

Brief Encounters with the Taos Institute

May 2017



Awake at ICCP Congress - Tenerife, Canary Islands, 2017

by Adriana Gil-Wilkerson, MS, and Sue Levin, Ph.D.
and our many conversational partners who we have
brought home with us in memories,
new practices and in our dreams.

For those who were not able to venture to the volcanic island of Tenerife, in the Canary Islands, for the ICCP Congress in March, we will share some of our brief and special memories. Arriving to Tenerife was an adventure, as it took many of us long and multiple flights, the last which had to come through Europe. People arrived from more than 40 countries, including a whole delegation from Beijing, China, who came to the pre-conference day straight from the airport. The ICCP program in Beijing is unofficial, due to some governmental challenges, but it is very strong. One of their tired students volunteered for a consultation in our workshop on Walk-In and Single Session Therapy that day, and reported she wanted the consultation to "keep her awake." Awake we all became, as we bridged language, culture, and other differences, to make the consultation meaningful. This small example became a metaphor for us, for the whole experience at the conference. How can we stay awake to each other, when we do not know each other, when we do not speak the same language, or come from the same time zone? We found that our mutual interests and inquiries led to sleeplessness and late nights, as we were awake to new ideas, new people and new practices.

We needed to be awake, as the conference schedule was almost 12 hours long, from 9am to 9pm, with a few hours for lunch, all included and taking place on the campus of the ULL (University of La Laguna) in Santa Cruz. It is a very comfortable campus that includes outside space in which we often sat to soak up the sun and the conversation(s). Our hosts and conference planners, Josep Segui and his capable and welcoming team worked hard for two years pulling together all of the resources, organizational pieces, cultural offerings, to engage us in fun and friendship from the first welcome. With almost 400 participants, it was easier to be in a conversation than it was to not be in one.

The sense of belonging to a community of learners and practitioners from such different backgrounds was awe inspiring.

Many of these long days were followed by long nights, wandering lovely streets, sitting in cafes, and eating wonderful local foods, usually from the sea.

Some of our favorite moments of the conference had to do with hearing, from practitioners, researchers, and learners from all over the world about how they used Collaborative Practices in their work and daily lives. We had many sessions from which to choose, our only regret is that we did not get to attend all of those wonderful presentations. We did greedily inquire about what others attended to engage in conversation about what else was offered that we could not attend—even these conversations were enriching and energizing. Some of us also talked about making waves in our respective communities of professionals and created a vivid picture of the metaphor and how we might continue generating waves that reach further and more different contexts.

The last morning of the conference, we were awakened by the surprising vocals of Harlene Anderson singing "Oh what a beautiful morning". Knowing Harlene for many years, and attending many conferences with her, this was the first time we heard her sing. We can only imagine how excited and happy she must have been to wake us up in this way.

In the whole experience we were reminded of a quote by Paul Valery, a French Philosopher and Poet, "The best way to make your dreams come true is to wake up."



Figure 1- Sue and Adriana



Figure 2-Sue, Neca, Adriana and Sun staying awake



Figure 3-The ICCP Program Directors and board at a pre-conference meeting



Figure 4-Part of the amazing organizing team

