Aboriginal Policy Research Consortium International (APRCi)

2005

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Version of record first published: 08 Sep 2008.

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SUMMARY. This chapter describes the development of a Web-based undergraduate child welfare course for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners. Rather than simply incorporate an Aboriginal perspective into Eurocentric pedagogies and course structures, the authors disrupt the dominance of Western ways of knowing in education by designing the course to situate Western knowledge as *a* way of knowing rather than *the* way of knowing and the frame from which all other perspectives are understood. In this research the authors describe the differences between Aboriginal and

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European thought and reveal how Web-based courses can be designed in ways that do not perpetuate Eurocentrism. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <http://www.HaworthPress.com> © 2005 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]*

KEYWORDS. Web-based learning, indigenous knowledge, child welfare, pedagogy, social work education

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the development of a Web-based undergraduate child welfare course at the School of Social Work, University of Victoria, Canada. The course presented two design challenges. Firstly, because the school delivers education to on-campus and also distance students, parallel versions of the course were needed–one in a Web-based format and the other in a classroom format. Both versions of the course were required to have the same learning content and outcomes. A second challenge was that course pedagogy needed to meet the learning needs of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students as well as prepare students for child welfare work in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

The authors were uniquely placed to respond to these challenges. Jacquie Rice-Green is an Aboriginal professor from the Haisla Nation with experience in child welfare practice and also teaching in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal contexts. Gary C. Dumbrill is a White professor originating from London, England, who has experience in child welfare practice, teaching, and also in designing and delivering Web-based courses. Working as a team, and both believing it important to deconstruct and disrupt the dominance of Western knowledge in education, the authors identified the differences between European and Aboriginal ways of knowing and considered the implications for both classroom and Web-based courses. Supported by a grant from the University of Victoria, Faculty of Human Development "Dean's Fund for Innovations in Computer Mediated Material" as well as an "Innovation in Teaching Research Award," the authors developed a model for building parallel classroom and Web-based courses that are suitable for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners.

The results of the project are described below. First, the course history and context is described. The course pedagogy is explained and an overview of the course content is presented. The course architecture and structure, which utilized modified "learning objects," is discussed. Issues that arose in constructing the course are debated and finally the course outcomes are detailed and conclusions are drawn.

COURSE HISTORY CONTEXT

Since being founded in 1978, the School of Social Work at the University of Victoria, Canada, has placed emphasis on delivering distance education (DE) as well as classroom education. The emphasis on DE was driven by a desire to make social work education accessible to those in remote parts of Canada. The viability of this venture was inspired by the Open University in Britain, which opened in 1969, and by 1978 was meeting with unprecedented success making higher education available through DE to those who would not usually attend university. The University of Victoria's DE efforts met with similar success and were bolstered by research that showed that the school's classroom and DE courses were equally effective in conveying social work education (Callahan & Rachue, 1988; Callahan & Wharf, 1989; Callahan & Whitaker, 1988; Cossom, 1988).

By the late 1990s, almost the entire school curriculum was available in both classroom and DE formats enabling students to take almost any course at a distance or on campus. DE content was delivered through a "correspondence" model that involved a traditional "course pack" and e-mail support. Currently, seventy-five percent of the school's students elect to take their courses by DE and it is now possible to complete almost all the required course work for an undergraduate social work degree in this manner. The school maintains the equivalency of DE and classroom education by insisting that the DE and classroom version of each course have the same content and learning outcomes.

In the late 1990s the school began migrating its DE courses into a Web-based model using WebCT as the delivery platform. Migration occurs when existing course material is due for renewal and involves an instructor updating the classroom content and corresponding DE manual followed by a faculty DE coordinator and technician moving the updated DE content into a WebCT format. This mode of migration caused the schools initial WebCT courses to be based on a similar pedagogy to a correspondence method of DE.

Although the school's DE program began increasing the accessibility of higher education in the 1970s, post secondary education at that time remained almost non-existent among Canada's Aboriginal peoples, who are also referred to in Canada as "First Nation's" peoples in recognition of them being the original Indigenous people of the nation now known as Canada. This lack of post-secondary education among First Nation's people needs to be understood historically. Beginning in the late 1800s, attempts were made through Canada's residential school systems, to strip Aboriginal peoples of their culture and identity. Children were separated from their families and communities, prohibited from speaking their native language or practicing traditions, and forced to learn European traditions–a practice that is now recognized as a form of cultural genocide (Downey, 1999). Formal "education," therefore, was not offered to First Nations people as a form of enlightenment, but was used as a political tool of subjugation. Even when forced attendance in residential schools began to dwindle in the 1950s and 1960s, the system continued to subjugate because prior to the 1970s, Aboriginal students were required to relinquish their identities (status) as First Nation's people to obtain post secondary education. Even when this requirement was removed, Aboriginal students needed to be strong minded and spirited to leave their communities (reserves) and cope with transition to new towns, cities, and colleges/universities which were often hostile to their presence.

Despite these difficulties, First Nation's students pursued higher education. Graduates returned to their communities and found ways to bring higher education to these communities in a manner that was relevant to Aboriginal peoples. Additionally, First Nation's graduates who began working in universities and colleges, began to challenge these institutions to meet the needs of Aboriginal learners and they also challenged the dominance of Western notions of knowledge and teaching.

Through the work of these graduates, it became evident that the vision of increasing the accessibility of education through DE did not hinge simply on delivering courses across geographic distances. Making education assessable also depended on understanding and bridging the gap between the Eurocentric notions of knowledge held by the academy and the ways of knowing of learning held by those not from European traditions. Bridging this gap requires deconstructing European dominance. From the Victoria school's beginning, efforts had been made to deconstruct dominant societal discourses, but as the school increased its focus on First Nations social work, it began to learn important lessons about the ways European dominance occurred through

social work education process itself. It was important, therefore, in the migration of DE courses into a WebCT format, to articulate, consolidate, and incorporate these lessons into the pedagogy of the new Web-based courses. The authors decided to undertake this articulation, consolidation, and incorporation when asked to update and migrate the school's child welfare practice course into WebCT. We decided to not only use this migration as an opportunity to explore the pedagogical issues of WebCT delivery to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students but to also address the pedagogical and design issues of parallel course construction in WebCT and classroom formats. Our pedagogy was developed through our experience of co-teaching courses together and is effective and appropriate for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners.

PEDAGOGY

Pedagogy is political. As mentioned above, "education" has been used as a pretext for removing Aboriginal children from their communities and indoctrinating them in Western/European knowledge systems. Although residential schools no longer exist, educational systems remain steeped in Eurocentric knowledge. This bias in education is often invisible to those from the dominant Western culture because society is so steeped in this culture that Western ways can appear to be the "normal" or natural way of being (Dumbrill & Maiter, 1996; Yee & Dumbrill, 2003, Dumbrill, 2003). Yet far from neutral, an educational system that uncritically adopts a Eurocentric stance is covertly perpetuating the residential school project because it continues to indoctrinate students into Western ways of knowing (Rice-Green & Dumbrill, 2003). There is, of course, nothing wrong with Western ways of knowing, as long as they are identified as "a" way of knowing rather than "the" way of knowing. Instructors, therefore, must make the nature and origins of the knowledge they impart evident to the learner. Additionally, in social work education with its focus on social inequalities, the relationship between Western knowledge and the dominant power systems that marginalize people within society must also be made known.

The Victoria school makes the nature and origins of knowledge known by not only teaching students to recognize and identify the dominance of Western/European knowledge but also by de-centering that knowledge and emphasizing "other" ways of knowing–particularly Aboriginal ways of knowing. Almost all the school's courses now contain

Aboriginal content. The school recently began to offer Aboriginal students the opportunity to obtain a social work degree that specializes in First Nations social work. This option is exercised by students choosing core and elective courses that focus specifically on issues from a First Nations perspective. In these specialized courses students focus on teachings from community elders and community healers, and they learn protocols when approaching these First Nation's experts. Such teaching is also included in the school's other courses to ensure that all those who may work with First Nation's individuals, families or communities understand the importance of protocol, history and relationships to Aboriginal peoples.

In adopting the above pedagogy, we take what we refer to as a radical, structural, feminist, anti-racist, and First Nations stance. Our radical and structural stance is similar to that articulated by Paulo Freire who, in "The Pedagogy of the Oppressed," provides students with the opportunity to effect social change by learning about the class mechanisms that drive oppression and shape their lives (Freire, 2001). Our feminist and anti-racist stance is similar to that of bell hooks (1994) who expands Freire's class analysis to challenge societal, racial, sexual, and class boundaries in pursuit of social justice. Our First Nations stance understands and deconstructs colonialism in the context of a historical analysis similar to the work of Emma La Rocque (2001), who asserts that "'voice is a textual resistance technique' and must be used as an attempt to begin to balance the legacy of dehumanization and bias entrenched in Canadian studies about native peoples" (p. 13).

Our stance is appropriate for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal social work students because a part of social work education for all students is to understand the links between the personal issues families face and broader societal inequalities. This approach also fits particularly well for Aboriginal students because it validates the historical trauma experienced by Aboriginal peoples as a result of colonization and begins a process of resisting ongoing colonization.

We apply the above pedagogy through a constructivistic approach. In both classroom and Web-based settings, we see ourselves as being "guides on the side" rather than "sages on the stage" (Reeves & Reeves, 1997). A constructivist educator does not see knowledge as "facts" or "truth" in which the student needs to be instructed, but considers that which we regard as knowledge and truth to be the result of perspective. Indeed, constructivists contend that "knowledge and truth are created, not discovered by the mind" (Schwandt, 1994, p. 125). Our educational role as guides fits well with our radical position because like Freire we

conceptualize education as a dialogue between the educator and students–a process in which both learn and are changed. There is, however, a caveat to constructivism within a radical pedagogy. Constructivist thought has postmodern leanings which can cause the educator to slide into a position that considers all views to be "true" and "valid." We avoid this slippage by holding the position that all "truths" are not equal or "valid." For instance, we would not accept overtly racist arguments or sentiments as viable, and we resolve the tensions this causes in our postmodern leanings in a similar manner to Leonard (1994, 1997) who embraces deconstruction as a means of dismantling the "truths" that support existing class and power relationships.

Our role as educational guides and a focus on process and dealing with racism and other forms of oppression fits well with Aboriginal teaching traditions. Learners and teachers within Aboriginal settings have inherent respect for collective learning, which is emphasized by a statement within most Aboriginal communities that, "it takes a community to raise children." So, by incorporating a constructivistic and radical position, students have an opportunity to explore Aboriginal philosophies (theories) without contention.

COURSE CONTENT

Because we were designing a "child welfare practice" course that prepares fourth-year undergraduate students for work in a child protection or other mandated child welfare setting, our content focused primarily on the micro practice of helping families and communities keep children safe and healthy. Content is also needed to connect micro practice to social issues on a mezzo and macro level. It would serve little purpose for social workers to help families cope with their individual problems without helping them connect these problems to broader societal issues that compound and in some cases cause these ills. This is particularly so in Aboriginal communities where it is not possible to grasp the dynamics of individual or family problems outside an understanding of colonialism.

In this course, we approached practice believing that social workers need to know what they are doing and why they are doing it. Consequently, we adopted as a text the book, "Child Abuse: Toward a Knowledge Base" (Corby, 2000). This book does not focus on the "how to" of practice but on a critical exploration of the theories and knowledge on which child welfare practice is based. We supplemented this European

text with a collection of readings that added knowledge from a broad range of other perspectives–particularly Aboriginal perspectives. We then applied these texts by emphasizing praxis and provided opportunities for students to connect course material to their own experience and to the experience of others in the course. In keeping with our pedagogy, we ensured that connections were made between these experiences and broader political and societal issues. From this mix of theory, praxis and critical analysis, we worked through the implications for child welfare social work practice. This process is compatible with Freire's emphasis on students connecting personal issues to political realities and is also compatible with working in Aboriginal contexts where an understanding of the ways history and colonization have impacted families and communities is crucial. We anticipated that this approach would teach students to engage in micro practice while and also recognizing, identifying and addressing the social inequalities that compound and sometimes cause the problems these families face. The course content was compiled as shown in Table 1.

COURSE ARCHITECTURE

We used "learning objects" to construct the course. Learning objects are virtual "granular" instructional units built around specific teaching objectives that are portable and can be reused in several courses (Recker, Walker & Wiley, 2000; Wiley, 2000). A learning object may be a RealAudio lecture, an online PowerPoint presentation, a series of HTML pages, a group exercise in a virtual seminar room, or any similar online activity.

The potential of learning objects lies in their granularity and portability. Once a pool of objects is established, they can be used like a collection of LEGO blocks to build a variety of courses. Learning objects are quickly becoming a central part of the pedagogy of Web-based instruction (Hodgins, 2000). Learning objects are particularly viable in dual course development because an object can be constructed in a Web-based and classroom format. For instance, an online child welfare quiz can also be constructed as a classroom quiz. An online RealAudio PowerPoint presentation can also be a classroom PowerPoint presentation. A classroom small group discussion can also be a WebCT small group discussion. Utilizing this architecture, we built the content for each week of the course with learning objects. By constructing each ob-

TABLE 1. Course Content

Wk	Topic	Description	Broad Learning Outcome
1	Opening Circle	Introduce course and each other. Establish a focus on "healing" which is taking care of one's own and others' wellness when engaging in course material. Provide overview of course.	Dialogue between students and instructors established. Expectations clarified. A focus on self-care and the care of each other in the course established.
2	History	Examine and critique the dominant Western discourse of child welfare and the ways this has impacted each of us and our histories. Review and un-suppress the history of child care in Aboriginal communities.	Awareness of political dimensions to the way child welfare work is established. Students learn Aboriginal child welfare and the historical child care practices of First Nation's people are affirmed.
3	Values, legislation & case examples	Review child welfare legislation, social work values and also Aboriginal values in relation to child care and communities. Operationalize these concepts by having students apply them to case examples.	Students understand and can apply child welfare legislation as well as understand and apply social work and First Nation's values when engaging in this work.
4	Dealing with abuse & neglect	Examine theories that attempt to explain physical child abuse and consider interventions.	Students understand the nature, causes and prevalence of physical abuse, as well as ways to intervene in such cases.
5	Dealing with abuse & neglect cont. . . .	Examine theories that attempt to explain child neglect and consider interventions.	Students understand the nature, causes and prevalence of child neglect, as well as ways to intervene in such cases.
6	Dealing with abuse & neglect cont. . . .	Examine theories that attempt to explain child sexual abuse and also theories that attempt to explain emotional maltreatment and consider interventions.	Students understand the nature, causes and prevalence of sexual abuse and emotional maltreatment, as well as ways to intervene in such cases.
7	Anti-oppressive skills in child welfare	Examine anti-oppressive practice (AOP). Although AOP is considered in every class, in this session AOP is considered in its own right.	Students' understanding of AOP is reinforced.
8	Risk reduction	Examine risk measurement and risk reduction.	Students understand the strengths and limitations of risk assessment.
9	Ongoing work with families	Consider ongoing casework.	Students consolidate learning by applying course content to real case examples.
10	Looking after children	Examine working with children in care, issues of permanency planning and adoption.	Issues in working with children in care are understood.
11	Cases that go wrong	Undertake an in-depth analysis of a case that "went wrong." In this class students utilize course learning to conduct an in-class analysis of a child who died as a result of physical abuse at home with his parents.	Applying course content in the analysis of a child homicide case reinforces the depth of students' learning.
12	Cases that go wrong cont. . . .	Undertake an additional in-depth analysis of a case that "went wrong." Students utilize course learning to conduct an in-class analysis of a child who died while in care.	Applying course content in the analysis of an additional child homicide case further reinforces the depth of students' learning.
13	Closing Circle	Consolidation of learning and ending ceremonies.	Formal course learning is concluded.

ject in a classroom and also a Web-based form, we ensured the equivalency of the Web-based and classroom versions of the course.

Although learning objects solved our design problems, they created pedagogical conflicts. Indeed, learning objects are usually constructed as "metadata," which is the notion that each object is self-contained, complete in itself, self-describing and able to achieve a specific learning objective (Oakes, 2002). This conflicts with a pedagogy that emphasizes the way knowledge interconnects and the ways power mechanisms shape what we regard as "knowledge." As well, the notion of knowledge being complete in itself de-emphasizes the process and praxis, which are central to our pedagogy. To overcome these limitations, instead of constructing learning objects as discrete items of knowledge, we constructed them as "way-points" on a learning journey. These way-points remained portable and reusable, but rather than being comprised of consumable knowledge items, they were constituted as points at which students could engage and consider bodies of knowledge. Way-points, therefore, are unlike learning objects because they are not simply independent structures that contain knowledge for students to absorb, but are interconnected structures that enable students to absorb information while they critically evaluate that information and connect it to other items of knowledge. In other words, unlike learning objects that are independent of each other and are self-contained, way-points are designed to be interconnected and interdependent.

Because way-points are interconnected, their sequencing is crucial. For instance, early in the course we constructed an "object" in the form of a child welfare quiz (which has been made publicly available online http://web2.uvcs.uvic.ca/courses/sw475/). Although the quiz communicates factual information, it was also designed to disrupt dominant discourses that situate current Eurocentric notions of child welfare as epitomizing civilized behaviour toward children. The construction of this way-point uses exactly the same educational strategy employed by MacFadden, Herie, Maiter and Dumbrill in their "constructivist, emotionally-oriented model of web-based instruction" (in press). The purpose of this model is to disrupt taken for granted social constructions and open students to alternative ways of conceptualizing issues–particularly alternatives that fall outside the established "truth" of dominant societal discourse. By introducing, through a quiz, historical information about advanced child welfare systems that pre-date European civilization, this way-point brings students to a place where they are ready to challenge the assumption that modern child welfare practice is the most advanced way of helping families. It is important that this point be

reached early in the course because it establishes a questioning about taken for granted practices that are important when engaging with the rest of the course material. With the modifications described above, learning objects provide the ideal course architecture. Objects, modified as way-points, provide students with a learning journey in which they do not simply consume information, but rather question and construct their own sense of the subject being taught.

COURSE CONSTRUCTION

Once we had designed the course, a school DE coordinator and technician undertook construction. The separation of design and construction relieves instructors from learning the mechanics of WebCT assembly. Yet separating design and construction can create problems. In our project, the boundary between pedagogy and construction became blurred because we had neglected to explain our model to the technician and DE coordinator. Not understanding our stance, they began to challenge the course design and also its content. In a traditional classroom, an administrator or technician would never question a professor's course content, but when work is spread across a team such questioning easily occurs.

To make progress, the team had to refocus and be reminded of who was responsible for which aspect of the project. This clarification, however, created further problems because, although it gave us control of content, it placed the mechanics of the course structure firmly outside our control. Our suggestions of replicating the course structure innovation shown by MacFadden, Dumbrill, and Maiter (2000) in creating a Web-based virtual campus in their work at the University of Toronto, School of Social Work, was rejected by those responsible for construction. The MacFadden team, using the "First Class" Web-based platform, eased students' transition to online learning by creating a virtual campus. Rather than encountering a collection of online files, students moved among virtual seminar rooms where they met for discussions, attended a virtual lecture theater to view RealAudio presentations, and visited a virtual library to collect course readings. The rationale for rejecting this model was that all the Victoria school's Web-based courses were being built in the same manner to enable students to move easily from one course to another. Additionally, the technician was unsure if she could reproduce, in a WebCT environment, the level of sophistication MacFadden and colleagues achieved in a First Class environment.

These rationales made sense: students need consistency in course design. Also, although WebCT is capable of simulating a campus like environment, it is less user-friendly than the First Class system. As a result of these constraints, we were prevented from using the full potential of WebCT as a course platform.

OUTCOMES

The classroom course was co-taught by a male and a female First Nation's professor from September-December 2002. Ten students registered with one drop out, resulting in nine students completing the course. Of these, eight were female and one was male. One student was Metis, one was of Chinese origin, and seven were white with European origins. The WebCT course was taught by a female First Nations professor from May-August, 2003. Thirty-five students registered with one dropping out resulting in 34 students completing the course. There were thirty females and four males. Diversity statistics were not collected in this course but there was at least one Aboriginal participant.

Outcomes were determined by a qualitative analysis of course assignments, examining course evaluation data, and collecting in-depth qualitative feedback from three students (two who took the course in a WebCT format and two who took it in a classroom format). The outcomes of each course were similar. The dropout rates were very low. The average grade for each course was A− and a qualitative examination of the course assignments (case studies) found no noticeable differences in the learning outcomes. Students in both the WebCT and the classroom course rated the course highly in their end-of-course evaluations, although there were some negative comments from WebCT students.

Positive comments from both cohorts indicated that both groups learned the importance of critically analyzing child welfare situations and the importance of understanding historical and colonial contexts in child welfare practice. This critical analysis not only enabled students in both cohorts to recognize the ways child protection work can be punitive toward marginalized communities, particularly Aboriginal communities; but also enabled students to recognize how they could work in a mandated child protection setting and still work in respectful ways with Aboriginal as well as other communities in the interests of children and families. Students from both courses agreed that the relationship and communication with professors was adequate with the DE students

being particularly appreciative of the opportunities Web-Based learning brought to communicate with the instructor to debrief readings and assignments. Students in both cohorts believed that the course helped prepare them for working with families in a child welfare setting and that they appreciated the challenge they encountered in person and in online discussions.

Importantly, students in both cohorts appreciated the ability to ask questions of the professor that they felt were difficult questions. For example, students in both cohorts wanted to meet and learn from elders in local Aboriginal communities but began, as a result of the course, to wonder how they could do this without imposing on these communities. Students showing this concern indicate a respect for Aboriginal communities and suggests our goal of teaching about dominance, colonialism, First Nation's history, and the importance of respectful relationship building and partnership with communities was achieved. The only negative evaluation comments came from one WebCT student who believed that she would have obtained a richer experience from the classroom course. Given the lower numbers in the classroom course and the fact that two instructors were available, these comments are probably valid.

CONCLUSIONS

The similarity in the Web-based and classroom course outcomes, the positive student evaluations, and the low dropout rates indicate that our model for course development was effective. In addition, we believe that our radical, structural, feminist, anti-racist and First Nations stance did justice in this course to the breadth of issues that social work students must address when engaging in child welfare practice. The approach we adopted also allowed us to be respectful of students from Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learning traditions. The modification of "learning objects" to "way-points" as our course architecture allowed us to gain the benefits of learning objects while also incorporating holistic ways of knowing as well as connecting micro issues and social work practice to broader societal issues.

Further exploration and development of our model is needed. The key to this ongoing development is partnership and relationship. Aboriginal, and non-Aboriginal educators must work together to disrupt colonization by ensuring that European ways of knowing are not represented in education as "the" way of knowing. European thought needs to be identified in teaching and courses as simply "a" way of knowing

and instructors must learn to respect and offer alternative ways of understanding and knowing. This is particularly so in Web-based education where design architecture such as learning objects, which views education as to the consumption of information, can further marginalize holistic Aboriginal ways of knowing. Without paying attention to both decolonization and holistic knowledge systems, Web-based education may bridge geographic divides, but will reinforce the divides between different peoples and differing ways of knowing.

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