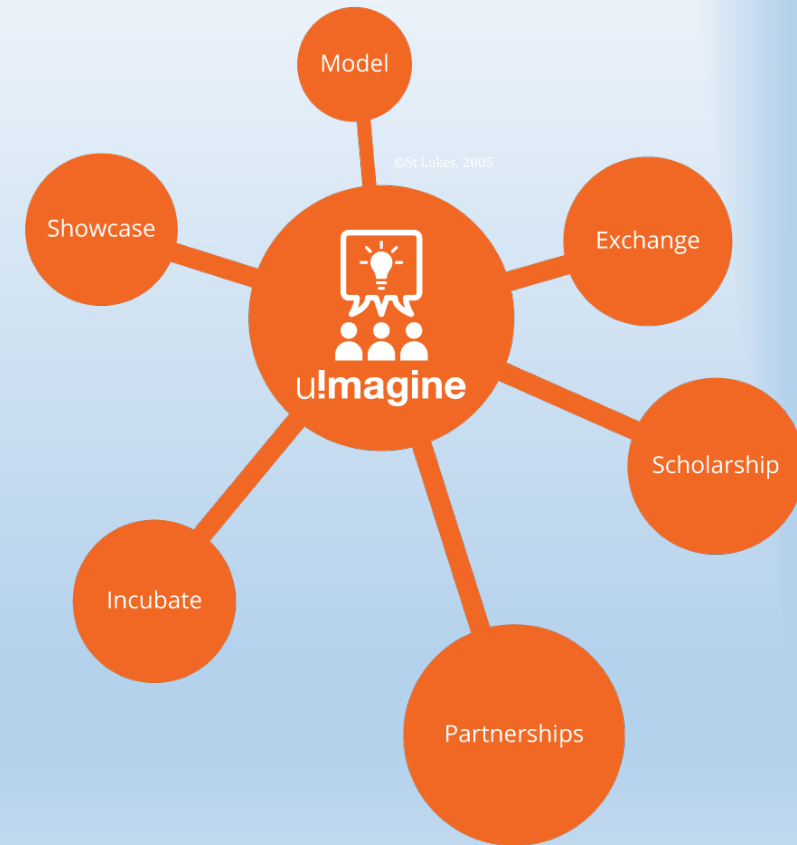


Project: A Strengths Approach to Child Protection Preparation

A CSU initiative - 'Uimagine' - awarded a grant to develop a repository for **strengths-based online learning materials** accessible by a suite of teacher education courses in the Faculty of Education at CSU to

“enhance the child protection preparation of students”



Child Abuse

- Abuse International/Australia
 - 143,00+ notifications in Australia per year
 - 1 in 37 children receiving CP services
- (AIHW, 2015; IPSCAN, 2014)
- Royal Commission into Institutionalised Responses to Child Abuse (2016)

Pre-service Child Protection



- Adjunct programs 3-4 hrs
- (Arnold & Maoi-Taddeo, 2007)
- Largely limited to mandatory reporting regulations

Literature Review Findings



Teacher Preparation

- Teachers overwhelmed
- (Baginsky, 2003; Watts, 1997)
- Fear & anxiety (Singh, 2005)
 - Underprepared (Fenton, 2013)
 - Calls for a new model for decades (Briggs & Hawkins, 1997)
 - Ideally placed to 'make a difference' (McIntyre & Carr, 2000)

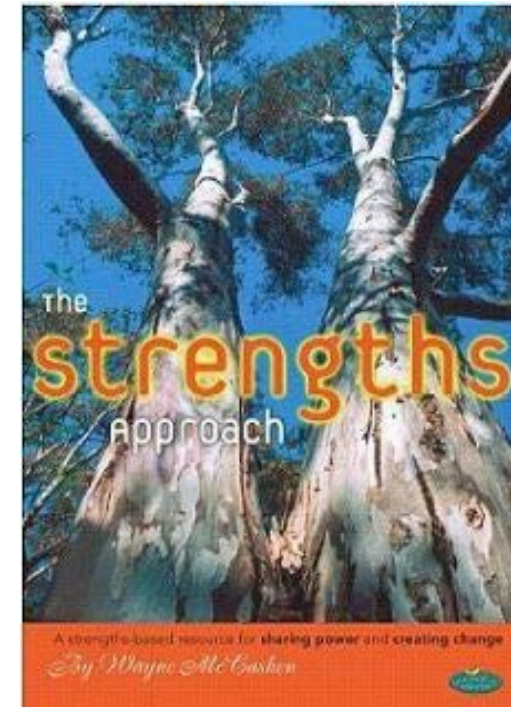
Strengths Approach

- Social Work (Saleebey, 2009)
- Positive Psychology (Clifton, 2002)
- Organisational Practice in Australia (McCashen, 2005)

What is a Strengths Approach?

- A philosophy for working with people to bring about change
- An approach that seeks to identify and address social, personal, cultural and structural constraints to people's growth and self-determination; and
- An approach that acknowledges and addresses power dynamics, cultures and structures in organisations that are incongruent with socially-just practice.

<http://www.stlukes.org.au/>



McCashen, 2005, p. v

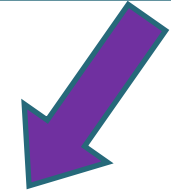
**Collaborative - “power with”
rather than “power over” people**

Strength to Protect

Reframe child protection :
A problem or an opportunity
to make a difference?



Students are firstly
introduced to the Strengths
Approach Framework

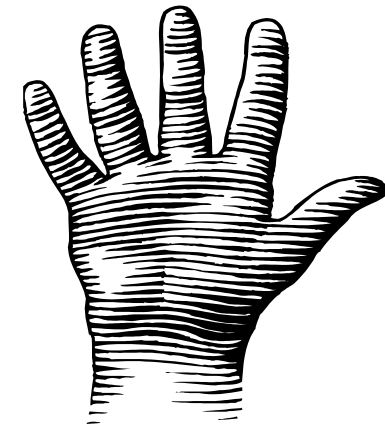


Recent research suggests that using a '**Strengths Approach**' (McCashen, 2005; Fenton, 2013) with child protection issues can be helpful. The project aims to:

- Enhance preparation to protect children



A handy guide to implement a Strengths Approach



1. Explore the Issue
2. Develop a picture of the future [Vision] or set goals
3. Identify and highlight strengths – note times when the problem does not occur
4. Identify additional resources available
5. Mobilise strengths and resources through a plan of action

Project grant

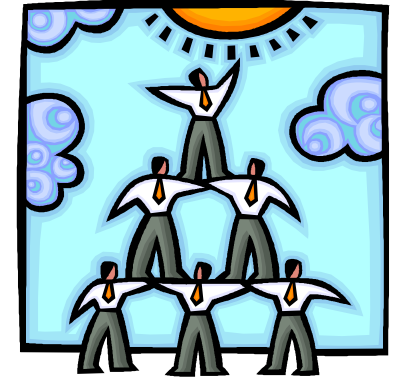
To develop and evaluate (parallel research) a teaching/learning site containing digital media training resources such as:

- videos, recorded workshops & learning simulations
- links to practitioner resources, mandatory reporting guidelines and organisation websites
- authentic child protection scenarios and child safety learning games
- Scaffolded discussions to support students with complex and sensitive questions of child protection

The resources are being piloted with the Faculty of Education, with opportunities for cross-disciplinary applications



Methodology



Case Study (Yin, 2009)

- Ethics – necessary re sensitive site content – not assessable subject
- Pilot the site (Interdisciplinary Reference Group & Student Participants)
- 40 (EC students – demographics)
- Pre & Post site access Surveys + EViews (qualitative)
- Learning Analytics

Analysis

- Learning Analytics – descriptive statistics re time/access patterns (Siemens, Dawson & Lynch, 2013)
- Thematic analysis (Aronson, 1994)
- Together used to analyse patterns of meaning & stakeholder perspectives (Patton, 2002)



Early Results



Pre-site Access Responses

- I realise it is a serious issue and needs to be addressed. **Circumstances surrounding possible abuse or neglect can be confronting** and make me feel like I shouldn't overstep boundaries, however I know it is for the child's benefit and that is what helps me to feel confident and follow my suspicions and addressing any potential abuse/neglect issue
- **In theory I feel confident however, when it comes to a real life situation I feel that confidence would decrease.**
- **I've never had first hand experience** with addresses issues of this magnitude and so only have my prior knowledge and research on which I can draw.

Post-site Access Responses

- I'm clear on my legal obligations moral and ethical obligations. The information on neglect was also very helpful and **I feel much more confident** with regard to this aspect of child protection having visited the site, worked through the workshop and completed the scenario questions.
- Every time as a pre-service or qualified teacher we come into contact with reminders about child protection **we become more equipped to handle a situation we may find ourselves in.**
- It would be valuable **if this site could be made available to the wider sector.** Free quality resources such as this are much needed and would assist in minimising the amount of misinformation and misunderstanding among early childhood practitioners.

Early Findings & Discussion

Learning Analytics

A2					
A					
Course Role.Role Type		Student			
Content Type	Content	Sessions	Interactions	Unique People	
Image	.	7	8	7	
Item	01. Before we begin	24	28	10	
Item	02. Using a Strengths Approach	20	32	9	
Item	03. Implementing a Strengths Approach	18	26	9	
Content Folder/Content Area	04. Step 1 - Issue of Child Protection	18	20	9	
Content Folder/Content Area	05. Step 2 - A Vision for Child Protection	16	18	8	
Item	06. Step 3 - Identifying Strengths	8	12	8	
Content Folder/Content Area	06. Step 3 - Identifying Strengths	8	12	8	
Content Folder/Content Area	07. Step 4 - Resources	16	20	7	
Content Folder/Content Area	08. Step 5 - Plan of Action	12	14	6	
Content Folder/Content Area	09. Possible Indicators of Abuse	12	12	6	
Content Folder/Content Area	10. Mandatory Reporting	14	14	7	
Content Folder/Content Area	11. Scenario	12	12	6	
Content Folder/Content Area	12. Conclusion	14	14	7	
Item	About	7	8	7	
URL	Adults Surviving Child Abuse	2	2	2	
URL	Australian Childhood Foundation Website	3	4	3	
URL	Beyond Blue	2	2	2	
URL	Bravehearts	4	4	4	
URL	Child Safety Education Video - Daniel Morcambe Foundation	5	6	5	
URL	Chloe, wait!	6	6	6	
Content Folder/Content Area	Community Organisations	4	4	4	
Item	Counselling	12	14	10	
Content Folder/Content Area	Counselling Support	2	2	2	
URL	CSU Student Counselling	2	2	2	
URL	Department of Community Services (NSW):	3	3	3	
URL	Department of Human Services (VIC) - Child Protection and Family Services	3	3	3	
URL	Early Years Learning Framework	3	3	3	
Content Folder/Content Area	Final Survey	7	8	6	
Content Folder/Content Area	Government and Reporting Resources	3	3	3	
Item	Implementing a Strengths Approach	9	13	9	
Content Folder/Content Area	Introduction	7	8	7	
URL	Keep them safe	3	3	3	
URL	Keep them safe - Aboriginal Intensive Family Support Services	3	3	3	
URL	Kids Helpline	4	4	4	
URL	Lifeline	2	2	2	
Item	Mandatory Reporting	7	7	7	
Content Folder/Content Area	National and State Resources	3	4	3	
READY					

Implications

- Too early to say
- Linear hits – drops away – but could be wave like in actual site – pilot site is more compressed usage?
- Cues to nudge – will be important
- Interactive Scenario – to embed or not?
- Add more formative content to scenario

Early Findings & Discussion

Currently, the Interactive Scenario is rated as the most useful section of the site 80% participants rating this tool as 'Extremely Useful'

Tentatively Positive

- A variety of existing child protection training had been previously experienced by the participants
- The participants drew heavily on their day to day experiences and reported that they were able to understand and apply a Strengths Approach (implicit & explicit)
- The interactive scenario and links to resources were most well-received elements of the site

Implications

- Add more nuanced and varying categories of scenarios
- Participants wanted access to resources upon graduation and emphasised that extended access was important
- The participants expressed the scenario was authentic and were able to suggest other situations

Limitations: Scale, contextualised, further work needed



Conclusion

Locating Social Justice?



The *actualisation* of a strengths approach to child protection preparation in the project was a complex feat, involving both **theory and practice** elements in the design process and a need “**to breach these separations**” (McArthur, 2015) for social justice outcomes.

To this extent, early findings in this project indicate that the interactive scenarios allowed participants to examine the complex moral judgements required in authentic child abuse cases. Additionally, there are encouraging reports of increases in confidence on how participants might be **able to make a positive impact with their actions as teachers.**



Questions?



Thankyou, Angela Fenton
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