

CLP*: Exploring a Neohumanistic Curricula Paradigm

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Our culture – the broad based philosophic culture of Western civilisation – is addicted to thinking in binaries. Binaries are useful, elegant and seductive: beyond the yin-yang there lies man-woman; nature-culture; Left-Right; individual-society; mind-body and so on. One way this binary vision is played out in education, is as child-centred versus system-centred schooling. Though this polarity may help us understand two basic approaches to the world expressed through a particular lens, when it comes to the reality of teaching teachers know that the real work happens *between* the two.

In education the individual is part of the system and as such must be part of any thinking about learning as process. One way this ‘Western condition’¹ is thought of in social theory is as the agency-structure dilemma – the kind of chicken and egg question often thrown at undergraduate students. To think about this question from a different angle, without ignoring the creative tension inherent to it, is both pedagogically and theoretically useful. Futures thinking in general, is premised on such a shift in perspective. The futures literature abounds with examples of thinking and strategy designed to help individuals on the ground, in a specific context, reclaim agency and thus revivify structure. Such work occurs with a clear appreciation of the role structure plays in mapping, containing and maintaining meaning. Thus the school, office, company, bureaucracy are relevant contexts for futures engagements. Yet they are all places inhabited by people: you and me. We all work within structures. And we need to find ways of maintaining the balance between our subjectivities and the objective nature of our existence. Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) facilitates this by allowing for context to be read, not as singular but as multiple and contingent upon the people inhabiting the context and issues they confront. CLA thus brings agency and structure together in a way that affirms both while retaining their basic character and integrity.

One way to think about CLA is as a ‘method of the between’ as it draws into its analytic the power of structure while locating it in the unique context of the moment in which it is being applied. Each unique context is intimately associated with the individuals involved. CLA invites these stake holders to reassess their position within the context, and provides a process for reclaiming personal and collective agency. In doing so it negotiates the space between the agency of the individual and the definitional and purposive

*Causal Layered Pedagogy

¹ This is put in inverted commas as it is no longer a purely Western condition being now exported with a missionary zeal to all countries wishing to partake of the ‘success story’ of the Western enlightenment project.

authority of the system within which they operate. Meaning in this context is no longer imposed on the individuals by the structure they inhabit but becomes fluid and negotiated, and is located in the ontological and epistemological processes that occur in the functioning of the collective dynamic, or what might be called the agency-structure ‘machine’.

Causal Layered Pedagogy

It became clear to me on being introduced to CLA (S Inayatullah, 1998; Wildman, 1996), some ten years ago, that it had significant implications for education. As an organising principle it allows curriculum to be rethought as an agency-structure dialogue that does not just account for the process of the individual, but relies upon it for an integrated learning praxis, while allowing for context – the school, the discipline, the syllabus, the curriculum, the politics of learning – to effectively embed the personal within an historical, cultural, institutional narrative that is committed to functional goals and reliable outcomes². As I thought about how CLA represented the *between* that is obscured by the glare of the binary I began to see how it helped reveal the inner processes at work in educational contexts. Here tables, spelling, tests and dates represent the litany of the day to day; the testing, disciplinary forms, school rules and curricula guidelines represent the system level; the commitment to enlightenment reason and scientific method and a peculiarly Western aesthetic speak to worldview; while a mixture of nation-state and consumerist narrative blend with family, community and personal stories to create the psycho-emotional state in which learning occurs and to which myth-metaphor refers (see Table 1).

Litany	Information: multiplication tables; historical dates, spelling and grammar, tests, etc...
System	Testing, disciplinary forms, school rules and curricula guidelines
Worldview	Commitment to Enlightenment reason and scientific method and a peculiarly Western aesthetic
Myth/Metaphor	Nationalism and consumerism (the images and stories that provide the emotional energy in these) blend with family, communal and personal ‘stories’

Table 1: CLA of Educational Environment

Inayatullah observes of CLA that it is “More inclusive of individuals, their perspectives and the worldviews that give them meaning and create their identities” (S Inayatullah, 2004, p. 540). This link between the personal and its context brings to each CLA encounter a spontaneity and ownership that reaffirms the individual and collective agency of those involved. People discover that they are not simply prisoners of the ‘system’ but consciously and unconsciously work to create it. The implications are that *they can also*

² In this I am thinking of the MacDonald’s formulae of reliability, predictability, replicability and assessability.

change what they do not like. If they feel battered by the day to day chaos of litany CLA offers them a way to ground their experiences in deeper contexts that are broader and more meaningful; if they feel the system drives everything CLA allows them to see the values that inform this process and helps them to identify contradictions and ways in which their values, once submerged, can become clearer and more relevant; for those who always see the 'Big Picture' – there is the reminder that there are structures that create and maintain realities and that people do suffer and struggle at the day to day level as a result of ideological pressures driven from a distance; similarly when myth/metaphor is understood and engaged CLA draws the links to the empirical world and the way the micro and the macro interact and reinforce one another. This brings me to the point where I can introduce causal layered pedagogy.

Causal Layered Pedagogy (CLP) follows CLA in linking deep, personal and collective forces – the myth/metaphor and worldview/paradigm – with the structure and forms of expression we associate with everyday reality. The learning classroom, the subject matter of each discipline, the text book and syllabus are all representations of systems of meaning and practice that have deep cultural, historical and personal 'stories'. CLP has the potential not simply to navigate or explicate the deeper levels of meaning making that inform curricula thought and practice but to actually grapple with these and suggest processes of engagement that can shift the balance towards transformative process and away from what David Jardine and his colleagues describe as a deficit model of education (Jardine, 2006).

Curriculum provides the interface between the worldviews that generate the maps of meaning and the system seeking to ground this in practice. Thus individual teachers and students live it at the level of litany while traditionally experiencing it as something external to them: a received body of 'wisdom' organised to meet the functional requirements of system. At its worst it can be dry, distant and oppressive. Yet it need not be so. William Pinar and his colleagues have argued that curriculum should be thought of as a conversation (Pinar, 2000, p. 848) while David Jardine and his colleagues develop the idea of curricular abundance (Jardine, 2006). What is central to their thinking is that curriculum is a social practice. CLP draws the social into the learning processes as a response to this insight. It can be understood as a response to this observation from Pinar et al:

After the curriculum has been developed, that is, after the phases of policy, planning, design, implementation, embodiment in material form (including in print and/or technological forms), then supervised and evaluated, what is still missing in the effort to understand curriculum as institutional text? It is the experience of teaching and learning (Pinar, 2000, p. 744).

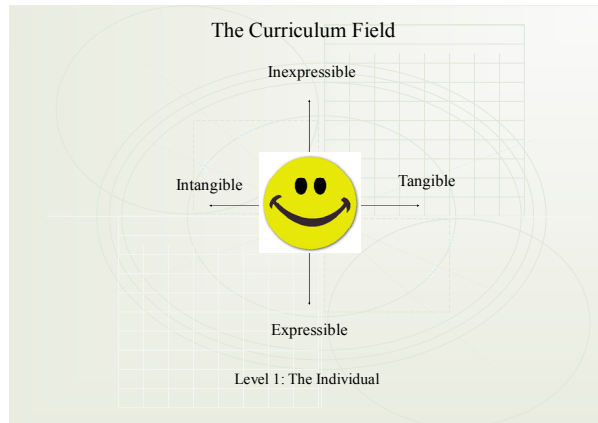
The Curricula Field

As a futures educator committed to the long term viability of the planet and its biosphere my educational focus is on bringing students into line with their own story and linking this to the broad context of their learning. This is not simply about finding out who we are, which of course is a life long process, rather it is about finding out who-we-are-in-context. CLP takes as a premise the fact that we are multiple, not singular beings and that how we function in an environment is not necessarily the only story to be told. As Gilles Deleuze has argued in *The Fold* our identities can be understood as an engagement with the 'real' in which we are forever folding and unfolding according to circumstance (G. Deleuze, 1993).

CLP is therefore focused on how the unique interacts with the universal, in this the word 'causal' flags the multitude. It implies process and presence, links, context, temporal breadth and depth, multiplicity, responsiveness, and participation. In all this it is closely akin to Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomic thinking which is fluid, sticky and creative (G. Deleuze, and Guattari, Felix, 1987; Gough, 2007). It is also reflective of a neohumanistic preoccupation with the subject-object interface that makes it process oriented, practical and focused on the *becoming* nature at the heart of human potential (Marcus Bussey, 2000, 2006a). Thus, it is a permanently unfinished (from an earthly perspective) project. While CLP can be seen to offer a map of the learning process that is layered and accounts for depth, it also takes a rhizomic approach to understanding how the context is rich with unspoken potentiality, representing what Deleuze and Guattari would call 'planes of immanence' (G. Deleuze, & Guattari, F., 1994). I have argued elsewhere (M. Bussey, 2008 (forthcoming)) that CLA is a hinge concept in that it acts as a futures method, one of Sohail Inayatullah's six pillars (Sohail Inayatullah, 2008 (forthcoming)); simultaneously it also breaks out into a foundational theory of knowledge, yet retains its pragmatic focus by enabling a form of critical agency. Thus CLP, in its process orientation, is emancipatory as it has the potential to evoke co-creative responses to context that return to those involved a sense of agency rooted in the critical consciousness of their place in context. The word critical here is used in the sense offered by Michel Foucault, as a critical attitude that fosters "the art of not being governed quite so much" (Foucault, 2002, p. 193).

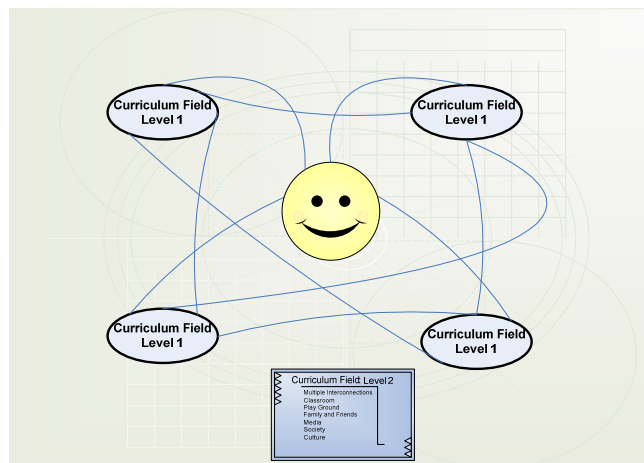
CLP offers multiplicity and ambiguity, sensitivity to context and a participatory promise by understanding that **each individual learner embodies a curricula field of meaning making** that is drawn from the collective pool of shared meanings while simultaneously being linked to their own unique life context. This life context is both consciously expressed in family and community but is also a product of what Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar called their bio-psychological profile (Sarkar, 1998, p. 263). This Tantric concept links one's body (including hormones and cellular memory) with mind (including one's neuroses and emotions) and spirit (one's deep life lessons and unspoken longings).

This individual curricula field composes both subjective and objective conditions that can be mapped as in Figure 1 below.



Curricular Field Level 1: The Individual

The complexity of curricula interactions amplifies considerably when we have a range of fields interacting. Such interactions can be either synergistic or entropic. CLP, I believe, has the potential to enhance synergy over entropy. The complexity of the multiple curricula field interaction is illustrated in Figure 2.



Curricular Field Level 2: The Collective

By personalising the curriculum field and linking it directly with individuals involved in any educational encounter CLP can be understood as a child centred, or students-centred, approach. Yet as CLP also clearly accounts for system needs and the environments that arise from worldview and myth/metaphor is simultaneously works at the macro and meso levels of policy and paradigm. Yet both policy and paradigm are not something in themselves but are dependent on individual and communal assent.

Thus we find in practice that teaching for the whole person has both an individual and collective dimension. These two domains are captured in Figures 3 and 4.

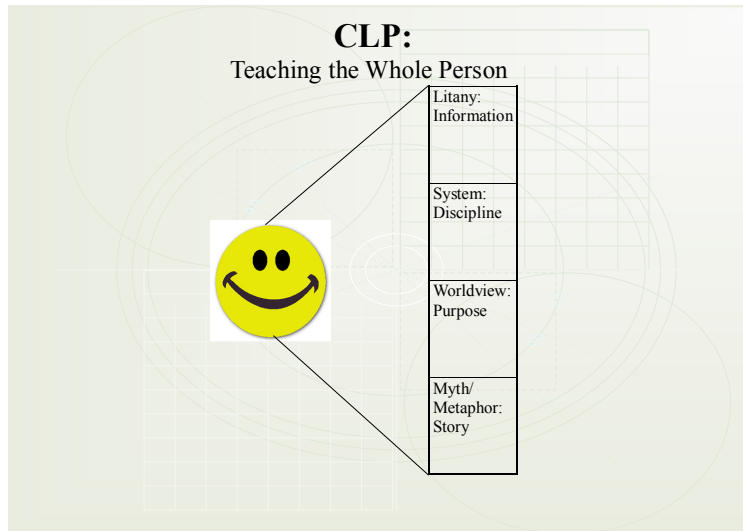


Figure 3: The Subjective Domain

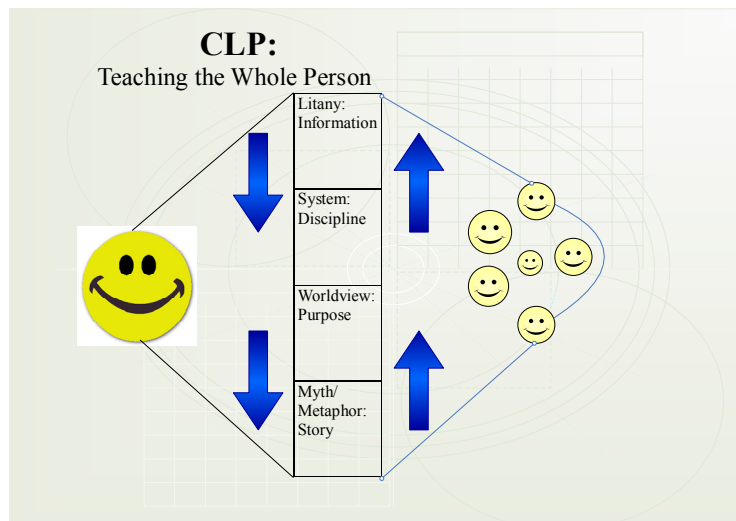


Figure 4: The Collective Domain

One of the implications of the individual-collective interface outlined here is that students – all of whom carry a pre-existing set of experiences and assumptions – must be *invited* to interact with their learning. This is the co-creative dimension. CLP invites students to define their learning context. Thus learning becomes meaningful and personal. The teacher acts as facilitator in this process and the curriculum is seen as multi-layered, consisting of immediate skills, structural processes, growing self awareness of the paradigms at work and their own relationship to knowledge production via story. Thus the CLA structure informs the fluid approach to meaning generation at the heart of CLP. It defines four contexts for learning, each with its own temporal referent, and focuses attention of issues, context, process and skills appropriate to each. This is mapped in Table 2 below.

	CLA (Education focus)	CLP	Time Frames
Litany	Educational Policy; Educational fads; Media driven single issues	Content/data – the specific information captured in a lesson; lesson plan	Day to day
System	Institutions and their laws; bureaucracy and due process; institutional culture/habit	Structure – scaffolded syllabi	1 to 3 years; 3 to 10 years if we are lucky
Worldview/Paradigm	Traditions – humanism, empiricism, utilitarianism, romanticism, socialism, etc...	Episteme – curricula formations	50 to 100 years; psychology of an era
Myth/Metaphor	Culture/Civilization – national stories, local and indigenous frames and mythic frames such as Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism	Ontology – stories, dreams, traumas, hopes and fears	100 to a 1000 years

Table 2 Overview of CLA and CLP with Time Frames

A CLP Anecdote

Some years ago I was working with a group of children aged 7 to 12 years of age. They are a multi aged, diverse ability group. The classroom was an open space in that it was situated in a dome (Figure 3) and there were no student desk – only work stations and work areas. Students would move through activities, with the more mature self directing their studies and showing considerable responsibility.



Figure 3: With students at the dome classroom

My job, as teacher (or biggest kid), was to initiate learning contexts. Thus the child-centred environment negotiated learnings with a curriculum that was a product of structural and pragmatic needs of society and state. I was the interface. On one occasion a number of students were very much involved in playing board games so I introduced a thematic learning process built around these games and the students' intense interest in them.

So far this all sounds very much like a general holistic educational environment. Using CLP as a curricula tool however I was able to direct learning with the help and support of the students in such a way that they took much of the responsibility for what happened during these work sessions.

What happened was this:

- Litany: students collected games; tried the out; found rules; built ancient or rare games from designs from the internet; visited the museum; visited a creative toy shop; played heaps of games; organised tournaments and play-ins...
- System: explore rules (why are they important?); wrote reports on games; kept a log of who was playing what games and, where appropriate, kept a record of winners, losers, top scores; explored the mathematics of games (especially cards); designed their own games – writing rules, creating characters, etc; turned games into stories....
- Worldview: looked at games from different cultures and civilisations; asked questions about why certain games came from particular places; noticed hybridity in action as games morphed over time and through interaction with different technologies, etc; asked about why we like rules and why some rules are competitive (ie punitive in nature) while others are inclusive and designed around win-win values; looked also at computer games and the values these portray – ie issues of violence, pattern, predictability and whether they offered open or closed scenarios...

- Myth/Metaphor: looked at games they like to play and asked about what this might say about themselves; explored fun; shared fun with others; organised a games museum and invited friends and family to visit; looked at life as a game; looked at win-lose and win-win in the context of games they like to play; looked at which games made them feel good and why....

We all agreed that a game museum and game day at school would be the best way to collectively demonstrate our learning in this area. The games day was a great success, parents and friends were inspired and the children felt fulfilled. Games they learnt were an important part of life and learning.

Concluding Remarks

A flexible and robust curricula approach needs to account for the daily context of the classroom and the eternal yearnings of humanity. The pedagogical potential of CLP is yet to be proved. Yet its promise is manifold. As a curricular tool CLP both offers a map of knowledge that greatly expands the frontier of the knowable in order to account for deeper sources of agency. As a praxis of knowing it does not just offer new categories but rather new ways of approaching knowing and the knowable. In this way it casts a wide net which offers an account of both the unique experience of individual and context while accounting for the archetypal forces that shape our daily negotiation of reality. In this it engages with Deleuze and Guattari's focus on the 'body' as the locus of power, meaning and possibility by offering within a simple framework a way to deal with their concern:

We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body, either to destroy that body or to be destroyed³ by it, either to exchange actions and passions with it or to join with it in composing a more powerful body (Cited in Albrecht-Crane, 2007, p. 100).

CLP offers an account of these *affects* and operationalises the space in which they function in rhizomic, eternally shifting formulations. It differs significantly from traditional curricula thought by working a temporal continuum that accounts for day to day experience without ignoring the medium and long term contexts and purpose of pedagogy (cf Table 2). It also shifts the curricula context from the system level, as it is currently located from the perspective of CLA, and involves curricula planning and practice – and all key learning stakeholders – in a dialogue with the layered nature of affective states and processes. Instrumentally CLP thus brings to the teaching moment an

³ It should be noted that for Deleuze and Guattari 'destroy' does not necessarily mean annihilation; rather when a body encounters another it may change as a result and cease to be what it was and become something new.

awareness of the eternal while bringing to the eternal a pragmatic engagement with context and process that it would otherwise lack. So despite the fact that teaching is so involved with the minutiae of the daily comings and goings of the classroom, it now becomes consciously involved in aspects of pedagogy previously hidden – as interior and subjective – from the pedagogical view.

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