

Learning for Well-being Magazine ②

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Abstracts

1

Understanding transactional and generative relationships

By Jon Vogen

Our relationships can be viewed through different lenses that enable us to understand them more fully and to build our capacity to 'be in' relationship with others and the world around us. One such lens for exploration is how our relationships fall on the continuum from transactional to generative. This article will explore the qualities of the continuum and how differences in these types of relationships impact our daily lives and learning. Simply stated transactional relationships are built on outside-in interactions and generative relationships are built on inside-out interactions. The elements and outcomes of each are different and both have their place in the repertoire of life. The article will explore the arena of interpersonal interactions and also look at more systemic issues that affect all of us in both visible and invisible ways. The learning goal is to provide some practical examples of the distinctions and impact of transactional and generative relationships and to have some fun considering personal applications to our own situations.

2

A magic recipe for seeing children as competent partners

By Maria Paz & Luís Manuel Pinto

What capacities do adults and environments need to see and relate to children as competent partners? In this article, we would like to explore a holistic perspective of the internal and external conditions that can enable participatory collaboration between adults and children. Our reflections will be illustrated by local and international experiences of initiatives such the 'Education for Peace' and 'Children as Actors for Transforming Society' programmes, both designed to stimulate children's agency and participation in environments regulated by adults. We will include the perspectives of children close to us about partnership with adults and what they believe is needed for better collaboration. We will conclude the article with some 'ingredients' which we believe would support relationships between children and adults where each is regarded as equal in value and integrity.

3

It sometimes takes a war for parents to relate to their children as competent partners:

How Anne Frank's story resonates in war zones around the world

By Shanti George & Zorica Trikić, with War Child (Netherlands)

War shatters normalcy, as everyday life falls apart suddenly for families and within homes. Alongside the trauma, chaos, helplessness and fear, a few positive opportunities may reveal themselves. Under 'normal' circumstances, children are very often expected to follow their parents' lead and to live their lives within parameters that parents set for them (attend school, interact with their extended family, be a part of the wider community, stay safe and respond to expectations) – until war turns this world on its head. The hierarchy between parents and children can then give way to greater connectedness and mutuality, and children's dependence can become replaced by interdependence between parent and child. This article presents three experiences that formed the core of an event titled 'Voices of Children and Young People from Conflict Zones,' that was jointly hosted by the Anne Frank House, Universal Education Foundation and War Child on the evening of 26 May 2016 as a themed networking event attached to the annual European Foundation Centre's conference. The experiences described in this articles cover: Anne Frank, a Jewish teenage girl living in Nazi-occupied Netherlands during the Second World War; the insights of co-author Zorica Trikić, who was the parent of two children during the violent disintegration of the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s; and Omar Munie who fled civil war in his native Somalia at the age of nine and endured several years of separation from his mother before finding a new home and entrepreneurial success in Europe.

4

Relationships in health settings

By Marguerite Guiguet

If we assume that very few people suffering from severe illness refuse treatment, and that the offers of care by healthcare providers are made in the best interest of the patient, how do we explain why people who are prescribed medicines do not always complete the course of treatment or do not follow recommended healthcare activities, as is often reported. A lack of health literacy has been advanced. In this article we will discuss some aspects related to the communication of health information and the 'patient-provider' relationship after presenting a French community-based survey designed by and for women living with HIV: 'The EVE study'. Following a workshop, 'Positive women in action!', organised by AIDES, the main HIV/AIDS organisation in France, a group of women decided to conduct, in partnership with researchers and practitioners, a study on the adverse events experienced by women living with HIV. The results of EVE illustrate the difficulties encountered in the patient-healthcare provider relationship. Empowerment of people living with chronic conditions and education programmes directed towards healthcare professionals are two complementary approaches for building fruitful communication in healthcare settings.

5

Knowledge that emerges in-between

By Maja Maksimović

Most educational activities are organised around the transmission of information and theories, either in traditional classrooms or through interactive learning methods. The curriculum is predominantly based on abstract thinking about a world which is separated from the self and community (Dillon, Bayliss, Stolpe and Bayliss, 2008). With a focus on rigorous educational outcomes, the space for mistakes is often reduced to a minimum. Therefore, previous educational experience of adult learners considerably influences their self-esteem and in a certain way determines further participation in adult education thereby making it far from equal.

As an educationalist and practitioner, I am often faced with the following question: how can we create educational activities that support the self-confidence of learners, which is built through relationships and creative practice? In that sense, a learner would become a maker instead of a knower. This question involves a paradigm shift to knowledge that emerges in-between and through building relationships and invention of new spaces and possibilities. A person is engaged holistically – not solely as Brain, but through body and imagination. This requires being open towards a fundamental rethinking of educational theory and practice.

How can we, as adult educators, support co-creation, complexity and collaborative, creative actions as a framework for development and learning? What can adult education learn from art practices? Some examples of educational activities based on art will be briefly presented in the article.

6

Learning for social cohesion and inclusion

By Janet Looney

In its March 2000 'Lisbon Strategy', the European Council set out social cohesion and the need to promote social inclusion for vulnerable groups as priorities for education and training. Crucially, social cohesion and social inclusion aren't only about learners' academic outcomes, but also about the quality of relationships in schools and classrooms. While this aspect is not entirely overlooked in education policies, it probably doesn't get enough attention either. In this article, I will discuss why relationships are so important for learning, referring to key evidence. I also discuss how educators and policy-makers can support cohesive learning environments, as well as some implications for quality assurance and for educational research.

7

Head and Heart for Children's Education: The role of the classroom teacher

By Carmel Cefai & Valeria Cavioni

This article starts by outlining the limitations of narrow, neo-liberal views of education focused on the development of a limited range of cognitive abilities and the preparation for the market economy, and proposes a broader, more relevant agenda, integrating both the head (cognitive dimension) and heart (affective dimension) in education. In the first part it

describes why it is important for children to develop social and emotional competences and how these are related both to their social and emotional development and well-being, as well as to their academic learning. In the second part, the article describes what classroom teachers can do to promote these competences, proposing a two pronged approach focusing on explicit teaching of social and emotional competences in the classroom, complemented by a positive classroom climate based on healthy and collaborative relationships. It concludes by presenting a number of strategies of how teachers can be supported to exercise this role as effective and caring educators, addressing both the head and the heart in education.

8

Why does a rehabilitation programme for young offenders work better when it is founded on a caring environment?

By Joe Cullen

Recent developments in youth offending prevention and rehabilitation have adopted what some commentators have called a 'punitive turn'. At worst, prevention and rehabilitation approaches emphasise correction and retribution. At best, young people and their families get inducted into programmes that seek to improve the well-being of young offenders, using techniques re-drafted from behavioural science, in order to transform wasted talents into personal and social goods. This article argues that such programmes, though outwardly caring and well-intentioned, are fundamentally misconceived. What happens in these programmes is that 'caring' involves young people submitting to a regime that 'does things to them' rather than 'for them'. In the current youth justice environment, prevention and rehabilitation programmes invariably tend to be either authoritarian or paternalistic. What would happen if young offenders were instead enlisted as 'co-architects' of their own futures? Drawing on evidence from examples of radical experiments in youth offending prevention and rehabilitation that use 'action research', the article proposes a definition of 'caring rehabilitation' that is based on a 'co-production' model of rehabilitation.

9

Using collective learning to build the trust and alignment needed to solve complex development problems

By John Tomlinson

Solutions to poverty and other development challenges are often built in silos - and therefore fail. Real change requires collaboration among diverse stakeholders. But collaboration isn't easy. It requires building trust and alignment among actors who might rarely work with each other, and who might even be in conflict. This article will explore how collective learning experiences can be used to build trust and alignment, while also helping bring community voice into development processes. It will draw upon successful collaborative experiences of fighting child undernutrition in India, reducing maternal and child mortality in Namibia, and improving smallholder agriculture in Ethiopia.