GLIMMERS: RESILIENCE-INFORMED REFRAMES

Glimmering Waves Towards Change

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Introduction: Oceans

Like oceans, activist movements are made of shifting tides. We talk about feminism's first, second, third wave. If we are wise, we free ourselves of the trappings of nostalgia and make necessary conceptual renovations along the way. Like water, we adapt to the changing *current* — sometimes placid, sometimes caught in the storm. We realize any movement building that isn't fully intersectional leaves someone out.   In this series so far, we have focused on trauma and the brain, including individual strategies for working with neuroplasticity. We looked at vicarious resilience mostly via dyadic connection. We are now expanding towards a larger group lens with this exploration of social change movements and models. The wisdoms of many world cultures have long held that mental health is collective, not individual, though the research of most institutions is just catching up to this idea (Elliot, 2020) and (Mulgan, 2021). Social movements, then, can be seen as large scale opportunities to heal mental health and overall wellbeing.

Disability justice (DJ) is no different from other movements in the sense that it has phases, is sometimes messy, is never done. DJ evolved from the disability rights movement which "established civil rights for people with disabilities" while also being "a product of its time" – namely, it was in need of a deeper structural power analysis. For this reason, a group of "disabled queers and activists of color" came together in 2005 to name and shape a more inclusive "second wave" (Berne, 2020, paragraph 10).

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Amidst the blossoming DJ movement, UDL emerged as a framework for embedding accessibility in educational practice, one that assumes the learning environment is at the root of barriers. Sticking with the oceans metaphor: we need to adjust the water conditions, not attempt to mutate the fish. First introduced in the 1990s, in 2010 UDL was presented to the federal government as "a means to boost the learning of all students, particularly those in the margins" (Bacon, 2014, paragraph 28). UDL considers three domains: engagement, representation, and action/expression. In each of these areas, UDL holds that we should have diverse resources to match each of our students' unique bodyminds (CAST, 2018).

As with most DJ efforts, incorporating UDL principles is of benefit to all, not just those with identified disabilities (Blackwell, 2017). UDL encourages students to reflect on their own learning in meaningful ways by asking them to select and utilize tools, resources, and options that best suit their cognitive and sensory needs. For example, when content is made available in multiple formats, students can choose either visual or auditory options to consume their course material based on how they best process information. Students are able to evaluate how they can most effectively illustrate their grasp of the material when we allow them to select their examination structures — long essay, short answer, verbal presentation. By making learning more accessible, we also expand the bounds of what is possible in the classroom.

Stages of Change

Alongside Disability Justice concepts, I will pull in another lens which has some basic principles in common with UDL: stages of change, or the transtheoretical model (TTM). Social work has a maxim to "meet people where they are," and the TTM is aligned with that tenet of the discipline. The original framework was created by Prochaska and DiClemente in the 1970s during a study of smokers who quit in various ways (LaMorte, 2022, paragraph 1). It has since been used to support those in recovery from many substances. It proposes six main change phases: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance, termination.

The model suggests that specific types of communication and intervention are needed at each phase. For those in precontemplation who do not recognize a problem, we help to raise their awareness. For those in contemplation who see a problem but are ambivalent about change, we help them consider pros and cons and identify the barriers to change. For those in preparation who have made the commitment, we assist with solidifying that devotion and developing an action plan. For those in action who are currently working towards change, we help revisit the plan and revise as needed. For those in maintenance who are consistently working towards change over time and are embodying new ways of being, we help with avoiding regression and continuing integration of the change (Sutton, 2020). Termination implies an end point, which of course does not apply to social change work; for the purposes of this conversation we might consider that phase as long term maintenance.

One critique of the TTM is that it "ignores the social context in which change occurs, such as SES and income" (LaMorte, 2022, paragraph 6). There is some resonance, you might notice, with the above-named critique of the Disability Rights movement. As I was learning the TTM during graduate school, a similar question set me pondering, fond as I am of looking at systems and societal dynamics. I recall asking a colleague if one could intentionally appropriate the TTM for, say, helping those who are unaware of how they benefit from racism to understand the harmful impacts and advocate for cultural and policy reform. Or those who benefit from heterosexism to understand and become better allies. The response: my ideas were somewhat unusual and interesting, yet tangential.

Integrating Concepts: A Story

Fast forward to one of my jobs sometime after grad school. The person who had the most power in my area of the organization was Black and immediately I noticed patterns of racism from white middle managers who were between this person and myself in the hierarchy. These were my colleagues, people I saw every day. I felt unwilling to be a bystander and decided I would talk with the middle managers by "calling them in" (Bennett, 2021; Ross, 2023).

When I let my supervisor know I planned to have this conversation, she suggested I speak with HR; the HR person asked me how it would go if, in therapy, I said to a client struggling with active unacknowledged alcoholism, "Clearly, the problem is that you drink too much." Well, I said. That would not go well. The person is in precontemplation and not thinking about change, so being direct would likely trigger their defenses; they would shut down and not listen to me. Point taken, though I did move forward with a conversation with my colleagues and received, as could be expected, a somewhat defensive response.

Is racism akin to a societal addiction, in some ways? A harm that some don't acknowledge, some are just starting to acknowledge, some have been actively and consistently trying to change, and so on? Are there ways to talk with people which are particular to where they are in noticing and undoing internalized white supremacy culture (Okun, 2020) and other forms of domination? The question I asked in grad school no longer seemed quite so tangential. Of course, how we are received when we raise these topics also largely depends on who our students are, who we are, and how our students read us (Smith & Tuck, 2016).

Some years later, I began working with a colleague who shared a draft of a blog post about using TTM stages of change messaging for politicians who are hoping to educate the public regarding the global climate crisis and the importance of taking action to address it (Augustine, personal communication, 2022). Seeing that others were also thinking along these lines reawakened the conversation in me.

Complexities and Takeaways = Conclusion

Of course, another question is: when does "meeting someone where they are" become collusion with harm? When do we push through resistance and when do we not? A clinical setting is not the same as an everyday chat is not the same as a classroom. The colleague mentioned above recently presented the TTM to a group of consultants at a racial justice organization called *RE-Center* (Augustine, 2023). During that conversation it was noted, of course, that Stages of Change must be blended with other models in order to mitigate its shortcomings related to power analysis. Choosing multiple models creates what consultant Anyanwu (2023) playfully calls the "magic fairy dust" which helps move groups forward through growth processes, and to do so with a sense of shared humanity alongside an understanding of racialization.

With that in mind, I offer that a blend of UDL and Stages of Change may be useful to educators who want to work through race and racism, disability and ableism, and the ways that oppression shows up in our classrooms — as long as one maintains a solid critical lens and acknowledges the limits of one's own preparation (i.e., leads only to discussions one is truly prepared to hold). The main points to consider are: UDL centers pedagogy which includes multiple learning options to reach more people. The TTM reminds us that we must practice assessing in a consistent way, which then must be coupled with a practice of responding according to that assessment.

I also offer that there are a number of additional change models which might be useful in shaping pedagogy, even if that is not their origin. There are very direct scaled frameworks such as Janice Gassam Asare's *Decentering whiteness in the workplace: A guide for equity and inclusion* (2023). There are a number of general guides to inclusive teaching (Sathy & Hogan, 2023). There are smaller everyday practices such as learning and enacting microresistance (Cheung, Ganote, & Souza, 2016). There is the Critical Conversations Model, originally developed for Social Work classrooms (Gockel, O'Neill, & Pole, 2022).

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Each of these resources has a unique offering in terms of ways of addressing questions such as: How do we have these conversations responsibly in groups which are racially mixed? In a meditation and mindfulness teacher training I participate in, there is a racial awareness component to the curriculum and "peer group discussions" are divided into a Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) track, a white track, and a "third space" track (where I land). The content is geared to each group's needs (Brach & Kornfield, 2023). I see this structure through a universal design lens, even if that was not originally intended.

Every time we reshape our approach to change and learning, we open the opportunity to rewire neural pathways for ourselves and our students. The key in utilizing models is knowing your audience and selecting the ingredients that will best shape the path. Both UDL and TTM can help us craft our place in the coming waves of change. They are not the only options, not the only oceans swirling around us and within us. Unfortunately, then, this article is not a list of exact to-do's, but rather a lingering series of questions: which change model(s) do we incorporate in our pedagogy when and for what purpose? How does our selection and integration of change models impact nervous system activity for us and our students? How does an understanding of collective trauma and resilience impact how we approach anti-racism and anti-oppressive principles? How do we communicate the ways in which social change benefits everyone even if initiated for the sake of specific groups? I want to suggest we all keep holding these queries together, to boost community growth and keep glimmering our way forward from this wave of change into the next, towards a world that is truly livable.

From this metaphor of oceans, waves, water, we will next return to land. That is, to the earth. Next article: literal ground as pedagogy, and the reasons such a practice can benefit us and our students. ❖

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SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE

'No, It's Not Only a Movie' — Utilizing Film as a Teaching Tool in A Politicized Climate

Monika Raesch

The COVID-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter Movement were and still are two happenings that have had widespread impact on people's lives, and as a result, students' approaches and attitudes towards learning have changed in certain respects. Having taught film history for almost two decades, I never had students as interested in the social problem film as now. Following the study of genre during the Hollywood Studio System (1930–1948), when given a choice of studying a film on their own, selecting between always popular genres — such as horror — and less popular genres — including social problem — half the students selected to study an additional social problem film. Prior to the pandemic, the social problem option had always been an outlier.

At the same time, recent happenings in some U.S. states impact curricula, such as Florida's HB 1557, known as the Parental Rights in Education statute and informally referred to as the "Don't Say Gay Law." This has put teaching professionals in a challenging