professional identity and legal recognition. Or will those who need the enabling role most be deprived of its benefits by further professionalisation?

CONFLUENT AND POLITICAL LEARNING ON IDHP COURSES

by John Heron

IDHP courses can be seen as having two primary dimensions: a confluent dimension and a political dimension. Confluence is about interweaving, intellectual, emotional, interpersonal and other learning. The political dimension is about balancing and integrating the decision making - of the IDHP committee, the course facilitator, the course participants as peers and individuals - with respect to the content, timing, method and assessment of learning. This article outlines the issues that arise around these two dimensions for participants and facilitators on all our courses.

My sense of these issues comes from a combination of perspectives. As a founder member of the IDHP I attended all committee meetings for nine years. I formulated a lot of its initial ideology and methodology. I facilitated the first IDHP course at the University of Surrey, I have provided peer supervision for facilitators of two other IDHP course and have run workshops of one sort or another for participants on most courses.

A conceptual model for the Confluent Dimension

To aid discussion I use a parity model of the psyche: the soul has co-equal capacities for understanding, feeling and choosing; capacities that are interdependent, mutually enhancing and in relation to other persons similarly endowed. So intellectual, emotional, decision-making and interpersonal development go hand in hand, each depending for adequacy and integrity, on each other. This leads to the notion of confluent education in which, in the long run, the four strands are fully honoured in the curriculum, serially, in parallel or integrated together.

Within IDHP courses these four strands of development extend into six like this:

intellectual	1. theoretical understanding
	2. written work
emotional	3. personal growth
decision-making	4. political skills internal to the course e.g. peer decision-making
	5. social change competence outside the course
interpersonal	6. facilitative skills

To these may be added a seventh strand - that of transpersonal centring, or access to a deeper resource within the psyche that empowers the integration process.

A conceptual model for the political dimension

The model I use here is that of an holistic learning system in which there is an interaction between hierarchical, peer and autonomous modes of decision-making about course objectives, content and method. Hierarchical decisions are made authoritatively **for** others, peer decisions are made co-operatively **with** others and autonomous decisions are made **independently** by oneself.

... balance hierarchy, co-operation and autonomy

IDHP courses seek to actively balance hierarchy, co-operation and autonomy. Hierarchy is represented by the course prospectus and contract drawn up by the course facilitator, modified and approved by the IDHP committee; by the directive role of the course facilitator in the earlier stages of the course; by the fact that the final diploma requires the signatures of the course facilitator and a representative of the IDHP committee. Co-operation is represented by participants peer planning of all these considerable parts of the course that have not been programmed in advance by the course prospectus, and by peer assessment. Autonomy is represented by the individuals' assent to what is hierarchically and co-operatively decided and above all by the individual's self-determination, within this context, with respect to learning needs, personal learning goals, methods and assessment.

What kind of relation between these three kinds of decision-making is possible and desirable in a healthy learning system? Whatever the answer to this question, I take the view that all three need to be present as vigorous, interdependent, political parts of an holistic learning system.

Learning about confluence

Dynamic tensions arise between all seven of the strands mentioned above and all the points made below are echoed to a greater or lesser degree on all our IDHP courses, in my view.

1. The experiential and the reflective

There is a tension in IDHP courses in balancing experiential work on the personal growth and facilitative strands with sufficient high quality reflective and theoretical work. Everyone has gone through intellectual development in their traditional education. Because its incidental function has been to control, repress and deny feeling, especially distress feeling, on a course

...balancing experiential work with reflective and theoretical work

with a strong personal growth strand learners want to get out from under the old oppressive role of intellect. Finding a non-oppressive and emotionally enhancing use of their intellectual powers takes time. From this follows an early emphasis in the courses on the experiential and emotional strands of learning which do of course include the exercise of intelligence as personal insight. Secondly, immediate experience is hypnotic, sweeping the mind along with a cascade of sensation and perception. So that intellectual and reflective endeavour is an achievement wrested from a tide stemmed.

Third, when experience is structured for the purpose of learning from it, learners may consider that the structuring itself is sufficient and that reflection on what may be learned from it is redundant.

Fourth, integrating the reflective with the experiential is demanding for facilitators. It is very easy for us facilitators to collude with a sub-reflective culture of experiential pseudo- learning.

2. The existential and the analytic

Because the personal growth strand is prominent early on IDHP courses, there is a tension, when students face up to producing written work, between analysis and theory and more personal, existential statements. Author centred writing emerges first, providing a launching ground for later, more topic centred writing. We are learning that on IDHP courses that of the two poles of cognitive learning, personal insight is an essential precursor for the grounding of general reflection.

3. Personal growth and facilitative skills

There is also a tension in the first months of the courses between participants' need for personal growth work, and acquiring facilitative skills. Personal growth needs tend to overwhelm facilitator training. The reason is not far to seek, when you are engrossed in the challenge of putting your own house to order, you don't feel ready to learn how to sort out someone else's affairs. Conversely, when you cleared some space in you own psyche you are ready to use it to install skills for helping others.

However the several courses that use cocounselling for a significant amount of personal growth from the beginning do succeed in gradually and unobtrusively launching a very modest facilitator skills strand, with the main focus being on each person in the client role.

4. Eclecticism and psychological depth

How can a meaningful line be maintained through personal growth work when it involves so many different people and modalities - from cocounselling, work with the primary facilitator, to work with a visiting facilitator. There is no one person other than the participant who is getting a sense of the growth themes, of how they are unfolding singly and together. I may be wrong but I get a sense that for some learners this is more problematic than has been noticed or explicitly acknowledged. The great deal of learning about personal development could be better supported

by structures to enable participants to grasp the form of their learning and growth. This is especially true of regression work and the relation between past events and present ways of living.

The integration of personal growth with how participants live their lives outside the course depends on them being able to conceptualise what they are learning, so that they can transfer it to the rest of life. While a lot of transfer goes on, I have the impression that it is not part of any co-ordinated process of learning about transfer.

There is also a tendency for transpersonal development to be introduced in dribs and drabs, so that entry to the spiritual domain becomes another episodic bit of the general eclecticism. This seems odd, because learners want this domain and want more of it. The challenge of how to give it a central role has really not yet been met.

5. Social change and political malaise

Social change objectives tend to get crowded out of the curriculum though not entirely - important work is done in this area but it may be as an afterthought. However the situation is not actually as bad as it sometimes seems, the course itself is an exercise in social change, so is the acquisition of political skills internal to the course. And the transfer to life outside the course of both personal growth and facilitator skills is the continuous exercise of a small social change lever.

Nevertheless the history of radical political thought and social experiment, organisational change and development, ecological issues, no-growth economic systems, macro-analysis of rich and poor nations and non-violent political interventions, do seem to be under-represented. The course focus on personal growth tends to overshadow the theory and practice of moving toward a new society. This stems I think partly from the traditionally apolitical stance of Humanistic Psychology with its emphasis on personal autonomy and face to face situations and partly from the political malaise of the surrounding culture.

... the traditionally apolitical stance of Humanistic Psychology

6. Peer politics and everything else

There is a tension between developing peer decision-making skills and all the other strands of the course. From the beginning participants plan a significant proportion of the first year of their course. Difficulties in carrying through this peer planning can squeeze out the activities being planned.

Co-operative planning in a peer group takes some time to learn, since few people have any experience of it in our culture. At worst, peer planning meetings may last too long, be held too often, plan for too short a period, and lack awareness of the sort of decision-making model being used. The frustrations generated can mean that decisions are forgotten or over-ruled by events. At best, peer planning meetings are time limited, a decision-making model is used consistently, is changed awarely and with good reason and decisions are carried through.

Managing peer planning meetings in the early stages is a key role for the primary facilitator/s because the adequacy of the confluence of the various strands of the course depends dramatically on secure acquisition of decision making skills.

7. Tensions within an holistic learning system

Learning within a single strand, learning about the tensions between strands and managing and balancing these tensions, both for themselves and as a group, is a considerable challenge for participants. The facilitator/s provide a watching brief as guardians of the course prospectus, making reminders of those strands that are temporarily but improperly being neglected. This interaction between facilitator hierarchy and peer parity is central to truly confluent learning.

Learning about the political dimension

This comes through learning about hierarchical, co-operative and autonomous decision-making on the course and about how they interact. Several critical issues arise on IDHP courses.

1. parity too soon

Launching too quickly into peer decision-making leads to no real learning about the peer process taking place - except negative learning about messy democracy - and the supervisor will need to encourage the facilitator/s to resume a more influential hierarchical profile. If a facilitator brings people very quickly to effective peer decision-making, in order to join the group as an equal, then it can happen and has happened, that the result is pseudo-parity, where unprocessed transference and counter- transference material has sunk unnoticed into the group and distorted the political process.

2. the hierarchy parity paradox

The paradox we seem to be learning about is that it takes a good hierarch to bring into being a good peer political process. And that a healthy parity is sustained by being interdependent with a healthy hierarch. The facilitator's hierarchical role is not abandoned but changed to that of guardian of the course contract and to ensure that transference and counter-transference material is dealt with.

... it takes a good hierarch to bring into being a good peer political process

3. coming down the curve

A long tradition within IDHP sees the facilitator/s coming down the curve from hierarchy to parity. Originally this was taken to mean that the facilitator became an actual peer, certainly by the end of the first year. As we've seen this view is now changing. While it's clear that the facilitators need to come down the curve from a

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high profile to a lower profile, it is still an open question how steep, or gradual this should be, and over how long.

Aids to learning

Aids for learning about confluence and the political dimension of IDHP course remain scarce. Work on emotional distress supports effective and authentic learning within each dimension and about their interaction. What we also need, I believe are conceptual models to highlight the two dimensions, which is one of my reasons for writing this article.

SELF AND PEER ASSESSMENT
AND ACCREDITATION
by Mike Eales

Assessment and accreditation have become a focus point for the growth movement in the 1990's. For the past fifteen years the IDHP has been using and developing Self and Peer Assessment and Accreditation both in its selection of course facilitators, and in the ongoing and final assessment and accreditation of course participants. I would like to outline briefly some of the background and some of the learning we have gained from this approach.

From the outset, one of the main objectives of the IDHP was empowerment, defining an 'educated' or 'professional person' as "an awarely self-determining person, in the sense of being able to set objectives, to formulate standards of excellence for the work that realises those objectives, to assess work done in the light of those standards, and to be able to modify the objectives, the standards or the work programme in the light of experience and action; and all this in discussion and consultation with other relevant persons" (J. Heron 1974).

Widespread Authoritarianism

... professions acknowledged the case for acquiring self-determining and co-operative skills but the educational system from which the professions emerged was highly authoritarian

The founders of the IDHP believed that if this were a valid definition of an educated person, then the educational process in most institutions of higher or professional education did not prepare students to acquire such self-determining competence, as staff unilaterally determined student learning objectives, student work programmes, assessment criteria, and then unilaterally did the assessment of students' work (Heron 1981). There seemed to be a classic anomaly where professions ac-