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***The Art of facilitation: The essentials for leading great meetings and creating group synergy*, by Dale Hunter with Stephen Thorpe, Hamish Brown and Anne Bailey. Published in 2007 (fully revised) by Random House, Auckland, NZ. Paperback, 349 pages.**

Dale Hunter is the founding director of Zenergy Ltd. NZ, and principal co-author of the original edition of *The Art of Facilitation*. The book is presented in three parts.

Part 1: The first three chapters contain new material and describe the development of group facilitation as a profession, the role of facilitator and a conceptual framework for facilitation. The remaining chapters in Part 1 have all been revised from the 1994 edition and address key elements of facilitation.

Part 2: The material in this section explores the client, cooperative processes in organisations, ethics and a sustainability society. Hamish Brown has contributed a chapter on therapeutic facilitation and Stephen Thorpe writes a fascinating description of on-line facilitation using internet and computing technology. Chapter seven covers a wide variety of approaches and methods that have emerged in the field of facilitation over the past few years.

Part 3: Offers a training programme to be used as a peer-learning framework in group facilitation. Included in the section are design frameworks and 60 pages of processes that provide valuable resources for practice.

The book includes chapter notes and the bibliography provides a wide range of references. I checked out a number of websites for their currency, relevance and ease of use. It was a joy to find that my time browsing the websites was valuable, adding a different dimension of resources to my library.

Dale Hunter has received international acclaim for her practice and literature on facilitation. The book shows the evolution of facilitation and the possibilities for its future practice.

The simplicity of presentation and language in the book is powerful – empowering aspiring and experienced practitioners to enter the world of facilitation with hope, rather than fear. The ease of reading the material in the book belies the discipline, skill, creativity and knowledge required by practitioners in providing facilitation as a ‘moment-by-moment awareness’ a multi-dimensional and complex set of intelligences. The format allowed me as the reader to dip into a topic, a process, a framework or a concept and I was immediately engaged to practise something!

I wholeheartedly recommend this book. It provides a multi-dimensional foundation critical for any practitioner in this field. Dale Hunter’s wisdom and knowledge inherent in her writings have encouraged me to seek new challenges in my work as a professional supervisor. This current edition has broadened my horizons and will help take my practice into the future.

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***Anti-oppressive practice: Social care and the law, 2nd ed.,* by J. Dalrymple and B. Burke. Published in 2006 by Open University Press, England. Paperback, 343 pages.**

First published in 1995, this 2006 second edition continues to develop and explore the nature of anti-oppressive practice within a social care and legal context. Divided into three parts, this text firstly introduces readers to anti-oppressive theory, its historical development and the principles on which it is based. Canvassing the precludes to anti-oppressive theory, Dalrymple and Burke reflect on the traditions of radical, structural, feminist and anti-racist/black social work, as well as the more recent development of critical social work. The authors argue that anti-oppressive theory has developed out of these social movements and is a practice which seeks to be inclusive of all forms of oppression thus avoiding the privileging of one form over another. Dalrymple and Burke define anti-oppressive practice as being ‘informed by humanistic and social justice values and tak(ing) account of the experiences and views of oppressed people. It is based on an understanding of how the concepts of power, oppression and inequality determine personal and structural relations’ (p. 48). The main characteristics of anti-oppressive practice are identified as: a process of change utilising an empowerment, partnership and minimal intervention approach which necessitates critical reflection and reflexivity. Dalrymple and Burke note this model of practice has evolved through an increasing awareness and understanding of how power and oppression influence, contextualise and determine the lives of individuals and groups. In concluding the overview, the authors consider the ‘increasing legalism’ (p. 54) that frames practice in the 21st century. They reflect on the potential for legislation to ‘prescribe’ practice but urge social workers to continually analyse the ideology underpinning the law, in particular the social justice and human rights discourses, which offer opportunities for the law to be used ‘positively in the practice setting’ (p. 78).

Part two takes the theory and moulds it into a practice framework where values, empowerment, partnership and minimal intervention are considered and applied to anti-oppressive practice, practice based on both ethical and legal frameworks. Acknowledging that the law is based on dominant values, and social workers’ interpretation of the law is derived from professional ethical and philosophical foundations (including empowerment, partnership

and minimal intervention) (NZASW 1993), it is argued that critical understanding of the law, combined with reflexivity will assist practitioners to:

1. 'Identify inherent oppressive elements within and between pieces of legislation' (p. 97) and
2. To use the law in an anti-oppressive way by ensuring the law is challenged making it responsive in situations which do not enable and encourage equality and human rights.

Part three focuses on the interface between anti-oppressive practice and legislation. The overriding theme of this section is how social workers can use legislation in their interactions with service users. It is noted that the law can be used to prevent and/or address discrimination and oppression, to positively address structural inequalities, and as a means of ensuring the participation of service users in the processes of planning, assessment, decision making and evaluation of services. Paul Wilcox (cited in Dalrymple and Burke, p. 290), concludes the text. He states 'it is up to practitioners to utilise the law in the improvement of practice ...use ... the law for change'. In essence this text advocates the use of the law as a means of activating social work values.

Included in this readable text are activities, worker dialogues, case studies, detailed references and chapter summaries. All offer the reader insights into meaning, illustrations of key points, overviews of sections and opportunities for wider reading. *Anti-oppressive practice and the law: Social care and the law*, is an accessible and comprehensive text designed for undergraduate study with particular relevance for social work theory and practice courses. Its additional focus on the law makes it a useful companion text for a law course within the social work curriculum.

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***Social work and social exclusion: The idea of practice*. By Michael Sheppard. Published in 2006, by Ashgate Publishing, England. Paperback, 281 pages.**

Social inclusion and exclusion are terms that are hitting the practice fields in recent times. Although relatively new terms, the author Michael Sheppard contends that social work is founded on enduring themes and one of them is the notion of social inclusion and exclusion. A secondary theme of same importance underlying the practice of social work is that ideas and practice should be closely linked. It's nice to see a piece of work that gives practical depth to theoretical ideas through the use of everyday working examples, that although not New Zealand based, have relevance to practice I have been involved in.

Starting with a very comprehensive look at the notion of social exclusion/inclusion, Sheppard draws from it themes around structural causes, contract rights and moral degeneracy as sources of exclusion. One is challenged to not gloss over the use of exclusion, but to question which social exclusionary practice one is responding to or indeed engaging in. Three pertinent themes are, firstly that social work is concerned with social exclusion and

is engaged to ensure inclusion; secondly, social work could be involved in enhancing social inclusion (and should be); and thirdly that social work is itself exclusionary. This last challenge is addressed by viewing social work's position as sitting between the marginalised and the mainstream. Its position on this boundary can enable social work to positively counter social exclusion, but does leave the discipline open to claims that it is captured or used by dominant groups, and perhaps is.

The author continues to challenge the profession around its use of other popular concepts such as empowerment, need, authority and self determination of the client. It is seen that these concepts all show an underlying concern with social exclusion, yet in practice social work may not meet these grandiose goals. Sheppard questions whether we would be better to use other less popular terms such as maintenance, coping and social functioning, which may be more achievable.

Further chapters seek to lead us to question our understanding around social work and reflect on whether it is art or science, or yet a tool of management for which we can have competencies. Other issues that are analysed in the text include how we make judgments and process knowledge. There is discussion around reflexivity and evidence-based practice. All of these are current topical debates in the field and the authors consider that our perspectives on these matters are based on each one's principles of how social work 'constructs' human beings, and on social work's notion of human nature.

This book was a breath of fresh air for challenging traditional and contemporary practices in social work around themes inherent in current debates. I read it to help inform my role around social exclusion, but found that this was only a part of Sheppard's undertaking in presenting this book. His overall conclusion is that social work is an academic discipline in its own right and as such needs to address and challenge if needed its use of concepts. I came away with a whole wider understanding of themes in social work, their relation to social exclusion, and with a firm grasp of social work's ever changing, though at the same time, continual role in this. This book provides a good basis for reflective practitioners who want to 're-look' at their profession and challenge their current practice.

Toni Ashmore

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Violations of trust: How social and welfare institutions fail children and young people.
Edited by: Judith Bessant, Richard Hil and Rob Watts. Published in 2005 by Ashgate, Aldershot, Hampshire, England. Hardback, 150 pages.

The book, examining issues in Australia, focuses on abuse of children by public institutions, ongoing for many generations, particularly of the poor and indigenous, ethnic minorities, and other vulnerable children. The particular issues covered are the mistreatment of Aboriginal youth, child refugees, psychiatric and pharmacological issues, unresponsive and punitive schools and general societal mistrust of vulnerable youth. What is interesting to the reviewer is how similar many of the issues are to those in the United States where there is also an indigenous population, and where there are also large numbers of children living in poverty and societal neglect, particularly those of disadvantaged minorities – African

Americans, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans and Central Americans and even 'Anglo' Protestant poor, i.e. 'Hill Billies.' The reviewer, in the United States, considers this book to be of major importance to social workers and social policy development in English-speaking countries and elsewhere.

The current disasters of the so-called child welfare or 'protective' systems in almost every state in the United States and ongoing deficiencies in poor school districts and schools are only two examples of many that resonate in Australia and other parts of the English-speaking world. In the United States, currently, there are major concerns about 'urban' public schools' failures and the at times violent responses of urban youth to their life situations. From published reports there seem to be many parallels with situations in Britain and even South Africa. For the most part, the book illustrates and discusses examples of betrayal of 'trust' by those in power in Australia, including within the school systems, the welfare system, the immigration services, and the medical and related professions relating to vulnerable youth. The discussion of such issues is important and has been often left undiscussed.

However, the promise of the book to 'develop an approach to restoring trust' is the weakest point of the book. For one thing, among many of the populations discussed there never was trust so the concept of restoring it is somewhat misleading. For another, little is set out that would in effect develop trust other than the cessation of the abuses detailed. To say that schools should respect the students is a truism. How we get the welfare systems and schools to work for the benefit of those for whom they are supposedly organised is a major issue for our societies. Comparing the treatment of aboriginal children with the Nazi genocidal approach is interesting and rather fitting but then what? How is restitution to be made and to whom? What reparations can be given to millions of black descendents of slaves and victims of 400 years of repressive and discriminatory laws and customs in the United States? What about the large numbers of youth who have been labeled ADHD and subject to potentially damaging drug therapies so they will be quiet and complacent? How are they to be made whole? How are we, who are concerned, going to affect the policies and practices that include such abuses? These questions are hinted at but the answers are slim and rather afterthoughts in this book. They deserve much greater thought and action rather than what seem to be *mea culpas* in the book.

Although the latter is missing the detailing of abuses of trust or power are important in themselves. The book is recommended as a reminder of the dangers that social work institutions, among others, can fall into and how they can abuse people under the guise of helping. Social work institutions have too often been instruments of society's prejudices and failings. The reviewer finds the parallels with many similar issues in the United States to be difficult. Hopefully, in New Zealand / Aotearoa, some much-needed responses to how to repair and build trust in the power of the society to help rather than abuse can be found. It is important that social workers in the English-speaking world share both our failings and our successes. We have much to learn from each other.

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