Community Psychology Practice Competencies: Some perspectives from the UK

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State Manchester. She is the past Director of the Research Institute for Health and Social change at MMU. Over the years she has worked on collaborative action research projects, many of them in partnership with the voluntary sector or with public services for vulnerable people. This work has exposed what life is like for people living in marginalised areas and precarious lives, and has informed and influenced public policy. She works mostly now as a community activist, struggling like many to weave a way through the paradoxes and contradictions of ideologically driven policies that both enable and disable community groups, and to develop collaborations and networks around active ageing, social justice and alternative social policies for a thriving and prosperous future within environmental limits.

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Abstract

Within global north spaces, the outcomes-based approach to programme delivery in higher education and the focus on accountability in professional training has increasingly led to calls for competency frameworks to be developed. However, the paradigm underpinning competencies as applied in higher education needs further examination. This paper aims to consider the technicist roots of the concept and the translation of derivatives of behavioral economics to critical community psychology. We distinguish competences from competency, noting the potential risks of a fragmentary approach and the mismatch between individually-based assessments and the participatory and egalitarian principles espoused by community psychology.

Drawing from discussions and workshops with postgraduate students and community psychologists in the UK during early 2015, the contributions and distinctive nature of community psychology training in comparison with other disciplines will be highlighted. Proposals for alternative frameworks will be explored, emphasising the need for these to incorporate flexibility and diversity, and to be more holistic (rather than atomistic, as lists of competencies often are); with emphases on community-based rather than individualised principles and values. Consideration will also be given to capabilities that relate both to functions and to freedoms, and to more process-oriented qualities to enable ongoing development. The imperatives to foreground social justice and to enable reflexive thinking and action will be emphasised, leading to interactive and inclusive processes.

Introduction

Debates about the purpose of higher education (HE) and its intrinsic worthwhileness have been eclipsed by a number of drives. In the UK, the widening participation agenda has enabled greater opportunities for access to HE. At the same time, the neoliberal shift in the market positions students (and families) as consumers within a competitive market. The costs of investing in HE in the short term and the longer term encourage "choice" of degree to be considered and is sometimes narrowly related to future employability. Related to psychology as a choice, routes available for professional recognition in UK psychology do not extend to community – unlike clinical, educational, counselling, occupational, health, sport or forensic routes. Each of these trainings require postgraduate qualification and practice engagement around a set of competencies. However, the paradigm underpinning competencies as applied needs further examination. This paper aims to consider the technicist roots of the concept, and it critiques the translation of derivatives of behavioral economics to community psychology.

It is informative to first consider the philosophical perspectives that inform our teaching practices in relation to our students in community psychology. We draw from a number of particular traditions:

- Vygotsky's (1962, 1978) notions of learners' active roles in the construction of knowledge through the interaction of thought and language, highlighting that learning cannot be separated from the societal context in which it occurs;

- humanistic ideas about the provision of enabling environments in which learners need to experience positive input to enhance their self-confidence (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994),

impacting the creation of optimal learning (Entwistle, 2004);

- the building of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998; Lawthom, 2011), where the role of reflection is central to promoting greater student involvement and activity leading towards more critical thinking;

- and concepts from adult education (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005), highlighting the developmental transition of the majority of our students from learning that has been "other"-directed and more extrinsically motivated to becoming independent adult learners who are intrinsically motivated to learn material that is relevant to their lives and aspirations, both deepening their knowledge and understanding its applications by adapting to levels of greater autonomy.

Students learn best when they are interested in, and committed to, what they are learning (Entwistle & McCune, 2013). We thus need to engage them in reflection on their motives and decisions.

However, this focus on students must be firmly located within our societal contexts, since their learning is essentially socially rather than individually constructed (Vygotsky, 1978). Thus, we need to consider the balance of our focus on societal and individual needs, given the fundamental goal of critical community psychology (CCP), which is to create a more egalitarian society. Kagan, Burton, Duckett, Lawthom, and Siddique (2011) outline CCP values as: social justice, stewardship, and community (through collaborative construction, celebration of diversity, and collective potentials). Students need to be enabled to contribute to society and their future workplaces as critical and concerned thinkers, invested in making a difference and working for change in the structures that perpetuate social inequalities.

The learning environment is enabling when open communication is encouraged and relationships are based on mutual respect. This relates directly to the effects of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) that form, with a central focus on transformative learning for students. The learning community comprises educators (formally titled as lecturers) alongside students and community partners. If communities of practice are seen as aggregates of people who share doing, talking, beliefs, and values (i.e. practices), then participants learn through doing, becoming, and belonging (Lawthom, 2011). Reflective practice (Gibbs, 1988; Schon, 1983) plays an active role in enabling a different kind of learning where students are formatively supported and guided to gain insight into their activities and the subsequent consequences, feeding into explicitly encouraging students to develop their critical thinking (Halpern, 2013) and leading towards critical pedagogy (Giroux, 1997). Further discussions of this learning context may be found in Kagan, Lawthom, Siddiquee, Duckett, and Knowles (2007). A key feature is that our students learn by doing – they all work with a community partner on whatever change project that the partner identifies. The nature of the mechanisms that support this "doing," in terms of building and maintaining partnerships is thus at the core of the work. It is therefore necessary to link the material to the students' experiences, to encourage reflection that enhance students' understandings and connects theory to practice (Gibbs, 1988).

As the professionalization of HE has progressed in the past two decades, the requirements for educators to much more explicitly articulate what underpins course construction became important. This led to the development of ideas around "constructive alignment" (Biggs, 2003), where course design is informed by a holistic approach based upon linkages between learning outcomes, assessment approaches, and learning activities. In the conceptualization of courses and curricula,

the intended outcomes of students' learning are the starting point, aligning modes of teaching, interactions, and assessment tasks to these outcomes. Outcome statements thus "drive" the design and delivery of material and modes of learning. These developments need to be located in the era of increasingly neoliberal developments, both economic and social, influencing systems worldwide. The outcomes-based approach to programme delivery in HE and the focus on accountability in professional training increasingly led to calls for competency frameworks to be developed (in order to better supervise and monitor performance?). Whilst the outcomes-based approach was intended to promote a more "learner-centred" focus, it had the unintended consequences of systematising and contributing to more managerial oversight of practice.

McCowan (1998) notes that when we introduce curricula based on competencies (such as the SCRA list as outlined by Dalton & Wolfe, 2012) we may be unaware that such curriculum paradigms are based on philosophical orientations with their own implicit value structures that are not those of community psychology. McNeil (2009) suggests that there are four paradigmatic curricula frameworks:

1. humanistic – education should provide students with a personally satisfying educational experience that results in a liberating process;

2. social reconstructionist – the stress is on societal over individual needs, creating a more egalitarian society;

3. academic – emphasis is within the organised fields of study of academic disciplines; and

4. systemic – structured, rational processes are used to achieve goals demanded by policymakers

Competency training thus fits the systemic paradigm – technical, efficient, rational and objective.

The drive towards competencies in education derives from behavioral notions of skills acquisition. This movement first emerged in adult education in the USA (McLagan & Bedrick, 1983) to enhance economic competitiveness through the training of workers (extended to the UK through the framework for vocational qualifications). It therefore had a focus on training rather than education; an approach that stresses and enables measurement, comparison, and assessment of behaviors that lie above or below an invisible line of expert-defined acceptability. Of course, training in accuracy and proficiency is important in some aspects of some professions – we would not like to undergo surgery by someone who did not possess competency. However, in an aptly titled paper "Monkey see, monkey do," Talbot (2004) offers a critique of a pure competency training and education in medicine.

Considering the list of competencies developed for discussion jointly by the SCRA Council of Educational Programs and the Community Psychology Practice Council and published by Dalton & Wolfe (2012), we see the implied good intentions. However, there are risks of "buying into" a number of associated problems that do not cohere well with CCP principles and practice. The importance of context and situated knowledge is central here, since in the USA, community psychology is a recognised career track that students may choose. SCRA (2012) spell out and emphasise they are "NOT intended as standards for accrediting programs or licensing individuals. Instead they provide a common framework for discussion of the skills involved in community psychological practice and how those skill scan be learned" (p3). Whilst SCRA may not intend they be used for evaluation of accreditation standards, they will not be able to prevent this from happening. Given this, it is also unclear why there is an insistence on naming the process and learning achievements as competencies, which can only serve to confuse in a field where competencies are understood as something different. More importantly it plays into the

same thinking as competencies in other fields.

In addition, Dalton and Wolfe (2012) goes on to suggest that mastery of competencies is possible at different levels – exposure, experience, and expertise. This is an "expert" notion of the community psychologist and does not sit easily with the notions of us all as learners and who, in practice, combine our knowledge with that of our community partners. Thus, any expertise to emerge is via transactions and relationships, not through the embodied competence of the community psychologist. In addition, Fryer and Laing (2008) remind us of the context-specific nature of the ways in which we work, and how these might evolve. They emphasise the central need for praxis: where the different constituencies' knowledge constructions and claims are assessed against a critical interrogation of whose interests are being served (by all parties) in the "pursuit of emancipatory process and just outcomes" (p. 12) to contest institutional oppression.

Although there is a clear history in competency-based training (McCowan, 1999), in the current political and economic context, such lists take on a different meaning. For example, with competence comes incompetence, static notions that contain implications about individual ability or lack of it. Competencies as checklists imagine the ability as consistently there or not – rather than being present in particular contexts and situations.

Notions of competencies are part of the neoliberal agenda referred to earlier: they emerge from the deconstruction and commodification of practice into units of behavior that can be measured, assessed, and if, necessary, found wanting. A competency approach reduces learning to blocks of proficiency and feeds into an alienated engagement with learning. Learning can be erroneously understood as a set of categories or blocks, rather than as an ongoing process. Competencies become tick boxes and students learn only as much as is necessary to gain that tick. For

example, in the UK, a competencies framework for professional psychologists was developed, against which the Health and Care Professions Council assess both training courses and individuals as fit and competent to practice. Such practices risk leading to the fragmenting of practice, contrasting with CCP aims to be holistic (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010), and may result in expediency rather than keeping the focus on participatory work towards social justice.

We thus need to ask the following questions:

- Who is this assessment for?
- Why is it necessary?

The answer to the first is likely to be for employers, professional bodies, universities, even students. In response to the second, we feel that its purpose is essentially to underpin social competition, to assert expertise and superiority as in "I am more competent than you"; "this profession is more competent than that"; "this worker is more competent than the other"; "this university is more competent than those." These claims are inextricably linked to market worth and the neoliberal agenda. Moreover, the results will be individually-based assessments rather than the collaborative co-constructions inherent in the egalitarian values to which CCP aspires.

In some spheres, a distinction is made between competenc*ies*, which are observable individually-focussed behavioral measures, and competenc*es* that focus more on areas of functioning and goal attainment and are thus less reductionist (Winterton, Le Deist & Stringfellow, 2005). These authors emphasise the interaction between people's capacity to learn and situational opportunities to learn, so they view learning as more socially-constructed. They note that developing knowledge (know-what) and operationalising knowledge (know-how) are all prerequisites to developing competence and other social and attitudinal capacities. However, because there is

widespread confusion of the two terms, perhaps it is preferable to avoid them altogether?

The questions raised above about the need for, terminology related to, and specific suggestions in the list prepared for SCRA (Dalton & Wolfe, 2012) are considered below, with reference to discussions that took place in three different UK contexts in 2014-15. In the three examples below, the opinions of various students and community psychologists are presented; both responding to the competencies debate as well as highlighting the contributions and distinctive nature of community psychology training.

Views expressed in three different UK contexts

Discussion in Manchester 2015

A discussion about the competencies debate was convened in March, 2015 in Manchester UK by the second author, then chair of the British Psychological Society (BPS) Community Psychology Section. It was attended by 16 people from the following groupings: community practitioners (with graduate degrees in CP), postgraduate students doing CP research though not necessarily with a psychology background, and academic staff members from different backgrounds but all with an interest in community psychology and social change. The academics present varied from novice to more experienced individuals.

After a briefing that provided background information to the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations standing committee for Community Psychology and the origins of the discussions in CP, an open discussion ensued. Concerns were expressed about the technical nature of the concept of competencies:

1. that they derive from behavioral economics and that because they are judgements of individuals' performance and outputs (from a role management perspective), they

are often static levels of skill attainment, rather than reflecting the dynamic and flexible nature of the applications of skills;

2. they are often reified once they have been established, thus lacking the flexibility needed in CCP work; and they may lead to checklist-based judgements being made, often in top-down evaluations;

3. they are thus designed with employers' interests in mind rather than from the perspectives of the person or community partners;

4. they may denote a form of professional elitism that is antithetical to participatory CCP principles.

However, a number of more recent graduates spoke positively about what they had gained from their university-based Master's program studies, and how they recognise that their contributions to their workplaces are distinctive compared to those from other disciplinary backgrounds. One of the noteworthy features of CCP is its more inter/trans-disciplinary nature, especially compared to "mainstream" psychology. Another is the valuing of close collaboration and the building of partnerships that enables theory to be applied in practice in community settings. Furthermore, the encouragement of reflection and reflexivity leads to graduates valuing the deepening of insights and challenging of labels that CP promotes. It is the combination of the articulation of values, coupled with fields of interdisciplinary knowledge that underpin the key objectives and strategies involved for achieving social change, which in turn determine the unique skills sets of CCP practitioners, understood within particular social contexts and anchored by reflexivity .

All those present at the meeting agreed that it is important that CCP is taught in universities, given its critical and research-based approach. We acknowledge that it is important for graduates to be able to articulate what CCP is about, and that there

are pressures in HE to use competence frameworks (perhaps more broadly capability-based and outcome-focused descriptors) in programme validations. These descriptions need to incorporate flexibility and diversity, and to be more holistic (rather than atomistic, as lists of competencies often are); with emphases on community-based rather than individualised principles and values.

Two Masters level student cohorts' responses to the SCRA list:

Foundational principles

1) Ecological Perspectives;

2) Empowerment;

3) Sociocultural and Cross-Cultural Competence;
4) Community Inclusion and Partnership;

5) Ethical, Reflective Practice

Community programme development and management

6) Programme Development, Implementation and Management;
7) Prevention and Health Promotion

Community and organizational capacity building

8) Community Leadership and Mentoring;

9) Small and Large Group Processes;

10) Resource Development;

11) Consultation and Organizational Development

Community and social change

12) Collaboration and Coalition Development;

13) Community Development;

14) Community Organizing and Community Advocacy;

15) Public Policy Analysis, Development and Advocacy;

16) Information Dissemination and Building Public Awareness

Community research

17) Participatory Community Research;

18) Programme Evaluation

Table 1: SCRA draft Community Psychology Competencies (Dalton & Wolfe, 2012)

These are some comments about the above list, drawn from discussions by the first author with two cohorts of UK students (2014 & 2015) who considered these as a means of assessing their CCP-related volunteering work.

1) The need for the sub-headings was questioned, since they seem to

strive to distinguish elements that might be continuous with each other and encourage a "tick-box" approach.

2) The separation of some of the items appears artificial, since they are often interlinked in practice, especially if we are espousing "participatory practice"! (for example, how is "Programme Development …" different from "Community Development" and how is "Information dissemination and building public awareness" separate from "Participatory research" and "Programme evaluation"?).

3) The 18 listed competencies seem to be conflating different cognitive "operations" (for want of a better word – perhaps they are also grammatically of different "orders"?). In the earlier days of the "constructive alignment" movement that specified learning outcomes and the links of those to module content in HE, distinctions were made between learning for "knowledge," learning of "skills" and the development and interrogation of underpinning "values." It seems that these are being mixed in the above list. For example, when applied to numbers 1 – 5 in the list, "knowledge" might incorporate understanding of theories behind ecological approaches, aspects of the literature related to power, awareness of the need to be inclusive and to appreciate diversity, insights into the evidence to promote partnership-working, and being able to articulate ethical considerations or something of the constructs that underpin reflective practice. However, how does one a) turn this knowledge into skills that can be evaluated as "competencies" when translated into action; or b) measure in any form of accuracy the way that these are actually implemented in practice? Also, why does number 3 list the word "competence"?

4) By the very nature of a number of the elements listed, there is an implicit "expert"-related approach implied. This is an "interventionist" attitude of a "professional," implying a top-down or "outside-in" positioning, potentially encouraging a patronising stance related to having more power and imposing and managing programmes from the outside.

5) Related to the previous point, if we do move to "operationalise" some of the elements listed, what gives us the right to think that we can "empower" or "develop" anyone or any group of people? Certainly, we need to very carefully interrogate the operation of aspects of power in great depth, since there are so many aspects of our own "power" that are influential without our necessarily being aware of these (especially notions of various sorts of privilege that we take for granted); but we cannot presume to "empower" others (though we would hope that this might be an effect of collaborative conscientization and partnership-working towards greater advocacy).

Email interaction with recently qualified PhD student in the transition to lecturer status

To complement the discussions above, the fourth author was a more recent CCP PhD graduate who had reflected on his training when he was asked to articulate what he believed his training had provided. This was in the context of applying for membership of the BPS's Division of Researchers and Teachers in Psychology (DARTP), following their framework of evidence that he needed to provide.

<u>Applying to be a chartered psychologist and relating competencies to community psychology</u>

Chartered membership of the BPS in the UK is considered to be the "gold standard." This standard expects psychologists who have chartership status to have the highest standard of psychological knowledge and expertise, demonstrating high ethical standards of practice, teaching, and research. To become a "chartered psychologist" there are two specific routes for eligibility, with slight differences for UK and non-UK applicants. Route one (also known as the "traditional" route) is for applicants who graduate from an accredited UK undergraduate honors degree, which provides the foundation for Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC). In addition, the applicant would then have achieved a BPS accredited postgraduate qualification and training in clinical, educational, counselling, health, occupational, or sport psychology, or a research doctorate in psychology. Whilst the BPS have a community psychology section, community psychology does not have the same accredited status as the aforementioned streams of psychology. Instead, route two is the more realistic option to gain chartership if you have a community psychology background. Following this route, you need to provide evidence of having met the criteria for GBC during your undergraduate honors degree, and having gained appropriate postgraduate knowledge with training and experience of teaching psychology. Each application in this route is assessed individually through documented evidence in four categories (as noted below) along with references from two chartered psychologists.

Some examples from a successful application for chartership are provided below, with the evidence strongly rooted in community psychology practice and theory that had been undertaken:

Core competency 1 – Transferable skills
1. An abstract was provided from a successful PhD, which was a community psychology study. The title of the PhD referred to community psychology specifically: "Confessions of a community psychologist: the tale of a group of men challenging the perceptions of learning difficulties and health promotion" (Richards, 2015).

2. An explanation was provided arguing that by undertaking a PhD in community psychology, transferable skills were developed and enhanced. For example, the study applied different methodological approaches in that it was autoethnographic, participative, and reflexive, and ethical implications were considered.

Core competency 2 – Professional attributes
1. Two examples were provided of successful grant applications relating to community psychology orientated work, including a BPS Public Engagement Grant in 2013, which led to the development of eight radio shows in the local community with adults with learning disabilities.

2. A list was provided of partner organizations with which volunteering occurred. This involved being engaged in community psychology work, including work done with public and private sector organizations, with young offenders, people with learning disabilities, and other marginalised groups.

3. The training undertaken with organizations within the community was highlighted, both as a volunteer and paid worker, including person centred training, professional boundaries, and child/adult safeguarding.

4. Evidence was provided of committee work within the BPS, such as that in the community psychology section, and examples of working with colleagues from other universities.

5. Evidence of work on a post-graduate teaching certificate, which was of importance because this is a teaching route to chartership status.

Core competency 3 – Professional knowledge
1. A vignette described how knowledge and understanding of psychology was applied to teaching at university level, using

participatory approaches in work in the community.

2. Certified evidence was provided relating to a BPS accredited psychology course that had been completed, and explanations were provided of teaching on BPS accredited courses.

Core competency 4 – Professional skills
1. A list was provided of the 30+ international and national conferences, and similar events, where work had been presented relating to experiences working in the community, and where community psychological research had been undertaken.

2. A publication list was provided, highlighting publications that discuss community psychology.

This successful application for BPS chartership highlights that community psychological theory and practice can be related to the broader core competencies set out by the BPS.

Discussion

The three accounts above illustrate the nuances that need consideration in relation to the competencies debate. We are concerned about competencies when they are converted into lists by authoritative bodies, becoming atomistic and risking a prescriptive approach (even if that is not the intention). The third account provides an example of a more evidence-driven account of competence development, although it is still driven by the individual's perspective rather than including accounts of community partners (though these were incorporated in some of the publications and the dissertation). In the discussion that follows, we summarise the critiques of the SCRA list of competencies and then make suggestions for more holistic and community-based considerations that are more interactive and inclusive, with social justice as a key element.

The SCRA competencies list (Dalton & Wolfe, 2012) has been critiqued because

- It appears "top-down" rather than emergent from collaboration with community partners, where we would want to know what is valued by the very people with whom we build various forms of partnership, especially in initiatives that have been judged by the people themselves to have been "successful" in meeting needs, solving problems or making some other progress towards change?

- A number of the 18 competencies are difficult to measure/assess (for example, how does one assess "empowerment"; "ecological perspectives"; "sociocultural or cross-cultural competence"; "community inclusion"; and "small and large group processes"?). We therefore need to consider whether these are really competencies?

- This competency-based approach fits a technicist "training" rather than a values-based "educational" framework (which would be far more discursive and rooted in ethics and philosophy); moving from a way of "doing" to a way of "being" (Dzjidic, Breen & Bishop, 2013).

- Competencies emphasise an individual focus: any sort of (in)competency evaluation implies competition (and deficits) rather than recognising assets and strengths (a core aspect of community psychology principles). Such lists do not allow for context-specificity and the adaptations of skills that are necessary in the complex diversity of interpersonal interactions.

- Who does the evaluation? Surely the best evaluation needs to be from our partners; but we also need to ask what the benefits are for them to be bothered with this, when they might often have much more pressing issues that need their energies?

We argue that we need proposals for alternative frameworks, emphasising flexibility and diversity, with emphases on community-based rather than individualised values. Thus, a possible way to build a framework is for students to critically reflect upon and analyse the ways in which the values of social justice, stewardship, and community (or solidarity) underpin their understanding and practice. Regular reflexive group discussions based upon the exploration of these values enable trainees to articulate the application of these.

Although Nelson and Prilleltensky (2010) list the value of social justice along with self-determination and participation, Kagan et al. (2011) elevate it to be the first of three central values in CCP. Social justice is seen to be expressed in working for fairer allocation of resources, where equitable structures and processes enable people to live in peace, to have greater control and agency, and to be protected by legal rights. Thus, CCP practitioners are concerned with social influence and political power and the impacts of these on individuals, advocating for non-discriminatory practice. This value category would thus include another of Nelson and Prilleltensky's values: that of "accountability to oppressed groups" (p.35).

Kagan and colleagues (2011) describe the value of "stewardship" as the second core CCP value. Stewardship is not regularly discussed within the field of community psychology, and is more generally found in ecological sciences. However, community psychologists are increasingly attending to this theme by taking on issues related to the environment and global climate change (see for example the special section on "Community Psychology and Global Climate Change," edited by Riemer & Reich, 2011). Stewardship, is the duty to think about and look after the planet that we all share, and to "do things as right as we can" (Kagan, et al., 2011, p. 38). This value frames critical community psychologists' core responsibilities to:

a) look after our world and the people in it,

b) enable people to make a contribution to their world and gain a sense of belonging,

c) not to waste things, lives or time, and finally

d) think long term, and make things last longer than any one of us.

Each of these duties could be reflected in our praxis. Stewardship therefore should be reflected in how we engage with communities and research. This value would certainly be difficult to operationalize as an individual level competency, although all actions can be assessed as to the degree to which they reflect this value; indeed, what is the point of values if not to direct action?

The third core CCP value (Kagan et al., 2011) is "community" expressed through CCP practice in the "collaborative construction of better lives, better societies" (p.38). Thus, as an abstract noun, community articulates people's hopes for acceptance, inclusion, tolerance and commitment to each other; but also recognises the need for balance between the "bonding" and "bridging" functions (Putnam, 2000) of building both strong communities and encouraging openness to others. This value includes the work of CCP practitioners, in solidarity with those who are marginalised or oppressed in some way(s), to accompany people "in their quest for liberation and well-being" (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010, p.26). This encourages people's expressions of their potentials but also acknowledges and works constructively where there are individual and collective weaknesses, tensions or conflicts.

Further, as both teachers and students, we enter an explicitly politicised educational environment where values, ethics, and moral positions are drawn out and discussed in connection with socially sensitive issues (such as disabilism, heterosexism, racism, sexism and so on).

This often involves us as teachers exercising:

> ... forms of intellectual and pedagogic practice that attempt to insert teaching and learning directly into the political sphere by arguing that schooling represents both a struggle for meaning and a struggle over power relations ... whose intellectual practices are necessary grounded in forms of moral and ethical concern for the suffering and struggles of the disadvantaged and oppressed (Tierney & Rhoads, 1993, p. 335).

This politicization of the learning environment happens both in the classroom but also, often more deeply, in the community settings where we ask students to undertake placements. We therefore need to consider ways of illustrating these issues through deeply reflexive practices and accounts based upon a foundation of the pedagogical values explored in the first part of this article, including respect, equality, reciprocity, participation, and inclusion that enable the incorporation of different forms of knowledge. Akhurst, Solomon, Mitchell and van der Riet (2016) illustrate the way in which these values and their expression are developed through community-based learning and reflective practice, through the progression of students' learning from undergraduate to postgraduate programs.

Dzjidic et al. (2013) emphasise a value ethic that draws from the reflexivity of the community psychologist. Thus, we return to the focus on developing an orientation that fosters skills development through a process of reflective learning through action – a way of being, not a way of doing, where the focus is on "iterative-generative reflective practice and being attuned to underlying world-views and values, which then enables [them] to be receptive and responsive to the contextual requirements of the social settings in which we engage" (p 7). This implies the tolerance of ambiguity, to function in complex settings where

uncertainty predominates, mediating between different elements of a system with deep sensitivities to power as it functions through people in different roles.

It is thus difficult to agree what behavioral skills would be required by community psychologists. Certainly all require a range of interpersonal skills, but these are not unique to community psychologists. From work as divergent as nursing and urban regeneration Kagan has suggested (2007; and Kagan & Evans 1995) that interpersonal performance is highly dependent on the context – physical, organizational, historic, interaction and environmental – and that proficiency does not reside in the individual. It is also important to distinguish "single-loop" learning, obtaining knowledge to solve specific problems based on existing premises, and "double-loop" learning that leads to establishing new premises such as mental models and perspectives (Winterton, LeDeist, & Stringfellow 2005). This appears to be a useful way to move away from the behavioral to the contextual. Winterton et al. (2005) also suggest that interpretative approaches, derived from phenomenology, see competence not as a duality but as the individual and the activities forming one entity through people's experience. Thus, again emphasising the interactive social dimensions over the individually-located.

Elsewhere too we have urged an approach to life skills for intellectually disabled people that goes beyond embodied competence to capability. This recognises the fact that other people's behavior, the construction of social settings and professionals and organizations in which they are embedded, and even the policies that promote assistance and integrated living have direct impact on people's capabilities for living fulfilling lives (Burton and Kagan, 1995). The distinction between competence and capability is one that resonates with Sen's (1993) notions of capability (Walker & Unterhalter, 2007) recognising that freedoms are needed and linked to the development of capabilities.

Thus we suggest that all of the above need to be able to be taken into account in assessing community psychologists' capabilities (if we are to do this at all!). Perhaps considerations need to be given to the development of portfolios of evidence (especially including community partners' voices) and to more holistic frameworks, with emphases on community-based rather than individualised principles and values.

We therefore conclude that further discussion is needed about capabilities that relate both to functions and to freedoms (drawing on the work of Sen, 1993; and Nussbaum, 2011). This approach would imply more process-oriented qualities, enabling ongoing development in a framework rooted in CCP principles based on social justice, enabling reflexive thinking and action, and outcomes that are interactive and inclusive processes. Flexibility needs to be built in, to enable contextual sensitivity, innovation, and improvisation.

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