

10,000 Miles away but feeling right at home: Rethinking global social work pedagogy and local friendship

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This summer, I travelled to Dublin, Ireland to present an oral presentation at the Social Work, Education, and Social Development Conference. The conference was expansive in both the scope of its social work topics as well as in its geographical and cultural reach. Over the course of 4 days, 2,500 delegates from all over the world shared work from their local contexts.

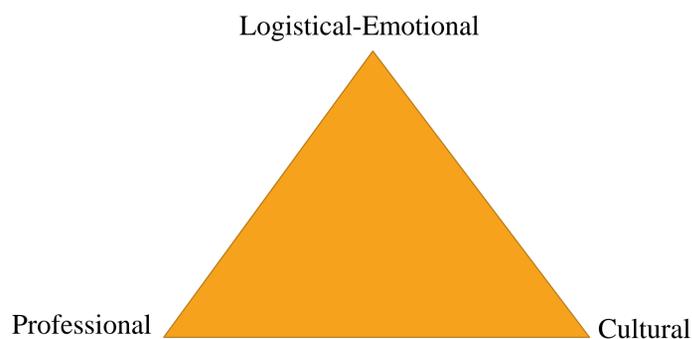
My presentation was an anecdotal case study and a tribute to Meredith 'Malka' Ciddor, a woman who hosted me when I was a Global Activities Scholars MSW student in Melbourne, Australia in 2015. Meredith and her husband Peter (top left) were an enormously generous couple who welcomed not only me, but several UM MSW students before me who conducted a field placements in Melbourne. Through her hospitality, Meredith personified the very act of inclusion that I had travelled across the globe learn. She embodied a kind of social work practice by direct transmission. Sadly, Meredith died of cancer 2017. She will be missed by her community, and she will leave a very real hole in the UM international social work program. My presentation in Dublin served as a tribute to Meredith as well as the beginnings of a larger project. Presenting these preliminary reflections served as an initial step toward the production of a journal article on the topic of transnational stewardship in global social work pedagogy, best practices for optimization of local resources in international educational contexts, and inquiry into the emotional labor required of international friendship building.

Key Questions

- To what extent do local friendships shape international social work education?
- How can universities initiate and sustain relationships with individual community members beyond the field site?

Theoretical Contribution: Trifecta of Stability

I propose the **Trifecta of Stability** as a framework for best practice recommendations for institutions that offer international social work pedagogy programs. Based on the anecdote of Meredith, I advise suggest that universities can optimize student experiences by ensuring that a local actors supports students 3 fronts: **Logistical-Emotional, Professional, and Cultural.**



Acknowledgments

Thank you to the School of Social Work Office of Global Activities for supporting travel to Dublin, Ireland to present at the SWSD conference as well as for supporting my field placement in Melbourne, Australia in 2015. The data for my presentation is derived from my 2015 field work as an MSW Global Activities Scholar. Thank you to Rackham Graduate School for providing funding for travel to the SWSD conference.



The photos here feature fellow UM SSW doctoral students at the conference and on a day trip to the Cliffs of Moher.

