The Better Practice Project 2010

A transformative approach to work integrated learning in social care with older Australian citizens

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Acknowledgements

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SUMMARY
A mature approach to change in the aged care sector

"Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning." (Albert Einstein)

This document provides a detailed analysis of the educational approach used by the Better Practice Project (BPP). It contributes to the growing documentation of the BPP as it seeks to communicate its considerable learning about inspiring and developing improved practice in the aged care sector. However, this document does not go immediately to a discussion of teaching techniques. As the BPP is deeply embedded in its context, it is not possible to write comprehensively about the approach of the BPP without speaking of:

- Its mission to honour older people reliant on human services
- The history of its emergence and coming into maturity
- The context in which it works and seeks to influence and change
- Its key relationships within the aged care sector

These elements are covered in Part #1: *Setting the frame: why work for change matters* by identifying four sides to a frame which captures the purposes and activities of the BPP. Each side is presented as a proposition identified from the extant documentation in the project and interviews with key players.

Part #2: *The context for working is the context* for learning provides a brief

- Brief presentation of relevant data
- Brief survey of discourses within the aged care sector
- Government policy

Educational theory and practice is explored in Part #3: *Keeping things plumb: educational model coherency* which shows that the approach of the BPP is more profound than listing an array of teaching techniques. Here we find a transformational approach to work integrated learning that can continue to nourish dedicated workers and service providers as they engage with older people who turn to services to improve their lives. Integrating learning and working brings workers as learners into a potentially new relationship with 'clients' as teachers. This model can assist all those who engage with it openly and honestly to understand helping in the way that Paulo Freire describes:

> *Authentic help means that all who are involved help each other mutually, growing together in the common effort to understand the reality which they seek to transform. Only through such praxis – in which those who help and those who are being helped help each other simultaneously – can the act of helping become free from the distortion in which the helper dominates the helped. (1978)*

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PART ONE
Setting the frame: Why work for change matters

Frames analysis: A way to explore and document change strategies used by The Better Practice Project

Social scientists use frames analysis to identify how groups within a community communicate ideas about their understanding of the world. This section adopts the Hallahan, K (1999) understanding of framing:

> *In addition to a rhetorical approach that focuses on how messages are created, framing is conceptually connected to the underlying psychological processes that people use to examine information, to make judgments, and to draw inferences about the world around them. Moreover, framing phenomena operate across levels of analysis […] making framing theory applicable at the intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, organizational, interorganizational, and societal levels.* (p207)

Frames analysis helps us to capture the key elements of an approach adopted by an organisation to explain and carry out its work. It directs us to seeing multiple layers in the work and, combined with Adele Clarke's (2005) *situational analysis,* points to the various *debates* within the sector and the *actions* that different players take to help the sector to develop. This includes discourses (as ways of talking and writing about the issues and ways we respond to the needs of older people and organisations) within the aged care sector and wider debates about ageing and older people in Australian society.

These will be expanded upon further in the section below on context. The focus here is on how the BPP has developed and exemplified a largely socio-political frame for its work and identifies key the components of that frame.

A brief history of the BPP

The BPP is extensively and expertly documented, revealing the development of its conceptual approach and delivery methods. Key documents, which provide a clear insight into the emergence of the BPP, include:

1. *A Unique Life to Live* (2000), a foundational review document developed at the end of the first 3 years of operations of the BPP, capturing the growth of the BPP from within a frontline service, <u>Community Options South</u> in ACH Group, to a project about to spread its influence into the wider network of HACC funded services.
2. *Living as an older person (2006)* a package of materials building on a 'Train the Trainer' model delivered throughout the state by the BPP in a variety of modalities.
3. *The Better Practice Project Handbook* (2006) distributed throughout the Wsector as part of BPP commitment to providing an enduring resource to the staff of services, guiding them through a self-directed learning and refresher course.
4. *The Framework for the BPP* (July 2009) with additional material from the 2009 BPP Annual Report, which enshrines a sector – wide capacity building approach alongside the more tailored service specific opportunities and captured in the image of the funnel which directs the BPP into deepening levels of involvement with agencies and their staff.

From these and related documents we can see that the BPP aims to carry out its work in these ways:

Sec: 1.4 Terms of Reference for the BPP Advisory group provides a succinct summary of the vision and mission of the BPP:

> *The Project is committed to building the capacity of HACC funded agencies to implement the BPP model, the aim of which is to increase services awareness and understanding of the vision that all people, regardless of age or disability, should be participating as valued members of their communities.*

This is also expressed within the 2009 Annual Report as:

The overall aim of the BPP is to define, develop, revitalise and embed models of better practice in services in the HACC target group by inspiring and assisting agencies to pursue better practice in person centred service delivery.

The four-sided frame

The following sections point to key framing elements (or 4 sides) in the BPP frame:

Side 1: Older people, especially those reliant on services, are vulnerable to diminishment of their self-understandings, aspirations and needs

Building on the findings of the initial report *A Unique Life to Live* (2000) and *Consumer Empowerment Initiative Project* (2005) the BPP enshrines recognition that services can bring both positive and adverse impacts in the life of the consumer. *A Unique Life to Live* centralises the analysis offered by Social Role Valorisation that older people constitute, individually and as a group, a socially devalued class by virtue of their detachment from certain socially valued roles (worker, active parent,

community member, and consumer) and their dependency on health and care services and supports. This largely unconscious devaluation is also found in human services which limit choice, restrict personal freedom, segregate service users from normative community settings, and develop stories about them as childlike, even vegetable-like. Some describe this state as 'clienthood'.

Over time this understanding has been added to by an recognition that contextual factors – organisational and management issues within services – especially constraints on resources; low and unskilled workforces; and managerial expectations imposed by funding authorities also contribute to a loss of focus on the individual reliant on services, and where appropriate, their family.

Side 2: Practice can be made better

Claiming this as an unacceptable outcome for those who turn to services for assistance and support the BPP advocates the adoption of service model that centralises:

- commitment to the recognition of and, where possible, protection and restoration of valued roles
- a strengths perspective which sees the person as a wise survivor and contributor
- a focus on the individual service design that is responsive to their needs for support and social protection

The first strong message (responsive to the allegation of unconscious devaluation) is that:

agencies, staff (frontline and management) and indeed the whole sector, can 'do better' by placing a transcending value on the person, their uniqueness, their needs and their desires and by ensuring that power does not transfer from the person to the service.

At the heart of this belief lies a cardinal commitment to respecting the person. When respect fails, the service fails. When respect is restored, the service can truly support the person to participate as a valued member of their community.

The second strong message (responsive to context) is that:

management can reduce the constraints on ideal service delivery by attending to the needs of a workforce eager for further training in values and in competencies, linked to the reality of the policy environment, the workplace and the communities in which the older people live.

Both of these conclusions provide grounds for the next side of the frame.

Side 3: Work integrated learning contributes to better practice

From its earliest days located within Community Options South ACH Inc, the BPP has focussed on the workplace as the key interface for learning. This, understood as *action learning*, *learning in vivo*, *experiential learning* or *work integrated learning*, will be expanded in more detail in the following sections. It is best summed up in *A Unique Life to Live:*

> Although the culture of learning and development is purposely individual and non-prescriptive it is based on a systematic approach. It is intentional, not accidental. The systematic approach ensures continued learning from a variety of theories, experiences and tools... (p.63)

Key activities include:

- *Production of written materials* in the form of newsletters, articles, handbooks
- *Single training events* including conferences, workshops, master classes and seminars
- *Courses* including Train the Trainer and TAFE courses
- *Capacity building strategies* including sustaining champions, mentoring, network development

In this sense we can see that work integrated learning contributes to:

The development of knowledge, skills and attitudes in an integrated way including whole person and interpersonal relations development (Invivo learning, UniSA 2010)
This also recognises that, as commented on in an interview, "The pathway to better practice is not a linear one and support strategies need to be tailored to take account of readiness and build on existing strength and capabilities..."

Side 4: The work of making practice better is open-ended

According to the BPP Framework (2009) the project seeks to define, develop, revitalise and embed models of better practice ...by inspiring and assisting agencies to pursue better practice in person-centred service delivery. This is a mature approach emerging from *A Unique Life to Live* with its strong focus on 'training' into a form of change agentry summed up as:

> We define change agentry as those activities of education and facilitation through which organizational stakeholders inhabit *a new state of their own design*. Now, this last, (…), is not part of the traditional understanding of change agentry but more a part of user-design; however, we feel that true change agentry is, in fact, centered on facilitation of communities, organizations, and stakeholders. (Beabout and Carr-Chellman, p620)

The funnel design presented within the BPP Framework captures this move from document and session based training into a more comprehensive strategy which is never complete.
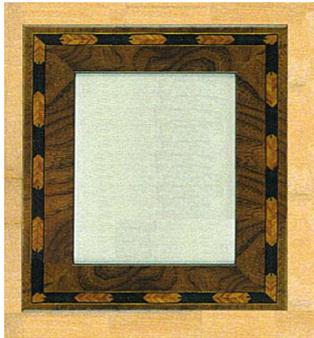
In summary, the BPP enters the scene as an external change agent, operating within a framework that embraces education as a core approach (other models of change could have been adopted e.g. quality assurance, regulatory frameworks, evaluations and reviews.) This aims to reverse the current trend in some workplaces where power is transferred from the older service user to the service. The older person becomes increasingly dependent and the service more determining in all aspects of their life. The transfer happens because of two interconnecting forces: an historical social devaluation of older people associated with a collapse of social roles and a loss of esteem uncritically *linked into* a service system that responds to straitened circumstances and increased demand by implementing people processing, managerial strategies within a rationing framework undergirded by a residual service model.

The BPP, however, asserts in all its activities, that a focus on values and competency training and on leadership development can free up the potential for individual human service workers and the service overall to develop a better practice approach that can restore value, respect, esteem and choice to older people reliant on services.

This is clearly seen in the four-sided frame that locates the BPP as change (capacity building) agent directed at addressing vulnerability based on a commitment to enshrining better practice through a work integrated learning approach that is organic and open-ended.

The following section of the report explicates the integration of learning and working contexts.

PART TWO
The context for working is the context for learning

The context for working

A situational analysis of the aged care sector reveals 3 pertinent themes and trends that impact directly on the work of the BPP:

1. An ageing population with more people living longer with disabling conditions, especially in the 75+ age group. Many of these people find themselves living alone and without active informal supports, placing upward pressure on formal services and mainstream community supports.
2. An ageing workforce with many workers being unskilled for the level of support required and to deal with complexity of issues facing older people as they strive to preserve their lives in community without being placed in residential care.
3. Persistent cultural attitudes of 'ageism' across all social sectors in which older people are devalued and considered burdensome and their citizenship and agency threatened.

Government policy at State and Federal levels is shaped by plans that reflect a growing commitment to:

- Ageing in place and community living,
- Recognising and sustaining the full citizenship of older people
- Providing a sustainable range of aged care services including community based and residential within ongoing budgetary constraints.

Within this context, the BPP has emerged as a change agent, external to individual services but strategically located within the sector as a mediating organisation focussed on capacity building within the sector. The followings sections provide brief detail about each of these elements.

A strategic approach to change agentry
1. BPP as external change agent

The model of change agentry is encapsulated in the Framework of the BPP, imaged as funnel with 3 strategic levels of 'work' which identifies embedded notions of what this 'work' is, including assumptions about change. The commitment to engage people in their own professional and personal development (as an understanding of life-long learning) leads the BPP into a range of models of training and learning and

into various relationships with the agencies throughout the sector. However, within the BPP Framework the educational or andragogical model (see below) is not clearly articulated.

2.   BPP as social intermediary program.

The BPP can be viewed a social intermediary activity. The literature on approaches such as this is mainly generated in the US, UK and Canada as this tends to be an undeveloped section of the Australian non-government scene.   Sanyal (2006) says that these activities differ from conventional non-government organisations in 2 main ways. First, they are located at the centre of several constituencies and secondly, 'their activities include innovative programs like organisational capacity building, training and staff development, research and advocacy, collection and dissemination of information, and networking.' (p.67, 2006). So, in this way we can see that the BPP is primarily dedicated to capacity building in their sector. The following text box provides a brief summary of this model:

These definitions taken from:

Alison Harker and Steven Burkeman (2007) *Building Blocks: developing second-tier support for frontline groups City Parochial Foundation 2007* www.cityparochial.org.uk/cpf/publications

A *frontline* or *first-tier organisation* or *group* is one which delivers services to, or campaigns with or on behalf of, a group of people who stand to benefit personally from those services or campaigns.

A *second-tier organisation (STO)* is one whose principal purpose is to help frontline groups to do their job. It does not generally engage directly with those who are the beneficiaries of frontline organisations.

A *third-tier organisation* is one that provides support to second-tier organisations.

It appears that the BPP, as a social intermediary, capacity building (see below) project, operates as part of the larger a 2nd tier organisation, Aged and Community Services SA&NT. The BPP relates primarily to 1st tier agency executive and managers in the first instance, and then with frontline workers involved directly in the care and support of agency consumers. The BPP uses this strategic position in order to tailor their activities to the expressed needs of agencies seeking their involvement.

Program goals and operations are also negotiated with project funders (ODACS) as a 3rd tier organisation. From this key mediating position, the BPP is able to use its location within the peak body to address sector-wide issues as well, especially though educational institutions such as TAFE. This, according to Sanyal (2006) enables the formation of bridging ties and the strengthening of civil society.

Viewed alongside the contextual analysis, above, this suggests that the BPP location is highly strategic, an almost unique response within the Australian aged care sector to the expressed need for improved practice throughout the sector. But such a strategic location does not come without tensions as the BPP aims to respond to a range of entry points beyond its traditional front-line worker focus.

In particular, The BPP faces ongoing tensions between the drive to *institutionalise* – to influence all levels of education for work in the sector (top-down strategies) and to *indigenise* – to tailor learning opportunities to worksites and to current worker concerns (bottom up strategies). This is a key tension in 2nd tier operations that can be creatively managed by paying attention to the unique opportunities offered through such a location. The literature offers some guidance about how to live out these dynamic tensions in such a mature project.

The capacity of the BPP to respond to industry demands in the way that it has over the last 10 years or so highlights that as well as being strategically located (in the right place) the BPP is able to take advantage of timing as well (the right time). The strategies outlined in the *BPP Framework* (2009) are time sensitive. Timing here is understood in dual ways:
- Opportunities emerge at different times
- The length of time taken within an engagement is important

This becomes clear when we look at a work integrated learning approach that is directly related to real people, real world, real time activities – raising the question of when an educational intervention is best introduced to a worker, over what period and when it should be reintroduced. These questions are also pertinent at organisational and sectoral levels.

3.   BPP as capacity builder

Capacity-building is anything that will increase the capacity of the voluntary sector, or specific organisations, to provide services or take action. Depending on the context, it also has restricted meanings e.g. providing training. (With the BPP it is linked to an educational approach offered by a 2nd tier organisation).

Capacity building through values education and competency training			
Focus	**Means**	**Process**	**Ends**
Building the capacity of an organization: organizational development	Strengthens the organization's ability to perform specific functions, such as refugee-camp management	Builds coherence within internal operations; develops the possibility of continued learning and adaptation	Improves the organization's viability, sustainability, and impact in relation to its mission
Building the capacity of an institutional subsector (e.g., health, credit, emergency assistance): sectoral development	Strengthens the ability of the sector or subsector to improve its overall impact	Develops mutually supporting relations and understanding within the sector or subsector	Achieves confident and meaningful interaction with other sectors and social actors based on shared strategies and learning
Building the capacity of civil society: institutional development	Improves the ability of primary stakeholders to identify and carry out activities to solve problems	Enables and stimulates better interaction, communication, conflict resolution in society, enhancing social capital	Increases the ability of primary stakeholders to engage with and influence the political arena and the socio-economic system in accordance with their interests

Source: Adapted from Alan Fowler, *Striking a Balance: A Guide to Enhancing the Effectiveness of NGOs in International Development* (London: Earthscan, 1997), 188.

Echoes from the Field: A collaboration between the Environment Support Center and Information Network Inc (2001) which examined 200 organisations involved in capacity building identified these 9 principles as at the core of effectiveness:
1. Every organisation is capable of building its own capacity
2. Trust between the organisation and the provider (i.e. BPP) is essential
3. An organisation must be ready for capacity building
4. Ongoing questioning means better answers
5. Team and peer learning are effective capacity building teams
6. Capacity building should accommodate different learning styles
7. Every organisation has its own history and culture
8. All people and all parts of an organisation are interrelated
9. Capacity building takes time

The Framework for the BPP enshrines these principles which also underpin the educational model which is explicated in the next part.

In summary, the BPP is a capacity building intervention that embraces a deeply responsive context based model of worker and organisational development. It exemplifies the findings of Echoes from the field:

> *Powerful capacity-building is the result of a strong, respectful relationship between a ready and willing organization and a skilled provider working with a set of core principles. In this way, good "practice" becomes a verb, not a noun; a provider helps an organization "practice" capacity-building, over time, in a back-and-forth relationship based on the 9 principles.*

In particular, the BPP Framework adopts an appreciative focus in that the work is not primarily focussed on deficits in services or gaps in systems but rather brings an focus on possibilities, especially through relationships and its transformative potential as participating individuals and services rediscover their relevance and potency in their support of vulnerable people.

This is the point at which the full scope of the education approach becomes apparent! The following section uses the image of keeping things plumb to illustrate the coherency of the transformative model of work integrated learning in aged care that has developed within the Better Practice Project.

PART THREE
Keeping things plumb: educational model coherency

"There is no difference between participating in work and learning". Billett, S. (2006) *Work, subjectivity and learning*, UNESCO, p7

Keeping things plumb: A way of ensuring model coherency

'**Keeping things plumb'** is an acknowledged process used by social researchers to ensure that their activities are aligned with their area of curiosity and their mission. Originator of this metaphor, Ronald Chenail writes about it thus:

> I do think that somewhere along the line, qualitative researchers need to "plumb up" their projects. By plumb, I mean that there should be a basic and simple reason for doing a study; something like a mission statement or maybe, a mission question for the project, by which you can keep track to see if you are beginning to drift from your line of inquiry or if you are staying on course with your research.
>
> After you have constructed your mission question, you should keep it in your pocket and carry it with you wherever you go in your research travels. And, every once and a while, you should pull this mission question out of your pocket, and let it dangle from your hand like a carpenter or mason's plumb line. Hold the mission question up to your mind's eye and see if your mission question is plumb with your project as it is unfolding

This offers a useful metaphor as the BPP looks closely at its educational approach and, employing the earlier commitment to **model coherency** seeks to explicate a model that will serve its purpose as it has developed over the life of the project. Model coherency forms an effective plumb line as it directs services to ask: *Are the rights things (educational model) being done with the right people (target population) by the right people (change agents) in the right way (BPP) in the right*

place at the right time and consistently so? This is essentially an evaluative programmatic question but it is useful as a guide to document the strategic educational approach used by the BPP. It is written up here as 5 key elements in the andragogical framework employed by the BPP.

Toward an explicit andragogical framework

While most of the reports of the BPP focus on project activities and to a more limited extent, outcomes, the choice of activities implies perspectives about:

- The learners as individuals and within groups
- The context for learning
- What will help the workers to learn better ways of practicing
- Why this might continue to be important

Therefore, this section of the report weaves together overt statements about the educational approach with understandings gleaned by 'reading between the lines'. It is important to stress at this point that this does not imply that the BPP has developed without attention to educational theory, rather that it is not always explicit. Educational theory and an evidence base are traditionally used to design and plan educational activities, however, both are useful tools (in praxis as reflection on action) employed to retrospectively chart the emergence of an organic, dynamically responsive model of engagement.

Andragogy is a technical term used to describe adult learning. Although it seems like jargon, it is important to use the concept when discussing the educational model employed by the BPP. Knowles (1984) sees it primarily *as the art and science of helping others to learn.* It builds on the sense that learning is not just instructor-centred and the learner naïve and inexperienced (like a child).

> **For Knowles (1984), andragogy was premised on five crucial assumptions about the characteristics of adult learners that are different from the assumptions about child learners.**
>
> 1. **Self-concept**: *As a person matures his (sic) self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward one of being a self-directed human being.*
>
> 2. **Experience**: *As a person matures he accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning.*
>
> 3. **Readiness to learn**: *As a person matures his readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of his social roles.*
>
> 4. **Orientation to learning**: *As a person matures his time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly his orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of problem centeredness.*
>
> 5. **Motivation to learn**: *As a person matures the motivation to learn becomes internal.*
>
> (Knowles, 1984, p. 12 cited Brown, 2006)

It is clear that at this stage in its history the BPP is well placed to make explicit the andragogical framework that has developed over the years of its work.

An emerging educational methodology

The andragogical developments in the life of the project have resulted from clear strategy e.g. to take the project way beyond its starting place and to organic responses to opportunities as they emerge. In this way the model evolves through cycles of careful planning and periods of exploration, even experimentation. We could view these as 'waves' as each point at which the model of the BPP has been documented, has captured more of the depth and scope of the project while responding to a context shaped by educational trends. Therefore, it is appropriate to read these documents as a form of palimpsest (see definition below) in which each wave of innovation builds on without replacing the former wave. The question for the present report is how to integrate these elements (waves) into a coherent andragogical model that conveys current wisdom and sets the stage for further development.

Waves…

The annual reports capture overwhelmingly positive feedback from all levels of participating front-line agencies, especially relating to the dialogical processes embedded within the project's foundational critical pedagogy (Friere, 1972). This approach builds on the concept of 'active learning' (see definition below) advanced within *A Unique Life to Live* (BPP 2000) in which 'conscientisation' is the key approach – frontline workers are encouraged to critique their current practice and to 'do better' by being aware of both the positive and adverse impacts of services in the lives of vulnerable older people.

At its next iteration (*Living as an older person, 2006)*, the andragogical model expanded to take in conceptions of competency-based training. This was exemplified by the modification of some of the modules for delivery within the TAFE certification processes, enabling a focus on pre-employment vocational training to emerge. This was further developed most recently (2009) as *Master Classes* directed at developing and sustaining leaders throughout the sector, in the hope that agencies will continue to teach new staff and provide refreshers. In 2010 this will also be mapped against the competencies for Community Services Cert IV and the Diploma in Service Coordination to update its content in the context of contemporary industry expectations.

At the same time *the BPP Handbook* (2006) enshrined the initial focus on the worker reflecting in the workplace as a self-directed heuristic approach (see definition below). This aims to inspire the individual worker to maintain a critical reflective approach but to do it in the worker-client interface, not within a facilitated workshop.

Increasingly, the BPP has directed resources at 2 other sections of the aged care workforce:
- Students within the TAFE/VET sector as they prepare to enter employment
- Leaders within the sector, especially those who occupy middle management positions

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This expansion of the target population has opened up further opportunities for influence while requiring increasing flexibility and diversity in delivery modes (see section below)

In 2009 these two documents were repackaged into a new Train the Trainer package. Additional opportunities lie within the *Volunteer Training Package* and the *Setting up for Success* workshop. This final wave takes the BPP into an overt capacity-building mode that needs to be further analysed for its andragogical assumptions and features as well as its links with the project's roots.

Education for transformation: 2010 model

In 1997, educational theorist, Mezirow, moved "beyond andragogy" and *proposed a theory of transformative learning that can explain how adult learners make sense or meaning of their experiences, the nature of the structures that influence the way they construe experience, the dynamics involved in modifying meanings, and the way the structures of meanings themselves undergo changes when learners find them to be dysfunctional.* (Mezirow, p. xii)

This brief definition of transformative learning identifies those elements that are part of the BPP model.

> *Transformative learning is a process of experiential learning, critical self-reflection, and rationale discourse that can be stimulated by people, events, or changes in contexts that challenge the learner's basic assumptions of the world. Transformative learning leads to a new way of seeing. "Values are not necessarily changed, but are examined -- their source is identified, and they are accepted and justified or revised or possibly rejected" (Cranton, 1992, p. 146). This in turn leads to some kind of action... (Brown, 2006, 705)*

The following sections look more closely at how this transformative learning is exemplified by the work of the BPP building on 5 key elements:
1. Adult learning in context
2. Self-directed heuristics
3. The teachable moment
4. Lifelong learning
5. Blended methods

1. *Adult learners in context*

Within the documentation of the BPP, learners are viewed primarily as workers through whose efforts organisational and service users' needs and goals are mediated. Learners' voices emerge as they reflect on their encounters with the BPP methodology (workshop feedback). They are not pre-described as a defined set of persons with a particular learning orientation and sets of goals and needs (such as we might find describing the characteristics of school students). It is possible to bring alongside the existing planning and teaching documentation of the BPP and the feedback data, additional widely acknowledged understandings of *workers as learners and learners as workers*.

Understanding the work of the BPP primarily as an andragogical undertaking focussed on adult learners, any framework for engagement must recognise that the learner brings beliefs about self and others, values about 'the good life', prior learning, personal and professional experience and meaning making to the structured educational event. Furthermore, the learning is highly context specific – it will emerge from within and be applied and developed back in the workplace, in this case most often in the direct engagement with older persons using services.

2. *Self-directed heuristics*

Heuristics implies the practice of seeking meaning and new learning from experience, from reflection, from deliberation with fellow workers, with clients and with external educators.

> *Mezirow (1990) defined it as a process of reflection and action:*
> *From this vantage point, adult education becomes the process of assisting those who are fulfilling adult roles to understand the meaning of their experience by participating more fully and freely in rational discourse to validate expressed ideas and to take action upon the resulting insights. . . Rational thought and action are the cardinal goals of adult education. (p. 354)*

3. *Teachable moments*

Linking context, a belief in the capacity of people to always be open to learning and the possibility of directed their won heuristic implies a string commitment to eb relevant in *time*. The BPP seeks to identify strategically the points and places in which their capacity building efforts are directed – the BPP Framework (especially within the image of the funnel) enshrines this recognition that development is influenced by:

- Timing (knowing where and when to direct effort)
- Timeliness (knowing how to maintain effort and when to withdraw)
- The teachable moment (knowing when a client, a worker or an organisation is open to change).

This is different from a model that relies only on formal, education institution based learning opportunities. Where the BPP takes up these more formal training opportunities, such as through TAFE (rather than the BPP Handbook alone) this is seen within the context of a significant touch point within this model that enshrines life-long learning (also a time focussed aspect of the BPP approach).

4. *Lifelong learning*

The BPP also enshrines a commitment to life-long learning, which respects the capacity of the older persons using services to learn and relearn ways of being powerful and hopeful, as well as workers learning and relearning ways to deeply honour and respect the people with whom they are working. This builds on the policy position enshrined in the position paper developed by the then Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training in 2003. Namely, the lifelong learning policy agenda has four distinguishing features:

- The recognition of both informal and formal learning;
- The importance of self-motivated learning;
- An emphasis on self-funded learning; and

• The idea that participation in learning should be universal.

In these ways, lifelong learning is closely linked to an agenda seeking transformation in the aged care sector.

5. *Blended methods*

Finally, the model is built on offering a blend of delivery methods. Each wave in the development of the model introduces new methods of delivering teaching opportunities and materials. This is cumulative contributing to an ever widening set of opportunities for individuals and organisations to undertake the empowering activities offered within this transformative model. It respects the fact that people will learn in different ways with different styles at different times – so diversity is importance to the coherence of this model, aimed at both values and competency training.

In summary, the BPP keeps its work plumb by saturating all its undertakings with the foundational commitment to 'open themselves up to learning from older people and from theory, to self-critique and to continually search for more potent ways to support older people to be valued members of their community' (*A unique life to live*, 2009,p7). The model of transformative education that has developed through this work encapsulates 5 key elements:

1. Adult learning in context
2. Self-directed heuristics
3. The teachable moment
4. Lifelong learning
5. Blended methods

CONCLUSION

Vision, educational theory and practice

> *When our lived experience of theorizing is fundamentally linked to processes of self-recovery, of collective liberation, no gap exists between theory and practice. Indeed, what such experience makes more evident is the bond between the two – that ultimately reciprocal process wherein one enables the other. Theory is not inherently, liberatory or revolutionary. It fulfils this function only when we ask that it do so and direct our theorizing towards this end.'* (hooks, 1994,p61)

It is appropriate that the BPP look back over its more than 10 years of practice as a capacity building project within the aged care sector. This survey of its educational approach – a transformative model of work integrated learning highlights just how practice and theory are kept in line by doing what hooks advocates that we direct the effort towards the end of a positive vision. What better place than to restate that vision which sums up' *A Unique Life to live?'* The beacon of the program is*:*

Each person is unique and will have full citizenship for all their life. Full citizenship will include being a contributing member of society, maintaining valued roles and responsibilities and a variety of freely given, reciprocal relationships. Citizenship also encompasses having a purpose in life, making decisions, being empowerment and having a level of personal contentment.

Each person will live in a community that accepts people of all ages, race and religion without prejudice; A community that accepts people for who and what they are, recognising their strengths and vulnerability and growing together through changes and losses that occur throughout life. The community will recognize the wisdom that comes with age and celebrate this.

Finally, let us also recognize the wisdom that comes with the maturity of the BPP and celebrate this!

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