Who are the teachers?: Co-production in social work education

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Who We Are

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What Are We Here For

Our Belief

Service User Involvement as a Key Pillar of Social Work Practice

Involvement = Participation = Power

Context of Education:

Instructors
(Academia / Practitioner Elites)

Social Work Students
(Students as "banks" / Students as future professionals or elites)

Service Users
(Often oppressed or vulnerable groups in society)

What We Do

Involvement of Students:
- Decide your participation grade metrics activity
- Discussing power & privilege
- "Dialogue" and focus on self of student through a response paper
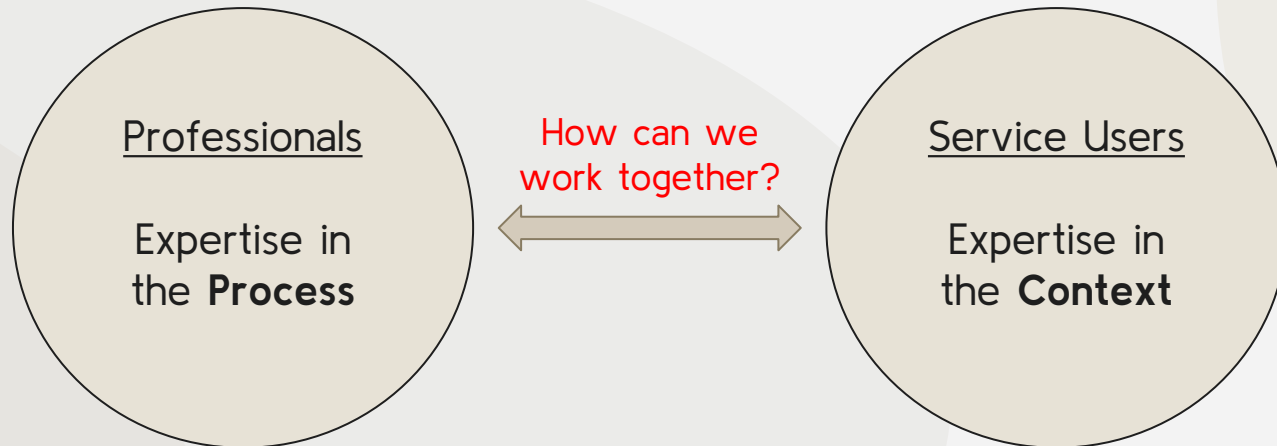
Involvement of Service Users:
- Co-lectures on community development
- Sharing existing projects and operationalizing of principles taught in class
- Service users sharing impact on themselves directly

What Guides This Approach?

Caveat: We try as much as possible, there are still limitations and realities to balance

Co-Production

- Peter Beresford
- Conventional hierarchies tend to exclude people with lived experiences from knowledge creation and decision making
- About bringing different groups of people for **equitable** partnerships

Professionals

Expertise in the **Process**

How can we work together?

Service Users

Expertise in the **Context**

Critical Pedagogy

- Paulo Freire
- Against the "banking" model of education and advocates for a more **"co-intentional"** education process
- Less "deposits", more dialogues
- Both educator and learner are equally responsible for the education process

Citizen Participation

- Sherry Arnstein
- Participation is not just attendance, but **actual influence** in decision making
- Strive towards high involvement in outcomes rather than tokenistic or manipulative

8	Citizen Control	Citizen Control
7	Delegation	
6	Partnership	
5	Placation	Tokenism
4	Consultation	
3	Informing	
2	Therapy	Nonparticipation
1	Manipulation	

Arnstein's Ladder (1969)
Degrees of Citizen Participation

Community Organising Frameworks

- Peter Block (6 Conversations) through facilitation
  - **Sense of agency** (experience of power to action)
  - **Sense of belonging** (experience of community – connectedness and caring for the whole vis-a-vis self-interests and isolation)

- Asset Based Community Development
  - **Assets:** Co-production recognises assets, values wisdom and expertise of everyone in contribution to education
  - **Reciprocity:** Mutual exchange and shared responsibilities between teachers, students, service users
  - **Co-Creation:** Involvement of students and service users in decision making process.

Power

Possession of control, authority or influence over people and/or resources that impact others and the ability to be allowed to deviate from norms.

"If people do not feel that they have power to change a bad situation, then they do not think about it. When people have a genuine opportunity to think their problems through, then they show their competence, raise the right questions… and look for the answers" – Saul Alinsky.

Privilege

Individuals live in multiple social worlds and derive their identity from more than one group. **Intersectionality:** When the full range of social identities are simultaneously lived, e.g.: race, gender, class, can lead to social inequality, over and under inclusion (Ramsey, 2014).

Privilege is societally granted, unearned advantages accorded to some and not others through systemic or structural advantages that impact people based on identity factors.

Privilege, like oppression, is intersectional (Sue, 2016).

Reflexive Practice

The practice critical reflexivity by the people with privilege (e.g.: teachers, social workers) to reflect upon complicity in dominant power relations, without which members of dominant groups reinforce their dominance, leading to oppression and social injustice (Pease, 2006).

"Engaging in reflexivity requires critical thought followed by action rooted in understanding. Where reflection is often individual, reflexivity is decidedly relational" (Tanaka, Nicholson and Farish, 2013).

Post-Test Findings

On a scale of 1 to 5,
What are some activities in this class that were impactful for your learning?

(1 being not impactful, 5 being most impactful)

Post-Test Findings

Activities Ran in SWD5102	Total (n=40) M (SD)
Deciding Participation Grade	3.98 (0.83)
Privilege Walk	4.08 (0.86)
Service user co-sharing on ABCD	4.43 (0.68)
Ask-Me-Anything session	4.08 (0.73)
Role playing for program planning	3.93 (0.80)
PAR sharing by service user* (n=20)	4.45 (0.51)
Lecturer's experiences / stories	4.70 (0.56)
Lecturer's use of self	4.60 (0.63)
Use of small group discussions	3.95 (0.81)

Sampling:
2022 and 2023 class

Response rate:
40/76 (52%)

Student-involvement

Service User-involvement

Reflections:

What has been the impact?

Joanne:

⤳ **Challenged assumptions** about fellow students and their learning journey

⤳ Experience of deciding something that we all can achieve helps to **build ownership and a community**

Pei Yi:

⤳ Surprised finding that relates to the **co-production intent**, which further influences how other classes are run

⤳ **Parallel process** of how small groups can contribute to community and promote **inclusion**

Hidayah:

⟶ Feel a sense of being heard and included, that I'm not just receiving help but **contributing** too

⟶ When people give positive feedback, it actually boosts my **confidence** to participate more, that I am more capable than I thought

Pei Yi:

⟶ Observed the shifts in service users and witnessed their **growth**

Joanne:

⟶ **Solidified understanding** of power and privilege in my work

⟶ Strive to **include** service users and be co-productive in my own social work practice

Thank You!