

Emerging New Professional Horizons: Meshworking Well-being and Place-making

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Abstract

What are the implications of a well-being focus for advancing professional education? What might this sustain, that is currently lacking – especially for professionals seeking to be more effective agents of sustainability? What new concepts, perspectives and practices merit consideration?

The presentation will build on recent experience with praxis-making and ethos-making in a professional education context (Friesen and Wight 2009; Wight 2011a, 2011b), targeting the elaboration of extended competencies, heightened capacities and more developed sensibilities – to help emerge the associated new professional horizons.

How might professionals be better enabled to be fully well beings i.e. more whole in their personal selves, as well as interpersonally – with other professionals? Well-being emerges in the context of well-becoming; education is implicated in creating the conditions for well-becoming, with sustainability built-in.

Drawing on over a decade of interest and experimentation with integral framings (Wight 2005; 2006; 2009; 2012), the presentation will seek to position well-being at the core of an inter-relationship with meshworking and placemaking - as anchors for a fresh post-conventional approach to professional education. An integral framing naturally aims for comprehensiveness, balance and inclusiveness; it is deliberately wholistic, valuing the uniting of multiple perspectives, while being intrinsically developmental (and in effect evolutionary). Well-being is associated with whole-making; making sense of the whole, and enacting as a whole, are very much part of meshworking and placemaking.

The presentation will explore the possible contributions of complementary social technologies, most notably the ‘interweaving’ (of single-, double- and triple-loop learning) associated with Developmental Action Inquiry (Torbert, W and Associates 2004) and the ‘presencing’ (to help us, literally, get to the heart and soul of our work) associated with the work of Peter Senge - and some of his SoL colleagues (Senge et al 2004), including in particular the application of U-Theory (Scharmer 2007). These appear to align well with emerging applications of meshworking (Hamilton 2008, 2010; Bets et al 2008; Merry 2009), which may be rendered as much more than networking, but including interweaving and presencing, in pursuit of a form of overstanding.

The practical context will be professional and inter-professional education in the built environment professions - which are perceived to have a common interest in place-making, as well-being by design. Well-being will be regarded as *the product* of whole-making; an expression of higher flourishing (transcending happiness). Place-making is perceived as *the process* of whole-making; the integration of physicality, functionality, community and spirituality – a form of truly integral practice. Post-conventional professing is anticipated to involve a meshworking of place-making and well-being.