family who had experienced unspeakable trauma. Students were asked to break up into small groups and reflect on the question, "What is the first thing you would do to help this family?" Each group selected one student to share their response with the entire class. One bright young woman started the process reporting that her group had spent their time debating which family therapy modality would be the best fit for the family. She explained that her group had chosen cognitive-behavioral family therapy because it was an "evidence based" modality "whereas experiential family therapy was just a random grouping of interventions". As I listened to this student, I felt an overwhelming sense that her words were not her own. She appeared to be reciting facts given to her rather than an expressing her own genuine feelings and thinking. Where, I wondered was the empathy for the family described in the scenario?

I was aware of feeling irritated with this student which I initially chalked up as my own defensive response to her critique of experiential family therapy. I was quite an enthusiast of experiential therapy at that time. Upon further reflection, I realized who I was really irritated with. I saw myself in that young student. I recognized the multitude of ways I had abandoned myself as a source of knowledge and in doing so, distanced myself from feelings that could have helped me create deeper more integrated learning. I also began to recognize the multitude of ways I had contributed to students distancing themselves from their own subjective experience.

Educational neuroscientist Helen Immordino-Yang has suggested that "leaving room for self-relevant processing may help students *own* their learning, both the process and the outcomes". Could there be some connection between owning one's learning and the development of empathy? I think there is a connection.

Marginalizing language

SPN writing taught me that the origins of meaning are often pure and that that purity is either maintained or changed by relationships. Words are powerful. Words matter. Transforming words to make them work takes time and patience. Sometimes it's easier to say "Oh, you know what I mean" than to take the time to change the way we talk to make it work for the greater good. As a part-time college instructor, I never use the word "adjunct" to describe my role. Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines the word adjunct as "something that is joined or added to another thing but is not an essential part of it." (Retrieved from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/adjunct).

Interestingly, the original meaning of the word "adjunct" derives from the Latin *adiunctus* which means "closely connected, joined and united" or an "essential attribute" (www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=adjunct). Somewhere between coining the term "adjunctus" in the 16th century and Webster's current definition of the term, its meaning had changed. What was once regarded as essential has now become unessential. How did that happen? My curiosity led me to reflect on an experience that demonstrates how the process of marginalization occurs and how I had become complicit with it.

I once paired up with two colleagues to complete a presentation about a research topic that was somewhat unfamiliar to me. Interestingly, the topic was closely related to my own cultural and spiritual background. How had I become so estranged from my own history? As I began to research the topic, my interest was ignited. The personal connection to research so relevant to my own history filled me with an almost urgent desire to read everything I could get my hands on. This was exciting, meaningful learning. I added my written contribution to the document I was co-creating with my colleagues. The next day, I discovered that one of them had edited out most of what I had written. When I asked about it, I

was told it had been removed because "It really wasn't relevant". I quietly replied, "Well, it's

relevant to me". In the spirit of collaboration and the desire to just get the job done, I let it ride.

Later, during oral presentation to our peers, I brought what I had found meaningful back to the

conversation. Why did that feel like an act of defiance? I injected my voice but in doing so, felt

almost as if I had betrayed my colleagues.

The meaning we assign to words influence and sometimes drive marginalizing behavior.

In my role as a part-time social work instructor, I have experienced marginalization in the

academy that is supported by a view of "adjuncts" as entering the academy with inadequate or

inferior knowledge, skills and abilities. What I bring to the classroom may be different but is

certainly not inferior. Marginalizing language only serves to perpetuate the practice/academy

divide – a process that parallels those that marginalize our students.

Coming out of the margins

Interactions with students from different cultural backgrounds have forced me to confront

the ways I have participated in the marginalization of narratives different from my own. One

example involved a student who had grown up in a culture that did not embrace our course text-

book's Western definition for what constituted a "healthy" family. I had been lecturing about

experiential family therapy and had introduced the concept of "enmeshment".   I pointed out that

this was a concept highly influenced by American Individualism and therefore may not be

helpful in assessing all families. One international student began to squirm in his seat and was

looking at me with a hurt and confused look on his face. When I nodded to him, he began to tap

his finger on a page of his open text book. "You are wrong and I am confused" he said. "This

book says right here - it is unhealthy when adult children don't leave home". He looked at me as

if betrayed. It took me a moment to realize that despite having clearly stated the concepts poor

fit for all families, I was the person who had chosen the course text – I had the power to make this choice. Despite acknowledging the text's limitations across cultures, my having chosen the text was could be viewed as an endorsement of its content. By continuing to use the text, even with the caveat, I was a participant in marginalizing this student's experiences. I think I know now what it feels like to be the oppressor.

Another example of my participation in the marginalization of students as a result of my own privilege occurred when, while teaching a class, I summarized an idea from the Mary Pipher (1996) book, T*he Shelter of Each Other.* Pipher compares attempting to provide good mental health services in a community lacking basic needs to "going first class" on the Titanic. One student challenged this idea, "But it was the first class passengers who had access to the lifeboats. They survived. Most of those who perished on the Titanic were lower class." Without even being aware of it, I had been perpetuating an incomplete narrative.

In this section of the paper, I speak to the implications of my SPN findings as they relate to my own future teaching.

<div align="center">Discussion</div>

My first stab at writing an SPN became more an exercise in learning how to "undo" the self-doubt that was preventing me from trusting and valuing my own internal wisdom – no matter how difficult to quantify. I started with questions. I listened to my own self-talk. This reflective process helped me to gage the level of influence my own internal narrative was having on my feelings, thinking and behavior. I began to recognize the extent to which my personal narrative was impacting my teaching. I struggled mightily to keep my voice in the process. I felt a strong pull to quantify, quote the experts, read more and assert the legitimacy of SPN. When I was able to resist this pull – it was an experience of pure joy. I had momentarily liberated myself

from both internal and external forces that wanted to discount the importance of my voice. I'd like to think that this learning will make me a better teacher – one who can help hold students in this space of discomfort and transformation.

It would be disingenuous of me to claim that writing a scholarly personal narrative was the ultimate liberating experience. I had so hoped that it would be. I had hoped that like the "Nobody" in Emily Dickinson's poem I could distance myself from the norms and expectations of convention and allow my pure "me-voice" to have its own way. I got a little ahead of myself. I wanted to avoid discomfort. I wanted to turn away from the painful realization that somewhere along the line, I too had become a participant in the invalidation of my own and others personal truth. Seeing how this process had developed in interactions with invalidating environments, I was able to have some self-compassion. At the same time, I realized it was now up to me to stop ignoring my "me-voice" and subsequently the "me-voice" of my students. I grew to understand that I couldn't do it alone. At first, this was a painful realization. Why would I want to return to the same environment, the same relationships that had marginalized my voice in the first place? Why would I want to engage with people and institutions claiming to have possession of one, absolute truth? It struck me that students representing different cultural, racial and other diverse groups might want to ask me the same questions.

Self-reflection on my own experiences with marginalization opened me up to re-experiencing how deeply painful it is to have one's personal truth excluded or undervalued. That pain became important affective data which further sensitized me to how students must feel when their subjective wisdom is undervalued. In addition, it strengthened my resolve not to perpetuate this behavior with my students. Given that self-reflection forced an encounter with

shame, staying with the SPN process was very hard. I found solace in Kaufmann & Raphael's

(1996) ideas about the importance of facing shame:

> Entering that experience long enough to endure it, deliberately, and consciously in order to transform it, is a challenge which knows no bound. Yet only by facing that challenge can we ever hope to re-create who we are. (as cited in hooks, 2003, p. 102-103).

The most positive outcome of my SPN experience is that I feel more confident in my ability to

support marginalized students wanting to engage in a similar transformative experience.

Finally, in responding to a student who shared concerns about finding a place for

personal voice in education, Robert Nash made a distinction between the "public intellectual"

and the "university scholar":

> Don't get sucked into either-or thinking. There is no reason why you can't present your work in two dialects: university-speak and lay-speak. Do the research and scholarship that you need to do in order to benefit from the university's conventional reward system. Do the public communication you want to do in order to find your true satisfaction (p.148).

Although I can appreciate the practical wisdom in Nash's advice, I can't help but wonder if, by

identifying two dialects, he too has fallen into "either-or thinking?" Why can't our institutions of

higher education simultaneously support both types of communication?   If an educator can only

find true satisfaction outside of the university, how does that impact classroom teaching and the

quality of relationships with students? Although offered as a method of coping, I fear that

setting up this kind of dichotomy only serves to maintain the continued marginalization of

subjective truth in higher education. Why can't we all be a "Somebody"?

References

Adjunct (2005). In: *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*. Retrieved from http://www.merriam-
webster.com/dictionary/adjunct

Adjunctus: Retrieved from http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=adjunct

Bommel, MV, Kwakman, K. & Boshuizen, H. (2012). Experiences of social work students with
learning theoretical knowledge in constructivist higher vocational education: a qualitative
exploration. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training,* 64:4, 529-542. doi:

10.1080/13636820.2012.727857

Cozolino, L. (2014). *The neuroscience of human relationships: Attachment and the developing
social brain.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Dickinson, E. (1998). From: *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, Ralph W. Franklin ed., Cambridge,
Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Graham, M.A. (1997). Empowering social work faculty: Alternative paradigms for teaching
and learning. Journal of Teaching in Social Work, 15:1-2, 33-49. doi:
http://dx.org/10.1300/J067v/5n01_04

Heidelberger, C.A. & Uecker, T.W., (2009). Scholarly Personal Narrative as information
systems research methodology. *MWAIS 2009 Proceedings,* Paper 22.
http://aisel.aisnet.org/mwais2009/22

Hussain, I. (2012). Use of constructivist approach in higher education: An instructors'
observation. *Creative Education,* 3:2, 179-184. doi:
http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/ce.2012.32028

Immordino-Yang, M.H. (2016). *Emotions, learning and the brain: Exploring the educational
implications of affective neuroscience.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Liu, C.H. & Mathews, R. (2005). Vygotsky's philosophy: Constructivism and its criticisms examined. *International Education Journal,* 6:3, 386-399.

Kaufmann, G. & Raphael, L. (1996). *Coming out of shame: Transforming gay and lesbian lives.* New York: Doubleday

Keaton, S.A. & Bodie, G.D. (2011). Explaining social constructivism. *Communication Teacher,* 25:4, pp. 192-196. doi: 10.1080/17404622.2011.601725

Nash, R. J. (2004). *Liberating scholarly writing: The power of personal narrative.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Nash, R.J., & Bradley, D.L. (2011). *Me-search and Re-Search: A guide for writing scholarly personal narrative manuscripts.* North Carolina: Information Age Publishing, Inc.

Nash, R.J. & Viray, S. (2014). *How stories heal: Writing our way to meaning and wholeness in the academy.* NY: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

Nash, R.J. & Viray, S. (2013). *Our stories matter: Liberating the voices of marginalized students through scholarly personal narrative writing.* New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

Pipher, M. (1996). *The Shelter of Each Other.* New York: Penguin Books.

Pipher, M. (2006). *Writing to change the world: An inspiring guide for transforming the world with words.* New York, NY: Riverhead Books.

Prochaska, J.O., Norcross, J.C. & DiClemente, C.C. (2007). *Changing for good: A revolutionary program for overcoming bad habits and moving your life positively forward.* New York: HarperCollins Publishers

CHAPTER THREE

The Invisible Consultant: An Experiential Technique for Social Work Education

Abstract

This article introduces an experiential learning technique used to support social work students to effectively manage anxiety when it arises during classroom roleplay activities. The *Invisible Consultant* (IC) technique described in this paper is presented as a role that can be used during classroom role-plays. This IC supports students by modeling how to manage anxiety, balance thinking and feeling processes and integrate learning.   In developing the skills and practices needed to implement the IC technique, students also gain direct experience with other social work skills and practices including: non-judgement, acceptance, self-reflection, empathy and attunement. Therefore, use of this technique not only helps students manage anxiety in the classroom but outside the classroom as well, should they decide to use it in practice. Challenges and benefits of implementing the IC technique are also discussed and recommendations for further research are presented.

Key words: experiential learning, roleplays, anxiety, invisible consultant role

The Invisible Consultant: An Experiential Technique for Social-Work Education

The preparation of social-work students for practice frequently includes the use of classroom role-play activities. Role-play is an experiential method of learning that requires students to assume the identity of either a client or the social worker and perform in that role during individual, group, or family practice simulations. The benefits of using role-play for training have been described extensively in the literature (Harrawood, Parmanand, & Wilde, 2011; Mooradian, 2008; & Sousa, 2011). Role-play prepares students for practice by immersing them in situations similar to those they will encounter in the field. In addition, they provide an opportunity for students to rehearse skills and integrate learning. As Sousa (2011) notes, "there is no long-term retention of cognitive concepts without rehearsal" (p. 93). Clearly, role-play is a valuable learning activity for preparing social workers for the realities of direct practice.

Despite its widespread use in social-work education, role-play in the classroom nonetheless presents inherent challenges. Role-play activities may heighten a student's anxiety about performing in front of peers or evoke unwanted feelings of vulnerability. As a course instructor, I often encounter students who are very reluctant to participate in experiential activities due to previous negative encounters with classroom role-plays. They describe experiences of becoming so anxious about performing that they could not recall prior learning and apply their knowledge of concepts in the moment. For them, the role-play became an exercise that left them feeling incompetent and diminished. Feedback from peers and instructors unaware of the impact of anxiety on learning only reinforced these students' feelings and subsequent reluctance to engage in classroom role-plays.

While completing a trauma certification program several years ago, I was introduced to an experiential technique used in groups that was designed to help clients whose anxiety had

overwhelmed their ability to think or make meaning of what was happening to them. This article

describes how I have used this technique in the classroom to support students with effectively

managing their anxiety and staying actively engaged in learning during classroom role-plays.

Before describing this technique and how to implement it, I discuss the impact that

heightened anxiety has on learning and provide a rationale for the technique's use in social-work

education. Next, I describe the technique and the three types of statements students need to learn

in order to implement it during role play scenarios. In addition, I provide a sample dialogue to

illustrate how this technique can be implemented in the classroom. Students in my classes have

aptly named it the *invisible consultant* (IC) technique because of the role's similarity to that of a

consultant, whom they can access for support when faced with challenges encountered in direct

practice. In addition, students have grown to understand that the IC role represents their own

unseen, internal capacity to effectively manage emotions as they arise in social-worker/client

interactions. Finally, a summary of the IC technique's strengths and challenges will be presented

along with a recommendation for further exploration of its effectiveness in the social work

classroom.

Anxiety and learning

The connection between high levels of anxiety and diminished learning capacity has been

well documented in the literature (Egan, Neely-Barnes, & Combs-Orme, 2011; Cozolino, 2014;

Immordino-Yang, 2012; Sylvan, Posselt & Lipson, 2016). Too much emotional arousal can

impede a student's ability to recall previous learning and use it to build new knowledge in the

present (Sousa, 2011). Experiential activities like role-playing were designed to create a level of

cognitive dissonance or arousal in students in order to more fully and meaningfully engage them

in learning. Too much anxiety, however, can temporarily diminish a student's ability to access

cognitive functions needed for integration of new learning. Too little decreases motivation for learning.

With imaging technology (MRI and PET scans), educational neuroscientists have provided empirical evidence that when a person becomes extremely anxious, the affective (feeling) and cognitive (thinking) centers of the brain become disconnected from each other. Anxiety causes stress hormones to be released in the brain and those hormones create what has been referred to as a *right brain/left brain split*. When this occurs, a person is temporarily locked into the *experience* of anxiety but unable to access the part of the brain that can assist them with labeling and/or putting words to that experience. This is where the IC technique described in this paper can be helpful to students: it serves as a temporary bridge between right- and left-brain functions so students can feel and think at the same time.

I have found the Yerkes-Dodson Arousal Curve "(as cited in Teigen, 2016)" a helpful tool for understanding the impact and role that anxiety has on learning. The Arousal Curve is based on the idea that people perform best at "intermediate" levels of arousal or anxiety. An anxiety level that is too low can impede a student's readiness and motivation to learn. When anxiety levels are too high, they become a barrier to comprehension and integration of new learning. In either case, the student is prevented from accessing the intermediate zone of arousal where optimal learning can happen (See Figure 1).

An instructor who has not been given techniques to help students "stay with" and manage uncomfortable feelings evoked during classroom role-plays might avoid using experiential activities like role-playing altogether. This is a disservice to students who benefit from consciously experiencing and safely managing emotional arousal in role-play situations that parallel direct practice. In addition, "Not appreciating the complex nature of reflection may

result in students who already engage in deeper reflection not being rewarded" (Trede & Smith 2012, p. 624). How then do social work educators create a balance between the need to arouse emotions for learning and the need to contain arousal at a level that does not impede learning? In the next section of this paper, I discuss my rationale for using the IC technique to teach students how to simultaneously experience and manage their anxiety during classroom role-plays in order to create meaningful learning that lasts.

<div align="center">The Invisible Consultant Technique</div>

Rationale for technique

The invisible consultant technique is based on Hudgins, Drucker & Metcalf's (2000) *containing double* technique (CD) for use in the group treatment of trauma. The theoretical foundations of this technique include attachment theory, experiential learning theory and modified psychodrama. In their work with trauma survivors, Hudgins et al. (2000) observed that when clients diagnosed with PTSD were overwhelmed by emotion, their ability to think and make meaning in the present was compromised. The result was an experience of high arousal due to past trauma that inhibited their ability to access cognitive functions to create new and healing meaning. The CD technique was developed to help clients be able to simultaneously experience and manage emotions in order to stay connected to new learning in the present moment. Hudgins et al. (2000) conceptualized the CD technique as "an organic, viable, flexible, solid holding place" for whatever a person is feeling, thinking, and experiencing. The role is nonjudgmental, supportive and stable—it *contains* rather than represses or compartmentalizes.

I became curious about how this technique could be helpful for students in my classes. I recognized similarities between how trauma survivors and my students coped during times of heightened stress. Although the anxiety experienced by a student in role-play may not rise to the

same level as that of a trauma survivor, the three major components of the technique—reflection,

labeling, and anchoring—seemed relevant for use in social-work education. This article

describes how I have used this technique in the classroom such that students can effectively

manage their anxiety and stay actively engaged in learning.

During the past two decades, educational neuroscience has begun to provide empirical

support for the observation that when flooded with affect, a student's ability to access cognitive

capacity is temporarily diminished. (Immordino-Yang & Sylvan 2012: Sousa, 2011). Recent

neuroscientific studies do, however, indicate that although the intensities of feelings may differ,

anxiety at any level involves the same neurological processes (Sousa, 2011). Having a basic

understanding of these processes could help instructors create classroom activities that help

students learn effective ways to manage their anxiety. The invisible consultant technique

described in this paper is one example of an experiential teaching strategy that can be used to

help students participating in classroom role-plays effectively balance feeling and thinking in

order to create new learning.

Description of Technique

The invisible consultant technique is presented as a role that students play during

classroom role-plays. The role of the IC is to provide support for the student playing the family

therapist. When students in the family-therapist role are lost in confusion or stuck in anxiety

during a role-play, the IC helps them become consciously aware of what they are experiencing,

thus effectively managing that experience and moving toward the integration of new learning.

The student playing the IC role accomplishes this by using statements that convey empathy, help

regulate anxiety, and support integration of new learning.

Prior to participating in family role-plays, all students are taught the IC role and given opportunities to practice using three types of "statements" with each other in small groups. They are told that the IC is supportive and nonjudgmental. The IC role is described as a representation of each student's own capacity to manage emotions, develop self-awareness, and integrate new learning.

The IC role helps connect the other student to her/his own ability to consciously experience and effectively manage arousal, and to stay connected to cognitive or meaning-making processes. Students in the role of the IC speak in the first person because they reflect the thoughts and feelings of the student role-playing the family therapist. The IC sits next to the peer in the therapist role and uses "I" statements. The next section of this paper describes and provides examples of the three types of statements used by the IC to meet the objectives of the technique.

Types of Statements

Reflecting statement

A reflecting statement is one that empathically mirrors what the student playing the therapist feels, thinks, or shows during the role-play. One example of a reflecting statement would be when the IC, sensing the anxious feelings of the student playing the family therapist, says aloud, "I am really nervous about being in the role of the therapist." A reflection can also be non-verbal: the IC might assume the same sitting position taken by the student in the therapist role. Sometimes the reflection can be a sigh or an audible breath. This skill requires the IC to become attuned to the internal state of the student playing the therapist. Attunement is an important skill for social work practitioners to develop, as Calvert, et al. (2016) point out: "Therapists must be able to use skills of reflection in action to engage in complex processing of

relational phenomenon with clients, responding automatically or intuitively to such dynamics as

they occur" (p. 4). Practicing reflection statements also benefits students performing the IC role,

because it requires them to tune in to their own thoughts and feelings while also attuning to

another student's experience. A primary objective of the IC role is to assist students in the

further development of empathy and the skill of empathic reflection.

Labeling statement

After the IC has used a reflection statement that empathically mirrors and reflects the

experience of the student in the therapist role, she/he moves to a labeling statement. A labeling

statement "labels a person's ability to contain the reflected process, content, affect or intensity

into conscious awareness" (Hudgins, et al., 2000, p. 65). In other words, once empathic

attunement has been established, the IC makes statements that guide the student in the therapist

role to an awareness of their ability to feel and think at the same time. Rather than

compartmentalizing uncomfortable emotions such as anxiety, the IC helps her/his peer

experience these feelings and simultaneously reminds them of their ability to effectively manage

them in the moment. This process is referred to as *containment* because it helps a student to

balance the domains of feeling and thinking, reduce anxiety and enhance learning. An example

of a labeling statement used by the IC to support conscious awareness of anxiety and to reflect

the student's ability to balance feeling and thinking might be: "I am aware that I am feeling very

anxious about saying the wrong thing and can remind myself that I can feel my anxiety and stay

with this role-play at the same time." In one of my classes, the student playing the role of the IC

borrowed a line from the children's book, *The Little Engine that Could*, to help the other student

recognize their own ability to experience anxiety and contain it at the same time: "I feel I can, I

think I can, I know I can."

Anchoring statement

Hudgins et al. (2000) describe an anchoring statement as one that "anchors the reflection and containment in the moment with time references, sensory information or interpersonal connections" (p. 65). When a student's anxiety has been accurately labeled and effectively contained, she/he can move from self-reflection to an awareness of the interpersonal context of the role-play enacted in the classroom. An example of an anchoring statement would be: "I am aware of my anxiety, can manage it in the moment, and see and feel the support of my peers who are learning right along with me with no judgment." Once anxiety is reflected, labeled, and contained meaningfully, integrated learning can begin to happen.

Sample Dialogue

This section presents a sample of a dialogue that might occur between the student performing the role of the IC and the student (SD) playing the role of the social worker in a classroom role-play experience. Reflecting, labeling and anchoring statements used by the IC are identified in brackets:

IC: "Well this is weird. I hate role-plays." [reflecting]

SD: (Laughs and nods) "I do."

IC: (Takes a breath) [non-verbal reflecting]

SD: (Also takes a breath and asks) "So what do I do now?"

IC: "I'm not sure what to do, I am going blotto." [reflecting]

SD: "Yes, that's right. I've forgotten what we were just talking about."

IC: "I'm not sure how to respond to this family." [reflecting]

SD: (Corrects IC) "No, I am not sure how to respond to this father's anger!"

IC: "I know that the father's anger is making me feel anxious." [labeling statement]

SD: "Yes!"

IC: "I feel intimidated by his anger." [labeling]

SD: "Yes!"

IC: "I can get curious about why working with an angry father is intimidating." [anchoring]

SD: "Well that's kind of personal. I can't let my own issues affect my work."

IC: "I know that my own feelings from the past are impacting me in the here and now."

        [labeling]

SD: "I just don't know how to manage my feelings about him and don't want to say the

        wrong thing."

IC: "I am able to notice my feelings, take a deep breath, and care about doing a good job at

        the same time." [anchoring]

SD: "Yes, that's good."

IC: "I can take a deep breath and get curious about what I need from other people when I am

        angry." [anchoring]

SD: "I don't want people to be scared away. I want them to listen."

IC: "I can let this angry dad know that I am listening by . . ."

SD: "Nodding, clarifying, mirroring."

IC: "I can use these skills in this moment and see, feel, and hear the support of my peers."

        [anchoring]

        This narrative sample of a dialogue between the IC and the student in the role of the

family therapist demonstrates the use of each of the three critical components of the technique.

Through intentional attunement to both verbal and nonverbal communication, the IC senses his

peer's discomfort and labels it out loud and in the first person: "This is weird, I hate role-plays."

In addition, the IC senses a desire to take an audible breath and does. The student in the role of therapist follows suit by taking a breath. This simple exchange is an example of empathic attunement.

Next, the IC helps the peer become consciously aware of her/his anxiety and affirms the student's own ability to contain or hold the feelings. Here, the IC directly intervenes to repair the right-brain/left-brain split caused by the anxiety the student is feeling. By affirming the peer's ability to experience, feel, and think at the same time, the IC helps to contain the over-arousal. Finally, the IC encourages the peer to collect sensory data and connect to the interpersonal context: "I can use these skills in this moment and see, feel, and hear the support of my peers."

Benefits and Challenges

Throughout the past 15 years, I have used the IC technique to help prepare graduate-level social workers for direct practice with families. First, the IC technique helps prepare students for practice experiences that may elicit anxiety or other intense emotions. Rather than ignoring or compartmentalizing these emotions, students who use the IC both experience and manage those feelings as they occur. The IC role helps students (and teachers, for that matter) successfully balance feeling and thinking processes during role-play interactions. This balance helps students manage their anxiety so that they stay grounded and available for new learning. Reflection on emotions helps social workers develop their capacity to empathically attune to the inner experience of their clients. When integrated, this technique epitomizes the "use of self" in social-work practice.

Second, the IC can guide students to greater awareness of countertransference responses elicited during their interactions with clients. Through reflection, the IC can help lead students

to conscious awareness of how their own discomfort with emotions might influence how they respond to the emotional expressions of clients. This awareness empowers students who learn new ways of managing countertransference as it arises in classroom role-plays and future interactions with clients.

Third, experiential activities like role-plays fit well with the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) competency-based standards for education and accreditation. CSWE Competency 6 for example, connects ethical and professional values so that "social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgement and behavior" (CSWE, 2015). The IC is a nice tool to help students develop this competency.

Droit-Volet & Berthon (2017) found that a competitive classroom environment and low levels of peer support significantly increase student anxiety; the IC technique directly addresses this concern by facilitating collaboration and increasing interpersonal support between students during role-play exercises. Students actually learn how to provide and receive interpersonal support with each other. While students are routinely encouraged to practice "self-care" during times of heightened anxiety, stress, or exhaustion, it is equally important for students to learn how to provide and receive interpersonal support, or what I refer to in the classroom as "other care." Through the nonjudgmental support of the IC, students develop greater appreciation for supervision in practice and the ongoing need for consultation. I have often observed that students become aware of when they need interpersonal support and will independently ask for an IC to help them. In my experience, when students' anxieties have been effectively managed through empathic reflection, accurate labeling, and interpersonal connection, they become more actively involved and less worried about making a mistake.

Finally, the IC supports the inclusion and expression of diverse ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving. Because the IC does not provide answers, the process of containing emotions helps them empathically attune, thereby leading students to their own particular discoveries of truth. Through empathic attunement, the IC leads a student to their own experience and discovery of their own truth.

A significant challenge in using the IC technique is that students who are more comfortable engaging with content have more difficulty dealing with the processes made explicit by the IC. Some students feel more comfortable relying on their cognitive abilities when engaging in a role-play and they miss the important affective and nonverbal cues needed to establish authentic relationships with clients. For them, experiential activities may make them feel more vulnerable because they are used to intellectualizing their emotions and keeping them at a distance. Ironically, these are the students who stand to benefit the most from this technique despite the discomfort involved. Without it, some students' particular discomforts with emotional processes may go undetected, impeding their development as practitioners. Therefore, although challenging to implement for some students, pushing through these challenges with the support of a technique like the IC has benefit. The IC reminds her/his peer, "You can be anxious and take a risk at the same time."

Another challenge of the technique is that both teachers and students need to have enough trust in a process that may become confusing or unpredictable—not unlike direct-practice experiences. Clear instruction and ample time to practice the IC technique before implementation must be provided for teachers and students to risk using it. Messiness and unpredictability are normalized by the IC, who also helps everyone involved in a role-play

respond with more spontaneity, less need to control, and access to support to help tolerate discomfort.

Because students bring varying levels of anxiety about participation in role-plays and the vulnerability it may create, educators need to be able to incorporate this technique in such a way that student progress is measured from where students begin, not just in terms of predetermined outcomes. Instructors who use the IC will also need to have some flexibility in the classroom in order to create the time needed to teach and practice the technique.

To date, there is very little empirical evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of the IC technique, which might deter some educators from using it. Studies designed to measure the effectiveness of the IC technique need to be conducted. A mixed-method research design that can integrate both quantitative and qualitative data would be helpful to describe the complexity of the IC intervention.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

The impact of anxiety on learning is significant. Too much anxiety can temporarily diminish a student's ability to think, reason and problem solve, and yet too little anxiety diminishes readiness and motivation for learning. Experiential teaching strategies like the IC have practical implications and are supported by findings from brain science that have re-conceptualized the conditions necessary to create and integrate new knowledge. Meaningful, long-lasting and integrated learning requires containment (not repression) of emotions in order to create the optimal conditions for learning. Social work education therefore is challenged to find a way to bridge the gap between conventional approaches to learning that emphasize cognitive domains and emerging approaches that emphasize affective domains.

Social work instructors may also benefit from practicing the IC technique to develop their own relational and reflective competencies at the same time as their students. Calvert, Crowe, & Grenyer (2016) use the term "dialogical reflexivity" to describe the kind of learning process where:

> relational and reflective competencies intersect to facilitate a reflective position within relationships in which practitioners step into a cognitive and affective position alongside the moment-to-moment relational situation at hand and examine their own biases, reactions, affect and behavior (p. 2).

The IC technique described in this paper supports this kind of learning process.

Social work instructors who choose to use innovative techniques like the IC in the classroom, need the support of their colleagues, administration and the institution where they are teaching. Educators who have developed a basic understanding of the "neuroscience of learning" and who can clearly articulate their rational for using new techniques in the classroom, are more likely to garner that support. Further research is needed to help establish the efficacy of techniques like the IC in the future.

References

Bonnycastle, M. M., & Bonnycastle, C. R. (2015). Photographs generate knowledge: Reflections

on experiential learning in/outside the social work classroom. *Journal of Teaching in*

Social Work, *35*, 233–250. doi:10.1080/08841233.2015.1027031

Calvert, F. L., Crowe, T. P., & Grenyer, B. F. S. (2016). Dialogical reflexivity in supervision: An

experiential learning process for enhancing reflective and relational competencies. *The*

Clinical Supervisor, *35*, 1–21. doi:10.1080/07325223.2015.1135840

Cheung, M., & Delavega, E. (2014). Five-way experiential learning model for social work

education. *Social Work Education*, *33*, 1070–1087. doi:10.1080/0261547925538

Council on Social Work Education. (2015). Educational Policy & Accreditation Standards for

Baccalaureate and Master's Social Work Programs.

Retrieved from http://www.cswe.org/File.aspx?id=81660. Google Scholar

Cozolino, L. (2014). *The neuroscience of human relationships: Attachment and the developing*

social brain (2nd ed.). New York: W. W. Norton Publishing.

Droit-Volet, S., & Berthon, M. (2017). Emotion and implicit timing: The arousal effect.

Frontiers in Psychology, 8(176), 1–5. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00176

Dudziak, S., & Profitt, N. J. (2012). Group work and social justice: Designing pedagogy for

social change. *Social Work with Groups*, *35*, 235–252,

doi:10.1080/01609513.2011.624370

Egan, M., Neely-Barnes, S., & Combs-Orme, T. (2011). Integrating neuroscience knowledge

into social work education: A case-based approach. *Journal of Social Work Education*,

47, 269–282. doi:10.5175/JSWE.2011.200900109

Harrawood, L. K., Parmanand, S., & Wilde, B. J. (2011). Using simulated sessions to enhance clinical social work education. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, *19*, 198–203. doi:10.1177/1066480710397122

Helmeke, K. B., & Prouty, A. M. (2001). Do we really understand? An experiential exercise for training family therapists. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, *27*, 534–535. doi:10.1111/j.1752-0606.2001.tb00346.x

Hudgins, M. K. (2002). *Experiential Treatment for PTSD: The Therapeutic Spiral Model.* New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company.

Hudgins, M. K., Drucker, K., & Metcalf, K. (2000). The containing double: A clinically effective psychodrama intervention for PTSD. *The British Journal of Psychodrama and Sociodrama, 15*(1), 58–77.

Hudgins, M. K., & Toscani, F. (Eds.). (2013). *Healing world trauma with the therapeutic spiral model: Psychodramatic stories from the frontline*. Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Immordino-Yang, M. H., & Sylvan, L. (2010). Admiration for virtue: Neuroscientific perspectives on motivating emotion. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 35*, 110–115. doi:101016/j.cedpsych.2010.03.003

Lee, E. (2012). Understanding anxiety and facilitating twinship self-object functions among social workers: Psychodynamic contributions to multicultural education. *Journal of Social Work Practice, 27*, 63–78. doi:10.1080/02650533.2012.719491

Mooradian, J. K. (2008). Using simulated sessions to enhance clinical social work education. *Journal of Social Work Education*, *44*, 21–36. doi:10.5175/JSWE.2008.200700026

Ornstein, E. D., & Ganzer, C. (1997). Mitchell's relational conflict model: An analysis of its

   usefulness in clinical social work. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, *25*, 391–405.

   doi:10.1023/A:1025744432524

Posselt, J. R., & Lipson, S. K., (2016). Competition, anxiety, and depression in the college

   classroom: Variations by student identity and field of study. *Journal of College Student

   Development*, *57*, 973–989. doi:0.1353/csd.2016.0094

Pugh, G. L. (2014). Revisiting the pink triangle exercise: An exploration of experiential learning

   in graduate school social work education. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work, 34*, 17–28.

   doi:10.1080/08841233.2013.863264

Russell, G., & Topham, P. (2012). The impact of social anxiety on student learning and well-

   being in higher education. *Journal of Mental Health*, *21*, 375–385.

   doi:10.3109/09638237.2012.694505

Singer, J. B., Gray, S. W., & Miehls, D. (2012). An educator's guide to the development of

   advanced practice competencies in clinical social work. *Journal of Teaching in Social

   Work*, *32*, 451–470. doi:10.1080/08841233.2012.726206

Sousa, D. A. (2011). *How the Brain Learns*. (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Teigen, K. (2016). "Yerkes-Dodson: A law for all seasons." *Theory & Psychology, 4*, 525–547.

   doi:10.1177/0959354394044004

Trede, F., & Smith, M. (2012). Teaching reflective practice in practice settings: Student's

   perceptions of their clinical educators. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *17*, 615–627.

   doi:10.1080/13562517.2012.658558

Figure 1. The Arousal Curve. Adapted from "Yerkes-Dodson: A law for all seasons" by K.
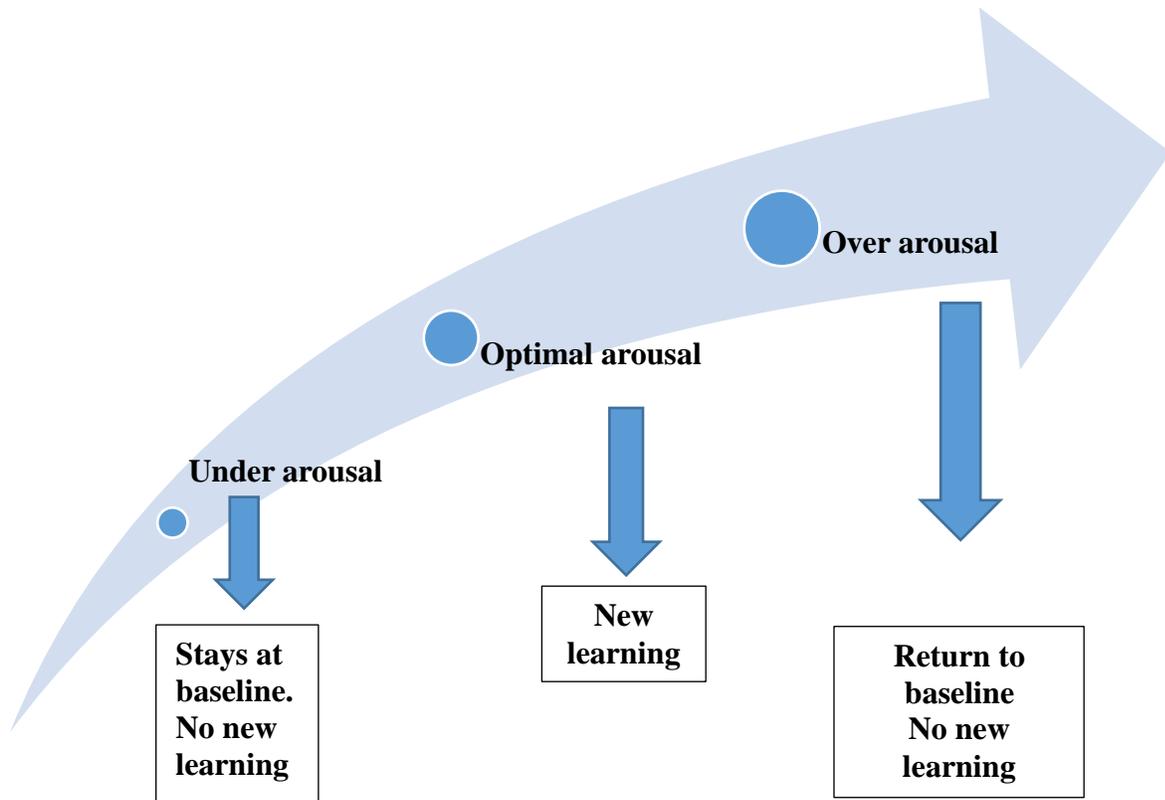
Teigen, 2016, *Theory & Psychology, 4*, pp. 525–547. doi:10.1177/0959354394044004

Discussion

Social work is a profession that is deeply invested in the empowerment of marginalized individuals and groups. This dissertation contends that when social work education fails to engage emotional domains involved in learning, students' experiences or voices are marginalized and learning is interrupted. Talking about or reflecting on feelings that arise in the classroom is very different from actually experiencing them. Recent findings emerging from brain science have demonstrated that emotions are what *drive* learning – we are motivated by our interests, biases, fears and longings. Educational neuroscience has also demonstrated that without emotion, cognitive learning does not develop and cannot be integrated for the long haul. Finally emerging brain science is demonstrating social-emotional processes that occur in the classroom play a role in mediating arousal levels of students. In other words, relationships support us to experience, express and effectively use emotions to create new learning.

SPN methodology provided an opportunity to deeply attune to my own internal truths prior to considering external sources of knowledge. In this way, my personal voice and emotion became a part of knowledge development rather than something I needed to suppress or compartmentalize. Reflection on my own inner sources of knowledge forced an encounter with shame and self-doubt and brought me face-to-face with how marginalization of voice occurs.

Techniques like IC do just that – lead students to their own authentic experience and hold them in the discomfort long enough for new learning to develop. In addition, the IC is a relational intervention.

Implications for social work education

Students who have learned how to stay attuned to their own emotions will be prepared to stay attuned to their colleagues and clients. Inclusivity justice principle -

Social work educators therefore would benefit from developing a greater understanding of emotional processes involved in learning and development of teaching strategies that effectively engage them.

Implications for future research

As social work educators become increasingly aware of the role of emotion in learning, new and creative teaching strategies that integrate this knowledge will be developed. Look at research across disciplines

Bibliography

Adjunct (2005). In: *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*. Retrieved from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/adjunct

Barlow, C. & Hall, B., (2007). 'What about feelings?': A study of emotion and tension in social work field education. *Social Work Education*, 26(4), pp. 319-413. doi: 10.1080/02615470601081712

Bommel, MV, Kwakman, K. & Boshuizen, H. (2012). Experiences of social work students with learning theoretical knowledge in constructivist higher vocational education: a qualitative exploration. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training,* Vol. 64, No. 4, December, pp. 529-542. doi: 10.1080/1363820.2012.727857

Bonnycastle, M.M. & Bonnycastle, C.R. (2015). Photographs generate knowledge: Reflections on experiential learning in/outside the social work classroom. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 35:3, 233-250. doi: 10.1080/08841233.2015.1027031

Brady-Amoon, P. (2011). Humanism, feminism, and multiculturalism: Essential elements of social justice in counseling, education, and advocacy. *Journal of Humanistic Counseling*, 50:2, 135-148. doi: 10.1002/j.2161-1939.2011.tb00113.x

Caine, G. & Caine, R. (1990). Understanding a Brain-Based Approach to Learning and Teaching, Educational Leadership, 1990, Vol. 48:2, p.66-70. ISSN: 00131784

Calvert, F.L., Crowe, T.P., & Grenyer, BFS (2016). Dialogical reflexivity in supervision: An experiential learning process for enhancing reflective and relational competencies. *The Clinical Supervisor*, 35:1, 1-21. doi: 10.1080/07325223.2015.1135840

Cheung, M. & Delavega, E. (2014). Five-way experiential learning model for social work education. *Social Work Education*, 33:8, 1070-1087. doi: 10.1080/0261547925538

Council on Social Work Education (2015). Educational policy and accreditation standards for

     baccalaureate and master's social work programs. Available from

     http://www.cswe.org/File.aspx?id=81660 Google Scholar

Cozolino, L. (2014). *The Neuroscience of Human Relationships: Attachment and the Developing*

     Social Brain, 2nd Ed., New York: W.W. Norton Publishing.

Cozolino, L. (2013). *The Social Neuroscience of Education: Optimizing Attachment & Learning*

     in the Classroom. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Dernova, M. (2015). Experiential learning theory as one of the foundations of adult learning

     practice worldwide. *Comparative Professional Pedagogy,* 5:2, pp, 52-57.

     doi:10:1515/rpp-2015-0040

DeRobertis, E.M. (2015). A Neuroscientific Renaissance of Humanistic Psychology, Journal of

     Humanistic Psychology, Vol. 55(3), pp. 323-345.

Dickinson, E. (1998). From: *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, Ralph W. Franklin ed., Cambridge,

     Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Droit-Volet, S., & Berthon, M. (2017). Emotion and implicit timing: The arousal effect.

     Frontiers in Psychology, 8:176, 1-5. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00176

Dudziak, S., & Profitt, N.J. (2012). Group work and social justice: Designing pedagogy for

     social change. *Social Work with Groups*, 35:3, 235-252, doi:

     10.1080/01609513.2011.624370

Egan, M., Neely-Barnes, S., & Combs-Orme, T. (2011). Integrating neuroscience knowledge

     into social work education: A case-based approach. *Journal of Social Work Education*,

     47, 269-282. doi: 10.5175/JSWE.2011.200900109

Gerdes, K.E. & Segal, E. (2011). Importance of Empathy for Social Work Practice: Integrating

New Science, Social Work, Vol. 56: 2, pp. 141-148. doi: 10.1093/sw/56.2.141

Graham, M.A. (1997). Empowering social work faculty: Alternative paradigms for teaching

    and learning. Journal of Teaching in Social Work, Vol. 15:1-2, 33-49. doi:

    http://dx.org/10.1300/J067v/5n01_04

Greenberg, L. (2013). Anchoring the Therapeutic Spiral Model into Research on Experiential

    Psychotherapies. Chapter 4 from: *Healing World Trauma with the Therapeutic Spiral*

    Model: Psychodramatic Stories from the Frontlines, Hudgins, M.K. & Toscani, M.F. eds.

    Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Harrawood, L.K., Parmanand, S. & Wilde, B.J. (2011). Using simulated sessions to enhance

    clinical social work education. *Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples*

    and Families, 19:2, 198-203. doi: 10.1177/1066480710397122

Hedin, N. (2010). "Experiential learning: theory and challenges." *Christian Education Journal*

    7.1, 107-117. Retrieved Feb. 26, 2016: http://go.galegroup.com.ezp1.lib.umn.edu/ps/i.do

Heidelberger, C.A. & Uecker, T.W., (2009). Scholarly personal narrative as information

    systems research methodology. *MWAIS Proceedings.* Paper 22.

    http://aisel.aisnet.org/mwais2009/22

Helmeke, K.B., & Prouty, A.M. (2001). Do we really understand? An experiential exercise for

    training family therapists. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 27: 4, 535-534. doi:

    10.1111/j.1752-0606.2001.tb00346.x

Hudgins, M.K., Drucker, K., and Metcalf, K. (2000).

Hudgins, M.K. (2002). Experiential Treatment for PTSD: The Therapeutic Spiral Model.

    Springer Publishing Company, New York.

Hussain, I. (2012). Use of constructivist approach in higher education: An instructors'

observation. *Creative Education, Vol. 3, No. 2, 179-184.* doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/ce.2012.32028

Ikebuche, J. & Rasmussen, B.M.(2014). The use of emotion in social work education, *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, Vol. 34, pp. 285-301. doi: 10.1080/08841233.2014.909378

Immordino-Yang, M.H. (2016). *Emotions, learning and the brain: Exploring the educational implications of affective neuroscience.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Immordino-Yang & Damasio, A. (2011). We feel, therefore we learn: The relevance of affective and social neuroscience to education. *Learning Landscapes*, Vol. 5(1), pp. 115-131. doi:

Immordino-Yang, M.H. & Faeth, M. (2010). The role of emotion and skilled intuition in learning. In Sousa, D. (Ed), *Mind, Brain, & Education, (pp.* 69-83). Bloomington IN: Solution Tree Press.

Immordino-Yang, M.H., & Sylvan, L. (2010). Admiration for virtue: Neuroscientific perspectives on motivating emotion. *Contemporary Educational Psychology,* 35, 110-115. doi: 101016/j.cedpsych.2010.03.003

Kaufmann, G. & Raphael, L. (1996). *Coming out of shame: Transforming gay and lesbian lives.* New York: Doubleday

Keaton, S.A. & Bodie, G.D. (2011). Explaining social constructivism. *Communication Teacher,* Vol 25, No. 4, pp. 192-196. doi: 10.1080/17404622.2011.601725

Lee, E. (2012). Understanding anxiety and facilitating twinship self-object functions among social workers: Psychodynamic contributions to multicultural education. *Journal of Social Work Practice,* 27:1, 63-78. doi: 10.1080/02650533.2012.719491

Lewis, T., Amini, F. & Lannon, R. (2000). *A General Theory of Love*, New York: Random

House.

Liu, C.H. & Mathews, R. (2005). Vygotsky's philosophy: Constructivism and its criticisms
examined. *International Education Journal,* Vol. 6:3, pp. 386-399.

Lynn, R. (2010). Mindfulness in social work education. *Social Work Education*, Vol. 29(3), pp.
289-304. doi: 10.1080/02615470902930351

Matto, H.C. & Strolin-Goltzman, J. (2010). Integrating social Neuroscience and social work:
Innovations for Advancing Practice-Based Research, Social Work, Vol. 55:2, pp 147-
146. doi: https://doi-org.ezp3.lib.umn.edu/10.1093/sw/55.2.147

Moordian, J.K. (2008). Using simulated sessions to enhance clinical social work education.
Journal of Social Work Education, 44:3, 21-36. doi:
http://dx.doi.org/10.5175/JSWE.2008.200700026

Nash, R. J. (2004). *Liberating scholarly writing: The power of personal narrative.* New York:
Teachers College Press.

Nash, R.J., & Bradley, D.L. (2011). *Me-search and Re-Search: A guide for writing scholarly
personal narrative manuscripts.* North Carolina: Information Age Publishing, Inc.

Nash, R.J. & Viray, S. (2014). *How stories heal: Writing our way to meaning and
wholeness in the academy.* NY: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

Nash, R.J. & Viray, S. (2013). *Our stories matter: Liberating the voices of marginalized
students through scholarly personal narrative writing.* New York: Peter Lang
Publishing, Inc.

Olson, K. (2014). *The invisible classroom: Relationships, neuroscience and mindfulness in
school.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Ornstein, E.D., & Ganzer, C. (1997). Mitchell's relational conflict model: An analysis of its

usefulness in clinical social work. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 25:4, 391-405. doi:

    10.1023/A:1025744432524

Pipher, M. (2006). *Writing to change the world: An inspiring guide for transforming the world*

    with words. New York, NY: Riverhead Books.

Posselt, J.R., & Lipson, S.K., (2016). Competition, anxiety, and depression in the college

    classroom: Variations by student identity and field of study. *Journal of College Student*

    Development, 57:8, 973-989. doi: 10.1353/csd.2016.0094

Prochaska, J.O., Norcross, J.C. & DiClemente, C.C. (2007). *Changing for good: A revolutionary*

    program for overcoming bad habits and moving your life positively forward. New York:

    HarperCollins Publishers.

Pugh, G.L. (2014). Revisiting the pink triangle exercise: An exploration of experiential learning

    in graduate school social work education. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work,* 34:1, 17-

    28. doi:10.1080/08841233.2013.863264

Russell, G., & Topham, P. (2012). The impact of social anxiety on student learning and well-

    being in higher education. *Journal of Mental Health*, 21:4, 375-385. doi:

    10.3109/09638237.2012.694505

Ryan, A. A. (2012). Integrating experiential and academic learning in teacher preparation for

    development education. *Irish Educational Studies*, *31*(1), 35-50.

    doi:10.1080/03323315.2011.596667

Shapiro, J.R. & Applegate, J.S. (2000). Cognitive neuroscience, neurobiology and affect

    regulation: Implications for clinical social work practice. *Clinical Social Work*

    Journal, Vol. 28, No. 1, pp. 9-21. doi: 10:1023/A:1005139123963

Singer, J.B., Gray, S.W., & Miehls, D. (2012). An educator's guide to the development of

advanced practice competencies in clinical social work. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 32:5, 451-470. doi: 10.1080/08841233.2012.726206

Sousa, D.A. (2011). *How the Brain Learns*. 4th Ed. Thousand Oaks: CA, Corwin Press.

Teigen, K. (2016). Yerkes-Dodson: A law for all seasons. *Theory & Psychology,* 4:4, 525-547. doi: 10.1177/0959354394044004

Trede, F. & Smith, M. (2012). Teaching reflective practice in practice settings: Student's perceptions of their clinical educators. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 17:5, 615-627. doi: 10.1080/13562517.2012.658558

Venema, R., Meerman, J.R. & Hossink, K. (2015). Experiential, team-based learning in a baccalaureate social work research course. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work,* 35: 471-492. doi: 10.1080/08841233.2015.1087934