The artwork illustrates the juxtaposition of transformative education and colonial control, represented through the beauty of a yellow sunflower interspersed with stamps of royalty. This tension between possibility and constraint provides the foundation for the reflection that follows. I explore what I believe education should be about and the historical and systemic constraints that it operates, and then consider how a transdisciplinary approach can underpin that philosophy before concluding with the importance of human connection.

Education should be about enlightenment, learning, human development, empowerment and the building of a better society. Yet our current education system remains shackled to history. It is a colonial, neoliberal system that lets profit drive the purpose of learning, privileging narrow forms of knowledge that benefit only those in power. A functioning society, by contrast, is a diverse one, an ecosystem in which all knowledges are celebrated and interwoven, an ever evolving, expanding co-creation of knowledge that benefits the whole community.

My pedagogy of hope requires a consistency of small acts that empower others to create impactful change. I was touched when a colleague nudged me to say she thought of me when describing hope in higher education. A small seemingly inconsequential act that brings light streaming into another person's world. As an educator and learning designer, I see illustrations of a pedagogy of hope when a student expresses appreciation of the clarity in written instructions, the academic who says "I never thought of it that way before," the lecturer who says, "I really appreciate talking to you and brainstorming."

A pedagogy requires a framework, and transdisciplinarity is one approach that can underpin it. Transdisciplinarity empowers students by giving them agency. It provides an overarching central question or theme that makes the knowledge they engage with relevant. It also creates opportunities for students to work in groups and connect with the wider community, building empathy and an appreciation of differing perspectives. Collaborating with people different from themselves helps students see the many layers of the systems operating around them and make decisions based on the welfare of the whole community, not just on what benefits them individually.

A pedagogy of hope and a transdisciplinary approach asks us to reflect. It gives us permission to stop for a moment, gather our thoughts and think critically. In our fast-paced world we are forced to adapt and change at a speed we are not built to withstand. We need to give ourselves and our students space and time to reflect, learn, and absorb the knowledge being shared. Like the sunflower's heliotropism (natural instinct to track the sun) stopping to take a moment gives us the opportunity to look up and find something bright to hold on to.

Ultimately, hope lives in human connection and the exchange of ideas. This is ako, the Māori concept of reciprocal learning, in which teacher and student learn from one another and hold for each other in mutual respect.

This is hope.