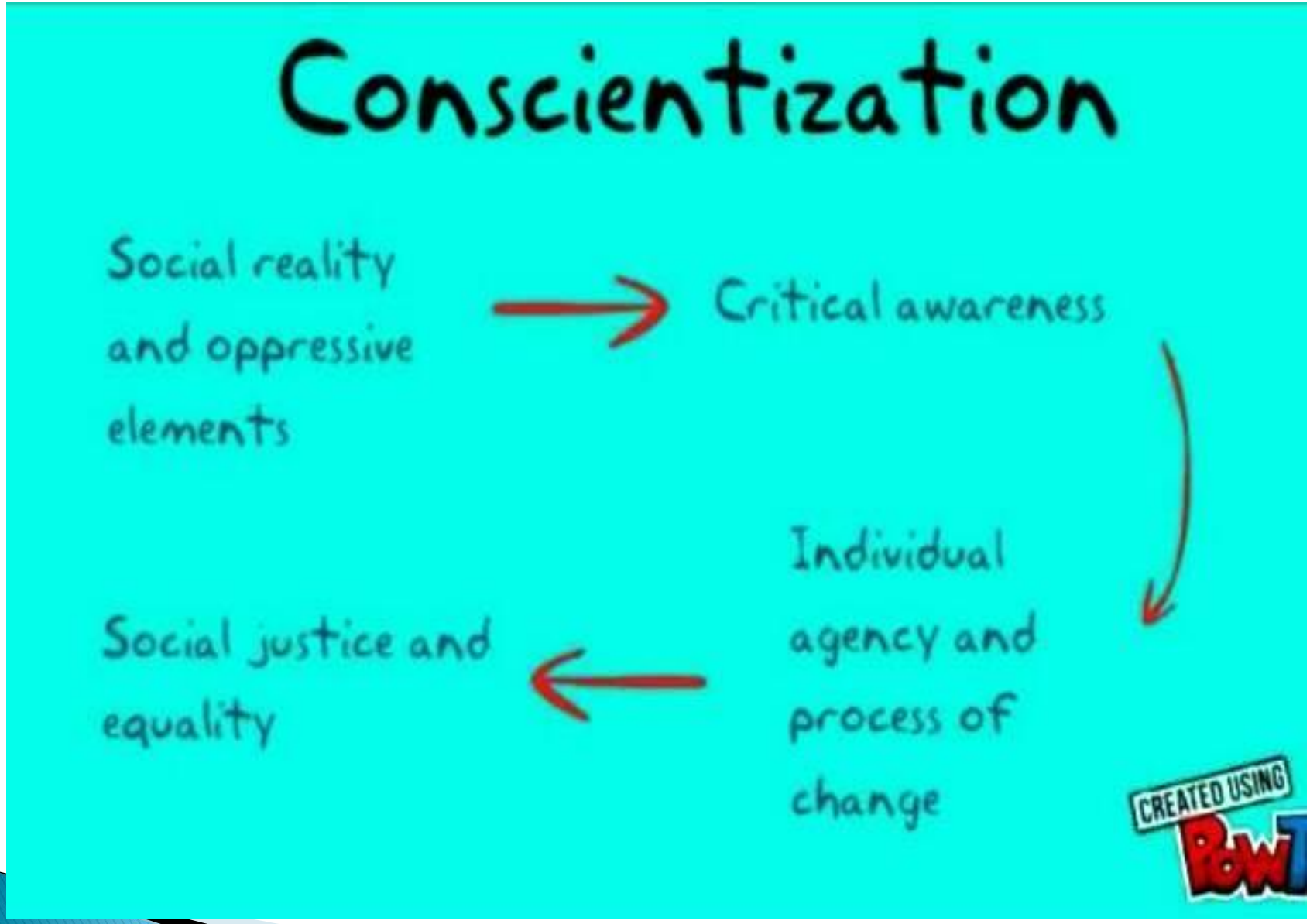
UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE

Towards critical occupational therapy practice : reflections on the development of critical literacies in the Occupational Therapy Department UWC

Lucia Hess-AprIL

Background

- Inequality in South Africa (World Bank,2018)
- Community development
  - **collaborate with** community groups to address self-identified priorities and strategies.
  - community development should confront structural oppression (Ife, 1998)
- Critical literacies
  - people are able to think critically about their situation, take control of their lives, and collectively transform how they relate to the world (Freire, 1990)


Conscientization
Social reality and oppressive elements
Critical awareness
Individual agency and process of change
Social justice and equality
CREATED USING

UWC CoP Project

- communities of practice (Wenger, 1998).
- qualitative research approach
- participatory enquiry
- Research question: What critical literacies are required for community development practice and how are these addressed in the curriculum?
- thematic data analysis.

Findings

- expectations regarding critical literacies
- learning and teaching strategies
- curriculum enabling factors

Expectations regarding critical literacies

- *We need to create more structured learning opportunities for students to question why some people suffer, lack opportunities, and lose hope, while this is not the case for others who have all the resources to meet their needs*

- *The phrase "Voiceless and without choices" that is so relevant in South Africa comes to mind prompting me to ask – are students able to conceptualise how people are rendered voiceless and without choices within their particular situation? Are they able to assist community members to explore this question themselves?*

Learning and teaching strategies

- *Because I do not have access, opportunity or resources. I desire to see a change but I don't know how – I am powerless- This feeling of resignation needs to transform to an understanding of my lack of power in my situation. The OTs role is to help people figure out the injustices they experience and how they may bring about change in their situation.*

CODES

- 1. See: what is observed in a situation?
- 2. Happening: Define the issue i.e. what is actually happening?
- 3. Our lives – share similar experiences
- 4. Why? – Question why it's happening
- 5. Do – Strategize what actions can be taken to address the issue?

A picture

SHOWeD: See, Happening, Our (lives), Why, and Do

Levels of consciousness

Level 1: Closed Consciousness
A community at this level is considered to be naïve, lacking in independence and suppressed.

Level 2: Awakening Consciousness
A community at this level is often angry, alert to problems and issues, is often rebellious and critical of people not events, and is often not questioning of established systems.

Level 3: Reforming Consciousness
A community at this level is beginning to engage in different types of struggle to improve the functioning of the system in order to make it more responsive to the community's needs.

Level 4: Liberating and Transforming Consciousness
A community at this level is said to be liberated and transformed.

- *One of my students wrote a journal reflection on how through a very heated and for her, emotional, class discussion on privilege, she came to realize how racial class and economic oppression operate in society and how this relates to her personally own assumptions and actions or rather lack of action about it.*

Curriculum enabling factors

- Asset based community development (ABCD)
- Occupational potential (Wicks, 2005)
- Occupational choice (Galvaan, 2012)
- Occupational possibilities (Rudman, 2010)
- Occupational consciousness (Ramugondo, 2012)

ST. 2006 FISANTEKRAAL
SENIORS' CLUB
VREDE
HOOP
LIEFDE
VERTROUE
GOD
ALMAL SAAM
MEER LIEFDE

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