



Creative reflections on Enhancing Practice 16: new explorations, insights and inspirations for practice developers

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Submitted for publication: 31st October 2016

Accepted for publication: 3rd November 2016

Published: 16th November 2016

<https://doi.org/10.19043/ipdj.62.002>

This paper was not subject to peer review

Keywords: Evaluation, reflection, poetry, experience, practice development, collaboration, person-centredness

It began two years ago, then
Arriving in Edinburgh the enthusiasm abounds.
The first day arrives – oozing anticipation.
Great to gather old friends, new friends;
Clans and clever creativity, having fun
Energy in the room, creating, innovating,
Creative ways transforming minds, creating impact.

The International Practice Development Collaborative (IPDC) is loose network of practice developers, academics and researchers who are committed to working together to develop healthcare practice. The IPDC believes that the aim of practice development is to work with people to develop person-centred cultures that are dignified, compassionate and safer for all. One of its four pillars of work is a biennial Enhancing Practice conference. Moving round the world, the IPDC members take it in turns to host the conference; in early September 2016 it was the turn of Queen Margaret University (QMU) in Edinburgh.

This article has been created collaboratively by a number of the people who attended this three-day conference. The IPDJ team invited participants to offer ‘the line of a poem’ that captured or reflected their experience and/or learning. These were then collected and shared, and together we created a series of poems and a collection of haiku (a three-line Japanese poem with 17 syllables, 5-7-5). Other participants have subsequently offered reflections, which we would also like to share with you here.

We offer this article to you, as a celebration of our time together; our learning, connections and creating, in the hope that there might be some learning in here for you and that you may consider joining us at our next conference in Basel, Switzerland in 2018.

Discovering 'key notes'

On each day we came together as a whole community and the keynote speakers created the opportunity for us to discover something new, or to think about something in a new way. These opportunities were created by:

- Professor Tanya McCance, director for the Institute of Nursing and Health Research and head of the Person-centred Practice Research Centre at Ulster University
- Julian Stodd, a writer and explorer of the social age
- Pádraig Ó Tuama, the leader of the Corrymeela Community in Northern Ireland

Perhaps the 'key notes' that were discovered are reflected in the following co-created verse:

Meeting, beliefs and values; moving the moments;
Moments are like drops in the ocean that make big ripples.
Celebrate the moments embrace new possibilities,
Living, dancing, discovering and speaking up – together.
Re-connecting through thoughtful thought-provoking stories,
Shared stories and power poems created better understanding;
Purposeful moments of person-centredness.

We now share individual reflections on each of the keynote addresses.

Karen LeGrow reflects on Tanya's keynote address, 'Engaging in person-centred processes: exploring the essence'.

'I wrote a haiku immediately after Tanya's poignant portrayal of her family's experience with a life-altering experience – the death of her husband and her children's father.

'I recall a multitude of feelings, emotions and words racing through my mind as I sat in the audience trying to take in all that she shared with us. What struck me throughout this experience was her intentional use of poetry, images and music to convey a message that was powerful yet very personal, profoundly intimate yet publicly acknowledged, and emotionally charged yet peaceful. While her story was the centrepiece of the keynote presentation, it was the way in which she shared it that invoked for me the essence of being human and connecting with others in a person-centred manner. That is, although she was describing the key processes of person-centredness throughout her presentation, in sharing her story she was actually enacting the key processes of person-centredness. This was her gift to us.'

The haiku below reflects for me the 'essence' of Tanya's story from its beginning to its end.

Storming tension pain
in the midst of me you we
presence being peace

Rebekkah Middleton has created a collage of ideas and reflections from Julian's keynote address entitled: 'Understanding the new realities of the social age'.

The social age of learning, what does that mean?

What does that mean to me?

The nature of knowledge is changing... am I keeping up to date, what does it mean to me?

Technology transforms the way we do things... why can't I just talk... scaffolding social learning...
what will that look like?

Perhaps it will involve co-created spaces, personal narratives, connections to take forward, a legacy.
At the heart is co-creation with shared values... that makes sense... and then I can have sense-making
with others.

Listening is required.

Aspiration versus culture... or is it aspiration in culture? The grinding reality of everyday is what must
be considered, much more so than aspiration...

Co-created and co-owned change... requires humility.

Only by a co-created model will we hear and value individual voices... and then will change occur.

My challenge... to engage and inspire and lead socially, not fight and resist.

Relinquish control.

Learning... come to conclusions... think about what I need to learn next...

Caroline Dickson reflects on Pádraig's keynote address, entitled 'Stories from the shadow of conflict'

Padraig, a poet, theologian and group worker came our way
with his stories from the shadows of conflict.

Beauty in the ear. Soft, lyrical sounds. Irish Gaelic gently creating
images of war, reconciliation and healing that danced in our minds.

Digging deeper. Complexity.

Being victorious, but what a cost to others!

How can we celebrate at the hands of another's suffering?

Acknowledging history can be painful, but mistakes need to be named.

Lessons to be learned, he said. Avoid replicating the past.

But how to feel safe enough to do that, he questioned.

What damage has been done by words spoken?

Tending to the past is part of reconciliation and building a new future together.

He talked of the power of stories. Paying attention to a plurality of stories,

Powerful in helping to create something that doesn't yet exist.

He encouraged us to consider the story of our own life.

What would the first sentence be? Sharing.

Shedding light on possible meanings emerging from our words.

The way we used them. Emotion, action, curiosity.

Past and future orientation. The power of silence.

What lessons for us as practice developers? Ideas like explosions going off in my head.

Familiarity in words heard and feelings felt in other spaces.

Consistent messages of EP 16. Being creative with words. The impact of our words.

Using words to convey our curiosity – tell us your story...

Listening and being present. Being softer round the edges as we engage with each other.

Creating psychological safety. Valuing others.

Letting go to 'let come'. Taking responsibility for our role in previous mistakes.

Not for blame, but to learn and think. How different it could be!

Shared understanding. A new shared future that we can work on together...

Sharing and learning through dialogue and creativity

Woven in between these moments when the whole conference community came together were further opportunities to think about and explore the deeper layers of practice and the challenges associated with developing effectiveness in practice. Concurrent creative spaces, concurrent oral presentations and show-and-tell displays, guided by the theme of 'architecture', facilitated the unearthing of the wisdom that is inherent in good practice development, the articulation of the expertise needed to connect with person-centred cultures at an authentic level, and gave voice to the creative engagement of practice developers.

Friendships, meeting of minds, collaboration, encouragement
and inspiration from like-minded people.
Living values and beliefs, suspend agendas.
You, we, sharing – being, with peace.
The joy of human interaction, dancing our vision,
Dancing with care, envisioning the future,
Social learning creates a flourishing ecosystem,
From this comes the finest action.



The conference in haiku

Great start, clans and shields
Beginnings, relationships
A Scottish embrace

Active, creative
Flames burn, uncover the unknown
Expressions forming

Tell me about you
Narrative stories, power
Co-create, co-own

Rush, rush, rush, hot room
I need fresh air and water
We, being human

Storming tension, pain
Revolution? Move forward
Explore and inspire

Gaining some traction
Courage is as courage does
Courage for PD

Politics, power
Compassion, person centred
Weaving wall of care

New knowledge, learning
She came, she went home different
Human flourishing



A limerick

There was a young practice developer
With a spark of humanity at the centre
She came to Queen Margaret's and set aside targets
And was changed from a 'yelper' to a 'helper'

The unfolding story of me Caroline Dickson

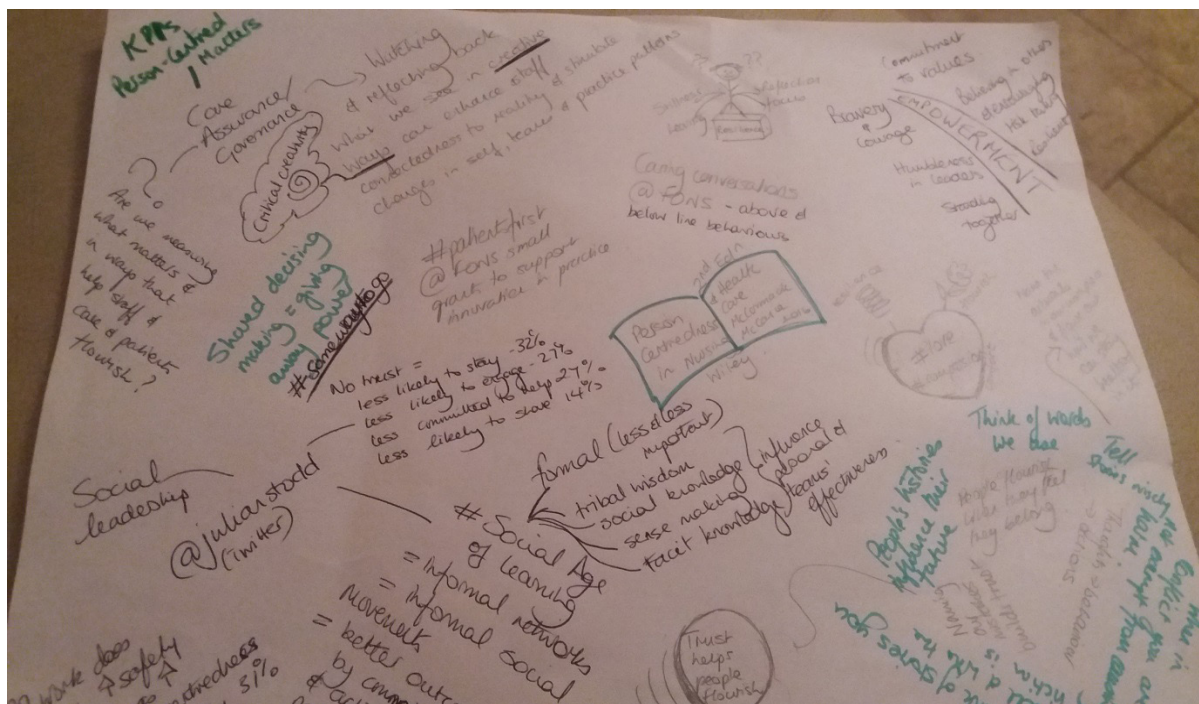


The unfolding story, from the perspective of me.
One voice, one perspective, in a rich tapestry.
Of Being
New thoughts and insights, crossing the line.
Learning. Laughing. Living.
The unfolding story of impact and change
Shared history. Of courage and pain.
Of Being
Taking time to listen. To hear. To capture.
Including Sharing Creating.
The unfolding story of being an explorer
Learning, reflecting. Unfurling new knowing
Being together
Always a work in progress. Constantly seeking.
Patterns. Creating. Owning.
The unfolding story of being a helper
The impact of words and the power of silence
Just being.
Gently. Stepping in and stepping away
Softly, safely, humility
The unfolding story of letting go
Experiencing safety and coming to know
How to be
Enabling opportunities and letting come
Vulnerable. Valuing. Visioning.
The unfolding story of dancing the dance
Crossing the line from shadow to light
Just being
Less is more. More is muchness and now I see
the parts and the whole in this rich tapestry.

Summary of personal learning

Debbie Baldie

- Aim high and deliver well
- Evaluate sufficiently
- You are only constrained by your self-belief
- Working with others makes anything possible
- Learn how to stay healthy in a fast-paced system
- Change from within
- Love, cherish, encourage
- Dare to dream, live to act
- Stay humble



Fun and games

It wasn't all critical reflection at our Edinburgh conference...



Photographer: Jane Stokes www.janestokes.com

And so to Basel...

In line with tradition, to end the conference but also to look forward to our next event, our hosts from QMU met with our hosts from the Network of Practice Development Units of the University Hospitals of Basel, Berne and Zurich, Switzerland, to exchange gifts and words of thanks and encouragement. The anticipation of further new explorations, insights and inspirations begins.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all those who contributed the 'lines' that have enabled us to create this evaluation. We hope that you will enjoy reading it and that it will resonate with your experience.