Free Thinker Institute – The Philosophy Café (BMUIN)

The Whole Concept of Community Education

Conversation Ship on the Sea of Detail: Where are we Heading?



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Free Thinker Institute (New York, NYS, USA)

The Philosophy Café, Brisbane, Qld, AU
Brisbane Meetup Intellectual Network (BMUIN)

The Whole Concept of Community Education: Where are we Heading?

Neville Buch, Ph.D., MPHA (Qld)
Wednesday, April 13, 2022



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SUMMARY

1. Format

A lesson format, using 'terms' of community education to lay down the groundwork in understanding what 'community education' is, and what it can be for the Free Thinker Institute. The teacher will walk through each term on a PowerPoint presentation, each term in order, so as to build one from the other. Pauses taken after the introduction of each term to allow participants to question or make specific comments.

2. <u>Description of topic</u>

The sector which is described as 'community education' is not well defined or described in the literature. Often organisations are doing community education without knowing it, and without knowing the full potential. As a historian, I could describe the past practices of community education, however, with the lack of information, it seems important to start with the basic vocabulary of the sector. The lesson is a walkthrough of terms which describes the practises of community education.

3. Introducing the host (Dr Neville Buch)

Dr Neville Buch is an expert on histories and historiography of big belief and doubt, within the scope of Queensland intellectual history. He has worked as higher education policy researcher for the Vice-Chancellor, Professors Roy Webb, Glyn Davis, Kwong Lee Dow, and Alan Gilbert, along with work for Chancellors, Mr Ian Renard, and Sir Edward Woodward (1998-2008). He has been a Q ANZAC Fellow at the State Library of Queensland (2015-2016). He has recently published on the influence of Charles Strong in Queensland.



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About the Author

Dr Buch have been a scholar in studies in religion and Australian-American intellectual history for 41 years, and I have been a disciplined philosopher for 20 years more or less. I am a community participatory teacher for The Philosophy Café Brisbane Meet Up, and the Brisbane Meetup Intellectual Network. Recently, I have been researching Freethought, Rationalism, Humanism, Unitarian-Universalism, during the 20th century.



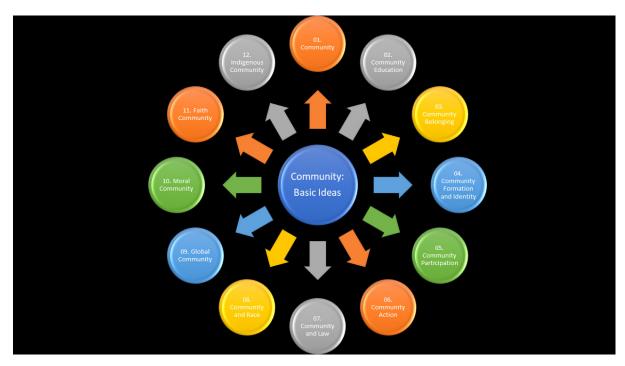
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TERMS OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION

For Discussion

1. COMMUNITY



The basic idea of community education is community. Frances Pestello et al (1996) relates the concept of community to the practice of sociology, offering for undergraduate education, a community base model that employs the concept of citizen-scholar. The literature is scant for full case studies for these discussions of modern urbanisation and community development. One of the best studies is from Jon Lawrence (2019) on the postwar shift from the East End in London to the new satellite suburbanised towns of the 1960s.

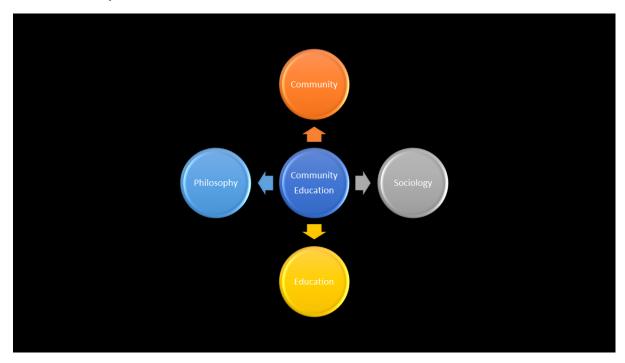


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Basic Ideas

02. Community Education



Community education is a public service, substantially (Buch, 2022). A global conversation needs to open up on the community education, and include the many visions of community education, and which would embrace differences.



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03. Community Belonging



Issues of belonging and identity are central, and usually are colourfully seen in community protests. Kim de Rijke (2012) looks at the fluid network of people and approaches the notion of community identity as the symbolic construction of similarity, for one protest movement in opposition to the Queensland State Government proposal to build the Traveston Crossing Dam on the Mary River in southeast Queensland, Australia. It forged an unusual alliance of farmers, environmentalists, urban retirees, some Aboriginal people and others.



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04. Community Formation and Identity



The formation and identity of a community is not straightforward. One more recent historical development is the global LGBT community (Robinson, 2010).



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05. Community Participation



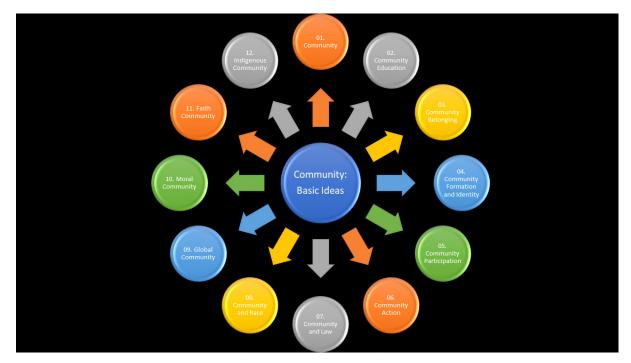
Don Dawson (1982) argues that the modern reproductive role of education lies in Gramsci's notion of 'hegemony' but that a counter-hegemonic momentum can be gain through community participation, a phrase which was becoming popular in the 1980s. Since then, various models have been developed to measure community participation (a recent example, Dmitry Khodyakov, et al, 2013).



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06. Community Action



Originally, Willis A. Sutton, Jr. and Jiri Kolaja (1960) drew out several questions to identify the measure of community action:

- 1: Is the action relevant to problems related to or derived from common-use of the particular area by permanently residing families?
- 2: If yes, is the action, routine or emergent?
- 3: Are symbols of collective reference for the locality used in the action?
- 4: Are basic community roles involved?

The questions and answer drill down from there.



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07. Community and Law



David Engel (1987), in relation to defining community, and interpreting the social, cultural, and economic transformations, argues that 'time' should be regarded as a socially constructed phenomenon, rather than as a universal constant and a baseline against which variations in behaviour can be measured. These become new principles in understanding the relationship between community and 'law', physical laws, and legislated laws.



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08. Community and Race



Communities, more often than not, are defined in racial terms. The literature struggles to articulate a multi-racial *society* as community. Australian social historians have, probably, done the most in exploring the nuances in race relations and community relations. A good example is Mei-Fen Kuo and John Fitzgerald (2016) on the topic of Chinese Students in White Australia: State, Community, and Individual Responses to the Student Visa Program, 1920-25.



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09. Global Community



Since the 1990s the dynamics on race, gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity has greatly changed within the concept of community relations. Matther Rofe (2003) states "Globalisation has significantly altered the scale at which social structures are organised and experienced. The erosion of spatial boundaries has liberated social experience from the constraints of the local."

Australian historians, such Irmline Veit-Brause (2006), have thought much on the "Global Community of Historians," and the integration of global knowledge into regional and local perspectives



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10. Moral Community



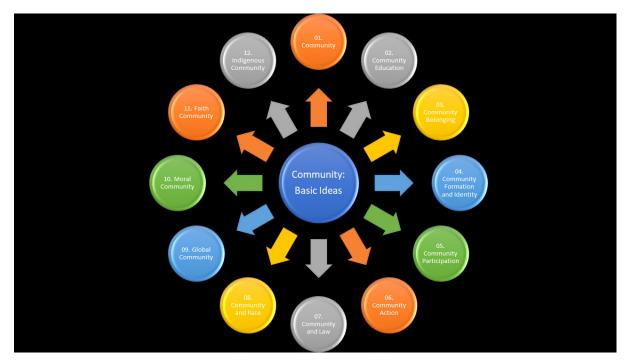
Often at the popular level, fear plays out on the impacts of globalisation, and there have been legitimate major concerns since 1989, however, the fear usually translates as knee-jerk moralism. There are better perspectives in the field of ethics, and John McNeill (1982) points to the relationship between hip of moral education and the community of commitment on which programs of moral education. depend. The community of commitment explicated in terms of agreements of concept, judgment, and practice. Much of the same and adjunct concepts are explored in the field of studies in religion (Richard, A., Bell, D., & Carlson, J., 2000, is a good example for ideas on individual religiosity and moral community, for the context of drug user treatment).



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11. Faith Community



Conversations on community, values, and moral/ethical principles usually turn to the concept of 'faith community.' The consensus among scholar is that too often the term is ill-defined, but many working definitions are offered. The best efforts are contextual rather than university, and Van Loon (1998) offers one in the Faith Community Nursing Programs in Australia.



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12. Indigenous Community



Foremost, in the last decade, discussions on religion, spirituality, and community have been concerned with indigenous perspectives. In Australia, it is within the umbrella term, 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' (ATSI), but in the last five years there has been an acknowledgement and practice for tribal names. There are large data sources (Davidson, et al,1984) built up over for some decades on indigenous community, however, it has only been the last decade where there has been an depth of understanding of what those community mean for the larger social fabric of the country.



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Multi-Disciplinary Characteristics

01. Engagement



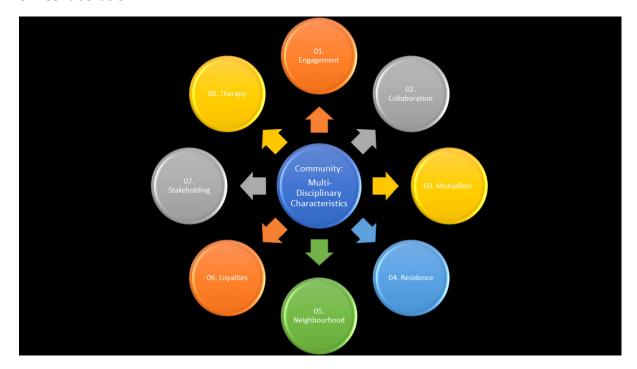
Whatever the community, the understanding has come down the stories of locals and their imagining of locality (Abbott, L., & Grayson, R. S. 2011). In the last decade we see programs in public history (Fenn, John., et al, 2015), "whereby approaches to arts and culture participation can inform ideas of sustainability and community development by offering opportunities for neighborhoods to engage in self- definition through the process of cultural mapping." As education, it is known, as Community Engagement Learning Exchange (Panke, S., & Stephens, J., 2018), which about civic engagement that fosters a true learning exchange over promoting one's own ideas.



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02. Collaboration



This does require collaboration, but there have been questions about the sustainability of such collaboration when commercial issues impinge (Jamal, T., Taillon, J., & Dredge, D., 2011).



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03. Mutualism



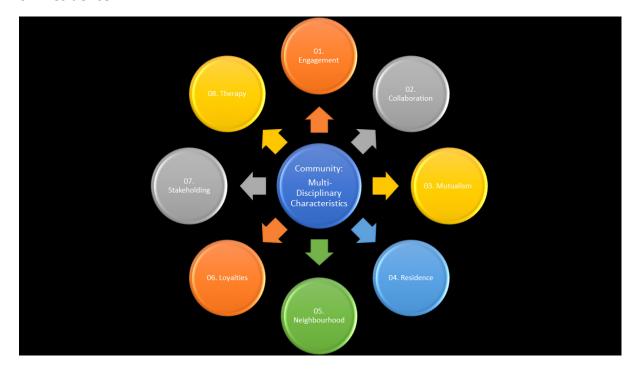
Universities today are big businesses, and the "University-community partnerships can encounter problems because of differences between the two sides in perception, values, goals, and available resources, among other issues." (Mayfield, L., & Lucas, E. P., 2000). It is a challenge for different players, different communities, to find mutual awareness and respect.



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04. Residence



Communities are still about residency, even with all the changes on the global wireless/wired fronts. It is not simply nostalgia, but a matter of local histories(John Lack 1980) which keep large cities functioning.



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05. Neighbourhood



The concept of neighbourhoods and who are our neighbours (Gwenda Tavan, 1997) is critically in this regard. The concept ties together the issue of race/ethnicity and the ideal of the modern suburb. The great fear is that persons are lost in impersonal suburban landscapes. Functioning neighbourhoods is the only solution, to such soulless isolation.



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06. Loyalties



What often stops neighbourhoods from happening (Bradley Bowen, 2000) in the suburban sprawl are the sense of shifting community loyalties. In the early20th century, its conversations were expressed in the changing class characteristics and industrial allegiances within a local community, and that conversation has not changed for the last century.



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07. Stakeholding



The conversations which have broken the sense of community are those which employed the concepts of 'stakeholding' and 'stakeholders' (Frerichs, L. et al 2017). The clear inferences from this corporatist language are that some persons have a stake in the competitive environment, and others do not and are excluded from the community. It is an affront to the public conception of community.



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08. Therapy



Those who are marginalised, excluded from mainstream communities, in late capitalism, often end up as members of therapeutic communities (Fischmann, V. 1968). Exclusion has medical and psychological consequences, which often leads to crime, alcohol and drug abuse, and anti-social behaviour. The 'rebel' finds a misfunctioning community through 'the cause.'



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2. EDUCATION

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01. Community-Based Learning



John Dewey, philosophically, provide a community-based learning approach (Bruce, B. C., & Bloch, N., 2013), whereby all, included the marginalised and the 'rebels with a cause,' can hope for participation in a community.



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02. Constructivist Learning Community



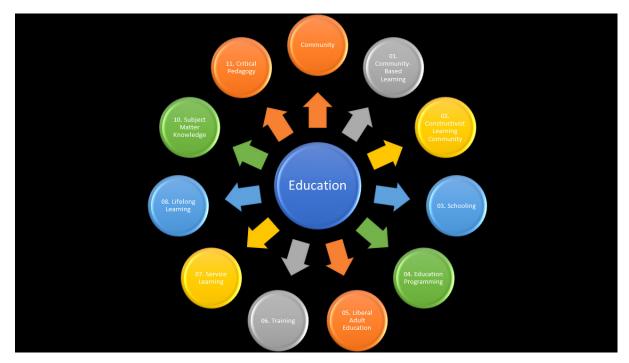
At the basis of this philosophy is a model of a constructivist learning community (Stephen White, 2002). It is constructivist because it does hold to a pre-existing reality that stops social change for progress and improvement. It is learning, for that is the key concept. It is community in that there is sustainable participation from its members.



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03. Schooling



This is the break from the old and traditional educational theories of schooling and the theories which have been put into practice from Dewey, and since into other models (Goldstein, J., 1973). The ancient concept of school laid down the foundation for our understanding of education, however, the modern concept as it developed in the nineteenth century, has been very problematic for local communities (Malcolm Vick, 1992).



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04. Education Programming



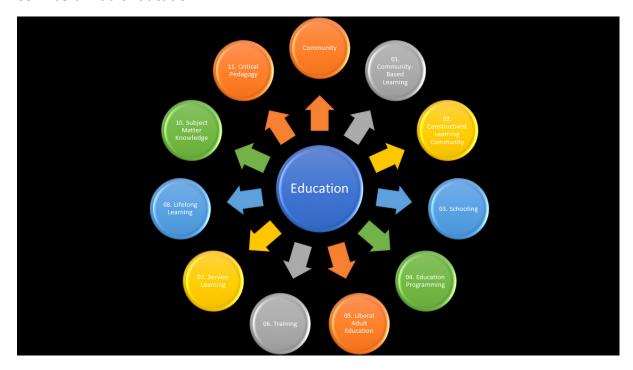
In the late 20th century much of this thinking, has moved into the idea of educational programming (increasing digital and remote). There was hope that the concept of promoting intergenerational cooperation could be a means for addressing community planning issues, and much attention has been on an effective community participation program model (Kaplan, M. 1994). However, these have been old questions and revised answers which go back to the early days of the Workers' Education Association and their course programs (Denis Binnion, 1997).



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05. Liberal Adult Education



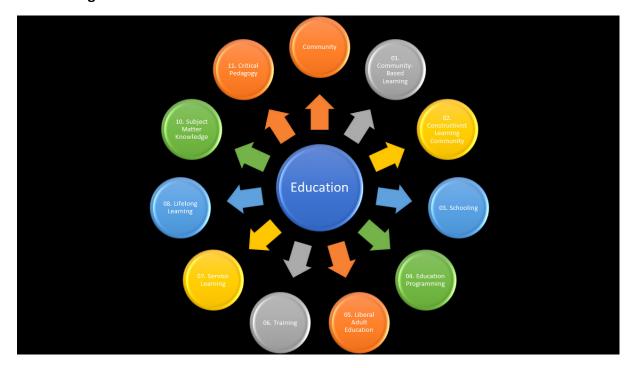
A key concept in adult education has been the idea of 'liberal adult education' (George Shipp and Mike Newman, 1997), the liberty for adults to take education in any direction.



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06. Training



This is opposite to the concept of training, where training is 'fit-for-purpose.' (Fenn, J. et al, 2015)



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07. Service Learning



Governments in the western world, over the last 30 years, have been pushing for 'service learning to gain lift in the job market, but it is not without problems (Marullo, S., Moayedi, R., & Cooke, D. 2009). Answers appear to be avoid in questions on how exactly innovative is service learning, and how community-based are 'the Cross-Institutional Collaborations' for 'Community-Based Research.' The great danger we have been facing is the double-speaking for noble ideas.



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08. Lifelong Learning



The danger in contemporary curriculum is 'atomizing' the human being. Lifelong learning would be a better way than service learning, but even here there is an need for critical evaluation of the curriculum. "There is the need for an inter-disciplinary approach as well as for balance between the various components of the curriculum. The concept of global, lifelong education has implications for evaluation: as the curriculum, evaluation should be interdisciplinary and aim at ascertaining the effect of the educational process on the whole personality..., his or her social behaviour and ability to integrate into the community, rather than the attainment of limited instructional cognitive goals." (Ochs, R. 1975).

Number 9?



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10. Subject Matter Knowledge



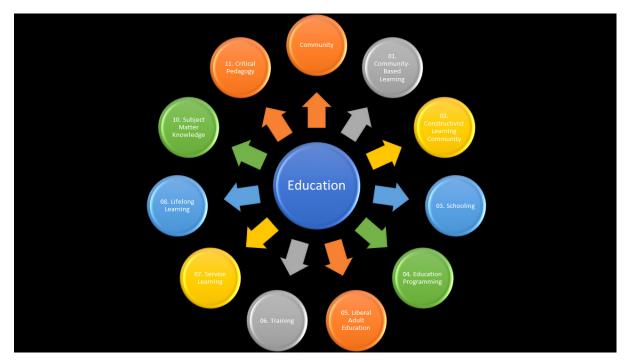
In these evaluative debates, too often some fool will try to force a choice between content and process. The concept of pedagogic content knowledge (McEwan, H., & Bull, B. 1991) has been well explored by Dewey's account of subject matter knowledge, but recent critiques does not see any justified division in subject matter between scholarly and pedagogic forms. There are compatibilist solutions between content, subject, and process.



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11. Critical Pedagogy



In the last 30 years critical pedagogy (Braa, D., & Callero, P. 2006) has come to the fore, and has been met with the reactionary 'back-to-basics' movement. The former has had the advantage, and that advantage is not simply political as conservatives would have it. The advantage is that critical pedagogy has delivered classroom praxis, and the 'back-to-basics' cannot equally deliver. The evidence is in the critical thinking movement and social advantages that appears in such education.



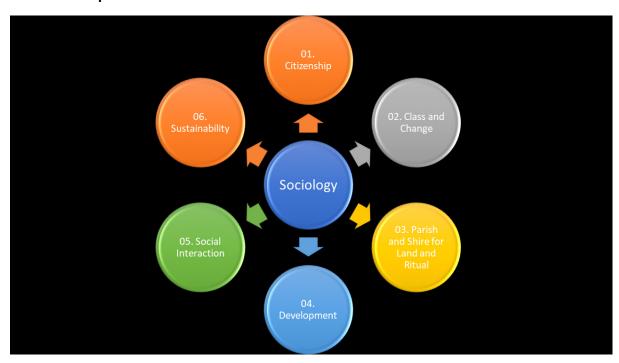
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3. SOCIOLOGY

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01. Citizenship



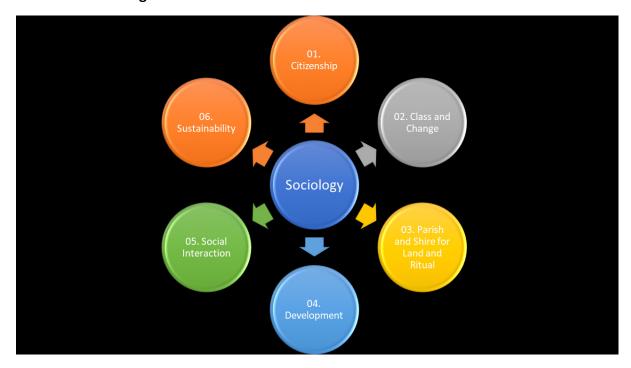
The conservative agenda has always been about national citizenship. Still in these days of the digital humanities these ideas are important for 'citizen scholars' (Pilkington, O.A. 2021).



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02. Class and Change



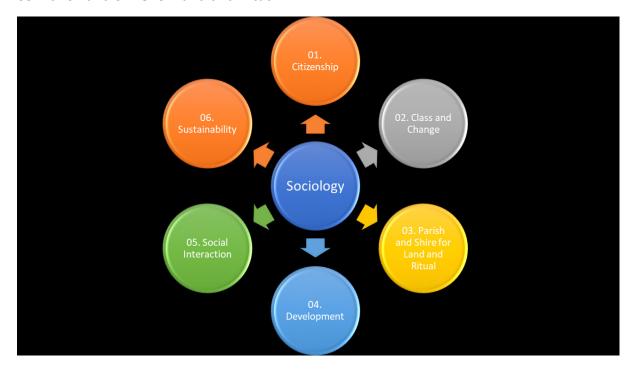
The idea of class has not disappeared with the importance of education for citizen formation (Bowen, Bradley 1999). The relationship between community and class keeps shifting, but the factors do not disappear from the contemporary sociology.



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03. Parish and Shire for Land and Ritual



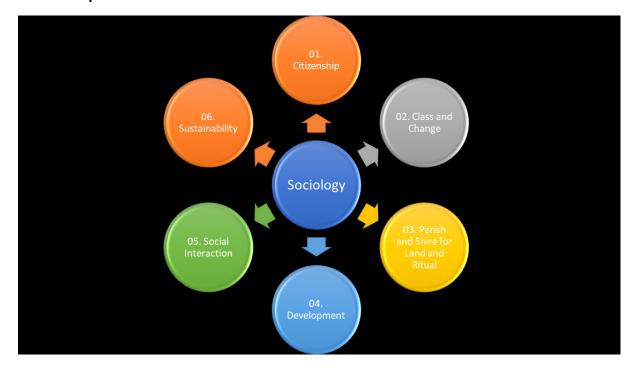
This is because the language is deeply and in longitude historical (Michaelson, E. J., & Goldschmidt, W., 1976). In the past communities were thought of as parishes and shires, and these terms are both social in ritual, and economic in the valuation of land. Those factors are, with the concept of labour, the basis for our ideas of class.



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04. Development



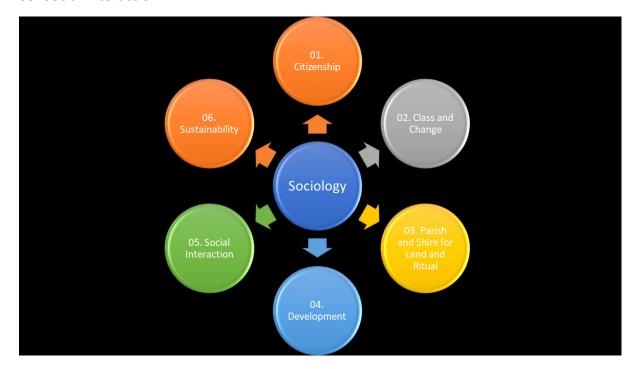
Globally, the solution to inequality of labour distribution and the valuation of land and society, has been in the concept of 'community development.' It is an old idea where the State participates with the communities. In Australia there once was the "Department of Environment, Housing Community Development" (1978). Housing is not a the leading critical issue in Australian politics, along with climate change reforms.



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05. Social Interaction



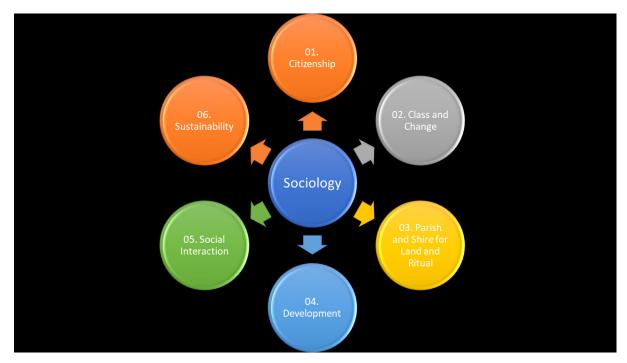
The online learning world, in spite of the egos of social media, has increase attention to social interactions (Joanne M McInnerney, & Tim S Roberts. 2004). The concept has a long history in sociology and psychology, which means scholars like myself are increasingly turning to the questions of interpersonal relations, and what a person is in a society?



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06. Sustainability



Other questions are coming to the fore, such as, What meanings and values does the community (the general public) attach to the term "sustainability"? (McLoughlin, L. C. 2004). Philosophically, the exploration of community service-learning as a pedagogy and philosophy, keeps coming back to the Jurgen Habermas' (1992) liberal model of the public sphere, and its criticisms (VanWynsberghe, R., & Andruske, C. L., 2007).



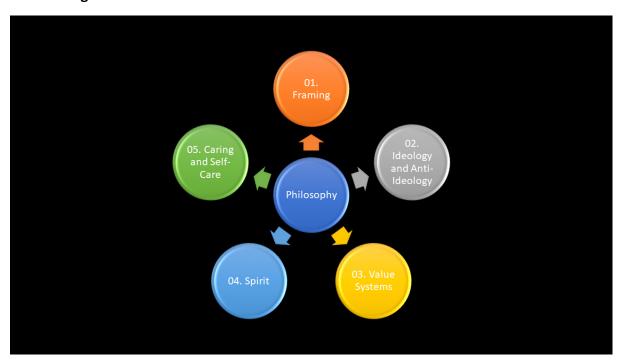
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4. PHILOSOPHY

In the end, it all comes back to philosophy.

01. Framing



The Cs framework represents a way forward for connecting in community (Dave Andrews, 2007), these are ideas of Celebrations, Cycles, Crises, Conflicts, Chances, and Change.



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02. Ideology and Anti-Ideology



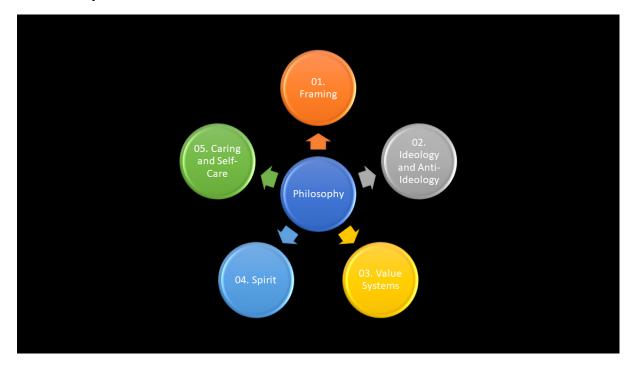
Much of that curriculum development has been made possible because we have escaped local 'ideological' battles (Webster, B., 2001). However, the danger from the radical right is derailing the process in skewed anti-ideology argument: "ideology is the problem but we are not ideological."



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03. Value Systems



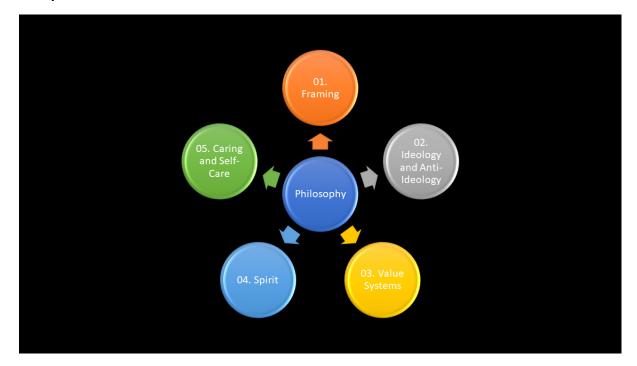
As the discussion on ideology can be more confusing than helpful, so also ideas of value systems (Koepping, K., 1983). Values are important, but they are not so systematised as people think.



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04. Spirit



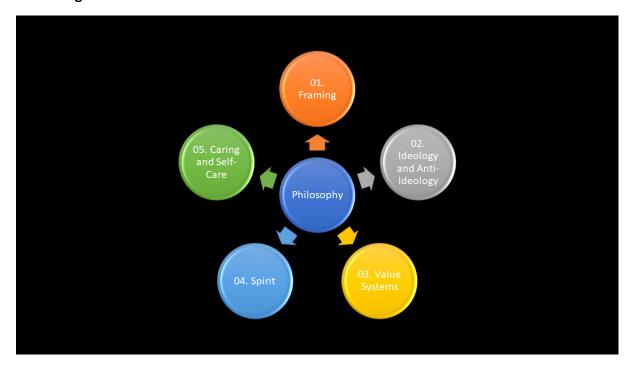
A key concept for contemporary community education is 'Spirit', and the conversation began with Hegel (Finn, D., 2016). Hegel in past century or so became problematic through the way he places the State in the historical movement of the Spirit over the concerns of the communities. Hegel has been somewhat redeemed in the concept of the Pneumatic Community, but in my personal view, Wilhelm Dilthey provided better insights to the subject of spirituality and history.



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05. Caring and Self-Care



Those insights usually bring an answer to why I/we should care, and including the concept of 'self-care (Milio, N., 1977).



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