

Toward Social Work Multiliteracies Pedagogy: Innovations and Challenges

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Summary (1000 character)

Multiliteracies pedagogy involves not only multiple and evolving communication channels (e.g., multimedia and the Internet) but also increasing and globalizing sociocultural and linguistic diversities (New London Group, 1996). This symposium presents innovative approaches to social work multiliteracies pedagogy, including: e-Social work, which includes online research, intervention, training and teaching, and program monitoring and evaluation; arts-based teaching and training of practitioners; contemporary films about migration and diaspora; and theater-based training of community peer educators in an immigrant community. Through the discussion of the innovative pedagogical approaches, challenges faced, and lessons learned, presenters of this symposium will collectively explore the ways in which social work education can enhance the components of the multiliteracies pedagogy: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice.

Overall Abstract (up to 500 words)

Purpose. Multiliteracies pedagogy, originated in language and cultural studies (New London Group, 1996), has been applied to diverse fields. This increasingly necessary pedagogy involves not only multiple and evolving communication channels (e.g., multimedia and the Internet) but also increasing and globalizing sociocultural and linguistic diversities. This symposium presents various pedagogical innovations to address multiliteracies.

Backgrounds. Over the last 15 years, the number of international migrants has continued to increase, from 173 million in 2000 to 244 million in 2015; there are 19.5 million refugees around the world currently (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division, 2016). Increasing migration and refugees contribute to ever increasing diversity. Across the Europe and the globe, there has been a rise of nationalist, Euro- and EuroAmerican-centric, exclusive, xenophobic policies, programs, and movements. Social work education must respond to these new developments.

During the same time, rapid technological development has altered the ways in which people communicate, disseminate and obtain information and make sense of the world. Over 1.8 billion images are uploaded to the internet each day (Meeker, n.d.). Almost 5 billion videos are watched on YouTube every single day, and every minute, 300 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube alone. Internet is increasingly used for social and professional networking.

In these evolving and diversifying sociocultural and technological contexts, social work education is challenged to provide more inclusive and equitable learning environments. This demands multiple modalities of communication for teaching and learning: not only text-based, but also visual, audio, tactical, special and gestural modes. This differs widely from “traditional” transmission-based approach in classroom teaching. The multiliteracies pedagogy involves at least four related, and non-linear, components: situated practice (building on the lived experience of learners); overt instruction (promoting learners to develop language and understanding of meaning-making processes); critical framing (critically analyzing the historical, sociocultural, political, ideological context of the knowledge and meaning-making); and transformed practice (applying meaning making practice and transferring knowledge to different contexts) (Cope, & Kalantzis, 2000; New London Group, 1996; 2000).

Symposium Contents and Focus/Process. This symposium will present innovative and alternative approaches to social work multiliteracies pedagogy. Dr. López Peláez will discuss e-Social work, which includes online research, intervention (individual, group and community levels), training and teaching,

and program monitoring and evaluation. Dr. Huss will discuss use of arts in social work teaching and training, with special focus on the use of drawing in assessing and enhancing practitioners' coping and resiliency. Dr. Guido Rings will discuss contemporary films about migration and diaspora and their application to social work education. Dr. Yoshihama will present her work using theatre and human sculpting in the training of community peer educators in an immigrant community. Through the discussion of the innovative pedagogical approaches, challenges faced, and lessons learned, presenters of this symposium will collectively explore the ways in which social work education can enhance the components of the multiliteracies pedagogy: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice.

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Abstract 1.

Social Work education and e-Social Work: a new way of learning in the XXI Century.

Dr. Antonio López Peláez

Professor, Department of Social Work, Faculty of Law, National Distance Education University (UNED), Madrid, Spain

Internet, digital devices, information and communication technologies (ICTs) have transformed many traditional daily practices over the world, from leisure habits and business to public administrations and public services. In this changing context, tensions also arise regarding social exclusion vs. inclusion, and 'software-mediated societies' define different social conditions to advocate for social justice globally. This permits researching and applying new reflections on e-social work, that is, social work using ICTs within this techno-social sphere.

According to this view, e-social work could be understood as a social work field where individuals, communities and groups have needs and it is possible to develop intervention programmes, conduct research projects and design public policies. Many public administrations now manage social services using ICTs and NGOs provide assistance using the Internet. e-Social work includes online research, patient treatment (individual therapy, group and community dynamics), the training and teaching of social workers, and the monitoring of social service programmes. In this regard, e-social work has become the new social work frontier.

In this paper, we analyze the role that the e-Social Work could play in the field of education, as a new way of learning that promotes situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice.

Abstract 2.

Using an arts based method to connect between micro and macro levels of social- workers stress in supervision

Professor Ephrat Huss: Ben- Gurion University

Dr Patricia Hafford-Letchfield: Middlesex University

Background: The issue of stress and ‘burnout’ in social work is endemic requiring a continuing search for strategies that can facilitate coping strategies and help to build ‘resilience’. This is imperative given the links between social work stress, staff turnover, public denigration of the profession in some national contexts and the impact of these adverse factors ultimately on the experiences of service users. However, there is little literature describing the social workers own definition of their stress and coping, and most importantly, of the connection they see between stressors, stress reactions and coping

Methods: Eighty social workers were asked to draw a stressful situation at work, identify their stress reaction through compositional elements in the art, and also identify their strengths and coping through adding them to the image if needed. Analyses used mixed methods, pointing to central symbols, themes, contexts, and most importantly, to the dynamics- between the stressors and the coping.

Results point to the problematic connection between the stress situation that is defined as systemic, versus the stress reactions and efforts to cope that are based on the individual social worker, with a tendency to self- blame, and to be generally stronger, rather than addressing the systemic problems that cause the stress.

Implications for social work teaching and supervision: The use of a single image to integrate stressors, stress reactions and coping helped to reflect back to the social workers their own perception of their stressors and coping reactions, but within the social context that constructs this stress. This points to arts as a tool for integrating micro and macro perceptions for social workers and promoting multiliteracies components.

Abstract 3.

European Cinema and Migration

Prof. Guido Rings

Professor of Postcolonial Studies, Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, UK

As a rapidly aging continent, Europe depends now increasingly on the successful integration of migrants, for which it is essential to overcome traditional oppositions and racist hierarchies between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Unfortunately, contemporary political and media discourses observe and frequently also support the development of nationalist, Eurosceptic and xenophobic mindsets, which have led to spectacular election results of right-wing parties all over Europe and to a Brexit vote.

This paper explores selected transcultural alternatives in contemporary European migrant cinema, with focus on Philippe Lioret’s *Welcome* and Aki Kaurismäki’s *Le Havre*. The aim is to identify examples that enhance multi-ethnic conviviality in Europe and that might be able to support directors, screenwriters, public intellectuals and policy makers to address key challenges of the 21st century, including extreme nationalism, euroscepticism and xenophobia.

A highly innovative combination of transcultural research, postcolonial studies and diaspora film studies will facilitate an in-depth examination of boundaries in cinema that allows for better understanding of how films address Europe’s role in our transmodernity. In particular, by drawing on intercultural and transcultural concepts of culture (Antor 2010, Benessaieh 2010, Moses/Rothberg 2014), postcolonial identity theory (Lazarus 2012, Singh/Kim 2015) and contemporary debates on postcolonial responsibility (Lazarus 2012, Menozzi 2014), the paper will address the following key questions:

1) How far do contemporary films about migration and diaspora manage to blur traditional boundaries marked by monocultural concepts, ethnic discrimination and gender stereotyping?

- 2) Which monocultural constructs remain so resistant to new deconstruction efforts that they destabilise the cinematic output?
- 3) What are the implications for social work education, and multiliteracies pedagogy in particular?

Abstract 4.

Theatre-based Peer Educator Training to Prevent Intimate Partner Violence

Dr. Mieko Yoshihama

Professor, University of Michigan School of Social Work

Objectives: This paper presents theatre-based training aimed at preventing intimate partner violence (IPV).

Background: Effective IPV prevention in the rapidly globalized world calls for programs that are grounded in their values and lived experiences. Incorporating multiple modes of communication enhances the inclusivity of diverse learners and promotes their learning. In an effort to develop more inclusive and sustainable IPV prevention programs in the growing immigrant communities, we used theatre and peer educators.

Program Description: Using theatre and intensive community engagement, we developed, implemented and evaluated a theater-based IPV prevention program for local Asian communities in Midwestern U.S.A. We recruited and trained local community members (both youth and adults) to serve as peer educators. Peer educator training incorporated multiple modalities, including theatre, human sculpting, collages, and films. Subsequently, these peer educators created a theatre play tailored to the perspectives of their own community members and delivered a theatre-based IPV prevention workshop at various community venues. We assessed the effectiveness of the workshop in changing the knowledge, attitudes and beliefs of the community members who attended the workshop.

Results: Analyses indicate that post-workshop changes were greater among participants in theatre-based workshops compared to those that used conventional methods of delivery (Power Point slides and discussions). Among theatre-based workshop participants, post-workshop changes were greater for those who identified strongly with the play and its characters than those who reported low identification.

Conclusion: These results are consistent with drama theory, which posits that identification with characters and emotional involvement are conducive to attitudinal and behavioral changes in audience members. Theatre-based workshops appear to promote participants' learning as they deliver information in familiar ways in language and idioms, appearance, and gesture (situated practice and overt instruction), and provide opportunities for discussion of sociocultural values and practices depicted in theatre play (critical framing).