Educational Provocations
2013

Educational Provocations is the yearbook of the School of Education of the Auckland University of Technology.
Educational Provocations provides an avenue for publication for articles (essays, literature reviews, research reports, scholarship, and critical comments) by staff, students, and friends of the School of Education at the Auckland University of Technology on aspects of education and related topics.

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Editorial

Leon Benade

This edition of *Educational Provocations* is book-ended by memories of two types: one hand, the life of a great New Zealand educator, well ahead of his time, Elwyn Richardson, is celebrated in the words of Janita Craw. On the other end, memorial writing is dedicated to Philippa Gerbic and Nicky Chisnall, two greats of the AUT School of Education staff. What unites all three is that it is unlikely any of them would have considered themselves as ‘great’ educators. The words of the writers – Craw on one end, and Bernay, Morgan and Arnold, on the other, give lie, however, to that judgement. Indeed, all three, in their own way, made provocative, meaningful and deeply-lasting impressions on those with whom they came into contact.

Being able to make such an impression is sometimes all that is hoped for by most of those who enter education. What is clear from the writing in this volume, is the impression various aspects of education, and the work of education, has made on the writers. This publication is intended as an opportunity to showcase some examples of the work of those associated, directly, or indirectly, with the School of Education. As such, this volume does not disappoint.

The concept of place and space is provocative, and, as O’Sullivan shows, evocative too. Craw illustrates how place and space are a critical element of our thinking in education, a subject picked up by Gardner, who re-imagines the learning spaces we take for granted, while Begg challenges teacher educators to think of the curriculum as a space for new ways of thinking. Researchers are required to take up a position or orientation in relation to the work of research. The contributions by Boland, and a further one by Gardner, show that this orientation can be provocative and rupture with standard notions of research.

Digital and mobile technologies are playing a central, and some may argue, pervasive, role in education in the current decade. These technologies have impacts on teachers, students and those supporting the work of the first two. Jhagroo self-reflects on the changes to her own teaching–learning relationship with her students as a consequence of making shifts in her presentation practice. Gukibau, Davidson, Williams and Corker, in association with Gibbons, describe in their words the impact of mobile technology on their
ability to support their work in the School of Education, while Rana and D’Silva conclude that digital technology have broken classroom walls, taking learning beyond the traditional space of teaching and learning.

The following group of contributions demonstrates further features of lived practitioner experience. For so many who work in education, the work they do is motivated by altruistic motives, though most would nevertheless not expect to work for no financial reward! Yet, this is precisely what volunteers do, and Fitzmaurice argues that not only are altruistic motives strongly evident in volunteering, but positive career benefits are to be gained from the practice. Langdon and Ah Park meanwhile consider teacher professionalism from an early childhood context. Still within that work context, Grey argues that a professional educator working in Aotearoa New Zealand must be able to see her work through a cultural lens. Brian, an adult educator, also draws attention to the work teachers do, by arguing for teachers to seek ways of ensuring their students develop the capacity for self-management.

The Education Act requires those working in New Zealand universities to be the critics and conscience of society. It could be argued, moreover, that those working in the academy should be people capable of being critical of their own work and of the various contexts of their work. Similarly, they should not only be a social watchdog, but should ensure their own personal consciences burn with a steady flame. When they inspire those around them, their students and their colleagues, then the fire is assured of fuel. This publication may, in its own way, stand as evidence of that commitment.
The life and legacy of Elwyn Richardson

Janita Craw

Abstract

The author reflects on the way the occasion of a physical and spiritual gathering of persons concerned with the life and influence of a great, recently-passed, New Zealand educator, can disrupt ‘business as usual’, and provide opportunities for space and place to have new significance.

Naomi Klein is adamant (in her documentary, The Shock Doctrine, 2009), that when we lose our narrative, our story, we become disoriented—we’re left in a state of shock. It’s important, she suggests, to think about history, about continuity, about roots, to place ourselves in the longer human story (of struggle); It’s history enables us to work with, and respond to, contemporary challenges (such as those in teacher education?) Thinking about the Elwyn Richardson ‘exhibition with symposium’ in this way, opened up spaces for critical discussion about the different histories of ‘(progressive) education and art’, in relation to contemporary (teacher) education, and art (philosophy/theory/practices) in teacher education. It also opened up spaces to consider the place of art-based research in education. As Berlant (2011) suggests:

A situation is a state of things in which something that will perhaps matter is unfolding amid the usual activity of life. It is a state of animated and animating suspension that forces itself on consciousness, that produces a sense of the emergence of something in the present that may become an event. (p. 5)

Berlant draws on a dynamic way of thinking about an event, one that suggests movement. For many in the School of Education, the life and legacy of Elwyn Richardson was something not known, for yet others, his life and legacy were (little) more than ‘that book’ that lay somewhat static on the self. Getting to know Elwyn Richardson through ‘exhibition with symposium’ (or was it a ‘symposium with exhibition’?) certainly bought something ‘to life’. The campus came alive, people (including a number of children momentarily
encountered in *The GlassHouse*) seemed to have a good time—a time well spent? It seemed to ignite the kind of (interferring) *noise* Michael Serres suggests is essential for communication, yet a noise that demands discernment or filtering (Berlant, 2011).

The day attracted over 100 registrations made up of a diverse audience of cross sector and out of town teachers, academics, artists, and a number of curators. Is writing ‘in the aftermath’ supposed, however, to offer some kind of evaluative overview, or perhaps something about the (long-lasting) impact? Or does it, at least, offer an overview that interprets the experience in ways that suggests (or measures?) its worthiness, its success, beyond simply its ‘smooth running’?

Without indulging in some kind of “self congratulatory enjoyment of nostalgia”, as (artist/writer) Dan Arps (2013, n.d.) warns, it was evident the ‘exhibition with symposium’ offered moments of reflective rememberings. An absolute and significant highlight of getting to know the life and legacy of Elwyn Richardson came through the eyes of David Henare, one of Elwyn’s pupils. More about ‘the man’ himself came through the work of Margaret MacDonald—and others who had the pleasure or privilege of working with Elwyn, or knowing his work. Helen May, “appreciated being asked” to share a rich (and pictorial) history of New Zealand education, contextualising Elwyn Richardson’s work within its bigger picture. Other presenters offered a glimpse of what might be important (now, and in the future) in relation to education and art across a number of tertiary institutions, and in the community. As with anything (ambitious) that endeavours to ‘disrupt a business as usual’ approach, there is much letting go of things outside one’s control, inevitably leaving traces of a cruel optimism (Berlant, 2011). It was very disappointing that artist, Jim Allen, was unable to attend due to illness. As he suggested in correspondence: “At 91 years I have good days and bad days and it happened that wasn’t a good day, no use to God nor man day”. Jim’s presence would have done much to increase the visibility and significance of Jim’s work with Elwyn, as well as other artists, such as Arnold Wilson and Barry Brickell.

*Art at Work* was successful in ‘outing art’, away from any traditional designated gallery spaces. spilling it “into the public domain, occupying abandoned sites and disturbing natural landscapes” (Blundell, 2007, p. 45); an approach always intent on creating new spaces for different forms of art, as
well as opportunities for developing new or (re)igniting old networks and relationships. As Blundell elaborates:

We’re talking about contextual art, art responding to its physical location, ephemeral art (videos, audios, physical performances, things growing or rotting or evaporating into urban folklore), art messing around with cultural history or the natural environment, art that may or may not leave a lasting imprint on the cityscape or landscape but that is designed to leave an enduring impression on the memory of the viewer or participant. (p. 45)

A highlight has to be the networks and relationships that occurred in the getting to know the ol’ (abandoned) garden shed, The GlassHouse, as well those that occurred in the preparatory work for The Print House—though in this instance, time compromised any greater involvement, for example, of Class 4 (Onepoto Primary), that might have otherwise have unfolded.

An email from Margaret MacDonald offered an overview: “I was so impressed with the exhibition and with the coordination of the whole event – you all really did a wonderful job in pulling this together – the program was beautifully done as was the website”. It was great to get feedback from those in attendance who represented the wider AUT University: an email from Sharon Harvey (Dean of Research, Faculty of Society and Culture) evoked a ‘looking back’ (perhaps to a new and different future?), when she suggested:

It was a wonderfully innovative, while academically robust symposium and exhibition and a real credit to the School. It was so nice to have Art practice and curation integrated with Education. It made me feel quite wistful for the days when Art and Design were part of our Faculty... I’m sure Elwyn would have been very pleased and humbled. Congratulations to everyone who had a part to play in the event!

Bruce Hammonds, a teacher-educator in the Taranaki (http://leading-learning.blogspot.co.nz/2013/01/elwyn-s-richardson-1925-2012-creative.html), suggested (via email) prior to this event that it might ignite a way forward, an inspired future: “Your symposium could inspire a new era for creative education before it is too late”.

Amongst the ripples included Lesley Smith (Director, Lopdell House, Titirangi), who reported that a number of people would have been keen to participate in the symposium, visit the exhibition, including those who had known or worked with Elwyn over the years, some in education, others like
herself, who had a keen interest in, or practice with printing. Other ripples in the grapevine questioned the significance of this celebratory event happening at the site of AUT University, rather than at that of the University of Auckland’s Faculty of Education (Epsom Campus), that is by all accounts the ‘home’ of Elwyn’s history, with teacher education as well as ‘home’ to (much of) the Elwyn Richardson Collection of archival children’s works. Perhaps, it’s this kind of disruptive gesture that creates the kinds of cracks, fissures, spaces for something else, something ‘new’ to emerge?

Maybe when our research reaches beyond the arbitrary limits we establish in a ‘business as usual’ approach, something new emerges. Another email (from someone in Health Care Practice) indicates what might happen when we create the cracks to invite others in:

I was just looking at the artworks in AF foyer, the prints and pottery inspired by Elwyn Richardson …. I didn’t attend the day, somehow I didn’t cotton on to that event, but I was very intrigued with the fabulous display of prints and poetry and pottery. I found it inspiring, and somehow encouraging that such ‘soul’ is still present in this big, busy institution ….. So I went back to the website and there I found the flyer and other information about the symposium/exhibition, and again I was impressed. It really is great quality.

So, congratulations to your staff for staging this exhibition. Although the exhibits are ‘historical’ they are still wonderfully original and lively. They really refreshed my day.

At the time of writing this overview, the exhibition still exists, well after the significant date, but in a somewhat metamorphosed form (works have been added, others taken away), enabling The GlassHouse to take on another significance. The kind of significance attributed to that of creating what is referred to as a biopolitical space, not unlike that of the ‘occupy movement’: Occupying The GlassHouse has become a small-scale activist gesture. It created the cracks, the fissures for thinking about how art might contribute to the social and political ‘struggles’ we (all) encounter in lives that include privatisation, corporatisation, and sustainability.

References


**Author**

Janita Craw is interested in examining how visual art as 'a site of knowledge' can contribute to our understandings and research practices in education. She is particularly interested in how artists draw on the site of 'childhood' to inform their practices and how this might contribute to the reconceptualising childhood movements taking place within a number of disciplines.
The Temporality of Trees - An encounter with Puriri, 
Time, Space, Self and Other at 5.46am 

Victoria O’Sullivan

Abstract

The author details her collaborative efforts and the underlying premises of the creation of the images that make up the covers of this year’s Educational Provocations.

The back-cover of this year’s Educational Provocations includes two images, taken at precisely the same moment in twenty-four hour time, (5.46 am) but in two different locations, and with a month separating each; the first image having been shot in the playgrounds of Oruaiti School, in the Far North, (latitude -36.880256, longitude 174.781172), and the second on the soccer fields of Dilworth College, Auckland, (latitude -35.004392, longitude 173.500750). These images are stills that have been extracted from a twenty-four hour recording, taken at the two sites, and with the assistance of Nicole Koch and Clint Milne, at the time final year Bachelor of Digital Design students at Auckland University of Technology. They travelled with Janita Craw and myself to the Far North, in June 2013, for the Oruaiti recording. The image on the front are the two images sandwiched together, compressing time, (‘now-time’ and a more ambiguously defined; ‘some-other previous’ time,) and space, and the markers of memory that inform the experience of both. The ‘now-time’ markers are perhaps the particular time the Oruaiti family – whom the four of us befriended, or who befriended us – in the house located behind the trees in the image, flicked their lights on as the sun rose, or the smell of diesel fumes as a boy/girl-racer charged along the main road outside Dilworth College, in the early hours of the morning. The ‘some-other previous time’ are perhaps the experiences of others, remembered or otherwise, in these spaces.

The images are stills from the resulting film that was produced from both recordings: 'Dilworth Puriri, (Latitude -36.880256, Longitude 174.781172) / Oruaiti Puriri and Wild Turkey – (Latitude -35.004392, Longitude
which was exhibited as part of the exhibition *Art at Work*, an exhibition curated by Craw and myself. The exhibition was a key component of the Elwyn Richardson symposium held at Auckland University of Technology in July, 2013, to commemorate the December, 2012 passing away of Richardson. The film took as its departure point, the significance of trees, and other natural phenomenon, in Richardson's short stories, teaching, and overall understanding of the 'aesthetic experience of science.' The latitude and longitude numbers indicate the location of trees of particular significance to Richardson; two located next to one another on the grounds of Dilworth School in Auckland, (the secondary school Richardson attended, between 1933 and 1940) and the other, a small grove, planted by Richardson and a student some forty years ago on the grounds of Oruaiti School, where Richardson developed his experimental approach to teaching, (1949-1962). The twenty four hour recording of this grove of trees, captured the progression of time during an atypical day, one where the otherwise bustling school environment, so palpable in archival audio-visual footage documenting a typical day at the school, for example in *The Song of the Bird*, (McRae, n.d) is replaced by the quietness of a day during the term holidays.

The Puriri trees at Dilworth College, (likewise recorded over twenty four hours,) were pivotal to Richardson’s developing understanding of the ‘aesthetic’ experience of science and became a 'motif' in his short story, 'The Upper Changing Rooms at Boarding School' (see MacDonald, 2010, pp.197-199). The story, which operates much like an educational fable and is written in the first person, outlines the phenomenon of Richardson, as a boarder at the school, seeing light being projected through holes in a galvanised iron roof of a building. He writes:

> It was a darkened room into which light came from one small south-side window and the door when it was open. A single electric bulb could illuminate the place – this was needed on dull overcast days. Two quite old Puiri trees (vitex-lucens) branched over the roof and there was always a scraping noise to be heard on the roof when no one was inside. The galvanised iron roofing was obviously serving a new purpose. It had been used before and nail holes let pinpoints of light into the darkness. (Richardson, 2006, cited in Macdonald, 2010, p.197)

Later in this story, Richardson talks about wanting to turn the changing sheds into a giant camera, (much like a pin-hole camera,) so that he could permanently record the chance phenomenon of seeing the shadows of the
Puriri tree branches being projected through the holes, their images, as he described it, 'trembling' onto a piece of paper that he had placed on the ground in order to trace the insects that have become caught by the light.

The recordings thus formed a sort of ‘cataloguing’ of trees significant to Richardson, and responded to ideas of time, memory, place, presence, the agency of inanimate things, and movement over time and history. They also took up on Richardson's desire, albeit many years later, to tangibly record the aesthetic experience of science, as he describes it in ‘The Upper Changing Rooms at Boarding School’.

Figure 1: Nicole Koch and Clint Milne in tent with camera, during the twenty-four recording at Dilworth College, 6th-7th July.

References


Author

Victoria O’Sullivan is a lecturer and programme leader in the secondary initial teacher education programme in the School of Education of AUT University. Apart from her long teaching experience, she is an accomplished artist.
The Guerrillas in the Myth…

Michele Gardner

Abstract

In *The Invisible Gorilla* (Chabris & Simons, 2010) we read of an often repeated experiment in which the observers fail to notice a large hairy creature appear in their environment because their focus is directed elsewhere. In this article, I want to explore some of the invisibles that I believe exist in my practice as an artist teacher operating in higher education in order to determine if they are indeed invisible gorillas.

Positioning the myth within the sacred space

The learning environment is a separated place within our community, and while schools, kindergartens, crèches, playcentres, colleges, and kohanga all have an element of this same fenced off uniqueness, the tertiary environment is distinctive in a different way. Perhaps it is the adulthood of population; a child is a rare and engaging visitor within these bounds. Perhaps it is the focus of that population, or perhaps it is the fact that the population here is present voluntarily, there is little compulsion being exercised upon attendance within the boundaries and buildings of higher education. No matter what the individual discipline or practice, nearly everyone here is intent on some facet of learning, absorbing it, promoting it, nurturing it, exploiting, or exploring it. Everyone is connected through that endeavour, be they professor, barista, student, administrator, or groundskeeper; each use the spaces provided in ways that intersect and enhance another’s experience within that learning environment. That interconnectedness creates a community that could be seen to operate within sacred spaces – as Broussard points out “anything that reconnects us is, inherently, a religious or deeply personal spiritual experience that has great meaning, and the university campus is ripe with opportunities to reconnect for people of all ages.” (Broussard, February 2010, unpaginated). He uses the word ‘religious’ in a very considered way, pointing out that “the etymology of religion is from the Latin term religio, to reconnect.”

In his article, Broussard looks at the campus from the point of view of the administrator, looking for ways to fund the business of learning, but recognizing that deeply personal connection that takes place within the learning space has other significant impacts for all who operate within that
wider environment. “There are five types of sacred spaces: ritual or
ceremonial spaces, processional or exploring spaces, perspective-dominant
spaces, refuge spaces, and cultural transition spaces” (Broussard, February
2010, 'By Definition'). The ritual spaces certainly exist on most tertiary
campuses; there are reception areas where greetings take place, designated
visitor and guest areas, even halls where graduations and award ceremonies
can take place. The pathways and walkways, drives and entrances fit his
processional space definition, all carefully maintained, and even guarded, in
the formal; and again in the casually created tracks and trails across grassy
areas between routinely used buildings and classrooms.

There are exploring spaces, specific sometimes, adopted at others, in the
gardens and quiet seating areas within and without social places, paths we
physically wander between classes, seats we rest on while our minds do the
wandering. The perspective-dominant spaces are easily spotted, the schools,
the laboratories, the technical areas, the offices, the studios, lecture halls and
libraries – could all be said to be perspective-dominant in a human sense,
while the open green fields, and views from high windows also provide that
broader visual perspective outlook. Or the smaller more intimate close
perspective, like view down into an abandoned bird’s nest that one of my
teachers here at Akoranga particularly enjoys. This viewing of a space
becomes a personal refuge, a small safe area we can mentally and spiritually
retreat to, in imagination or physically, like the seat by the goldfish pond or
the furthermost carrel desk on the third floor of the library. This perceived
need for a retreating space is formally provided for in different ways, with
 provision for culturally appropriate prayer, meditation, or meeting places, but
those are not the only spaces that acquire a spiritual significance within our
tertiary environments.

And while in ‘decasia’ the self-appointed critic of academic culture
(Thorkelson, 2009) quite rightly points out Broussard’s commercial
motivations in his discussion of the sacred space, he might well be gazing at
the trees in this forest, for the sacred nature of human community spaces is
not in dispute. Neither though are the commodification of matters educational
and the determined marketing of the institution through careful architecture
and groomed landscapes, which while inarguably part of rationale of
academic administrators is not the only raison d’etre underlying the academy
and its purposefully created or adapted environments.
Joseph Campbell, one of the western world’s twentieth century philosophers tells us what it means to have a sacred space. “This is a place where you can simply experience and bring forth what you are and what you might be. This is the place of creative incubation. At first, you might find that nothing happens there. But if you have a sacred space, and use it, something eventually will happen” (Campbell & Moyers, 1988, p.92). For many this is the space they gravitate to, before and after class, to meet friends, to work as self-directed groups or as individuals, to prepare or to decompress from more formal activity.

The learning space becomes sacred through the positive uses to which we as spiritual thinking beings put it; we create the connections, layer the associations and commit these traces to memory as part of our overall learning experience. If these are positive experiences, our learning is enhanced and expanded. It follows therefore that making these connections within beautiful spaces that facilitate our connectedness can only enhance that learning process, in a similar way that efficient tools, well designed seating, lighting and sound, and technically up-to-date equipment enhances it. These aspects of the learning space are not essential by any means, but they can be very successfully used to promote comfort and ease of learning which may well be a factor in the success of the institution. The financial investment Broussard is endeavouring to foster with his support of the aesthetic and the meaningful within the physical nature of the academy is evidence of that success. He seeks to use it to encourage financial sponsorship from those who benefited from that enhanced environment. The hallowed icons of our industry sing to us of these kinds of imagined sacred spaces made real: Yale, Cambridge, Harvard, Oxford – even the beloved pale stone clock tower that looks out over Auckland University contributes its lacy filigreed image to our memory coded associations with higher learning.

As teachers, facilitators, students, administrators, or whatever – our roles are inextricably dependent on the business and process of learning within the higher education environment. By deliberately choosing to enhance that space we are promoting the engagement of all who operate within it (Mitchell, 2012). From our routinely careful use of environmental systems and obedient observance of unspoken social rules regarding property damage to our active involvement in developing the learning space in individualised ways we each play a part in creating that sacred refuge within which we can operate with
increased comfort and pleasure. In the filmed seminar on technology and learning spaces “The Learning Space Puzzle” (Mitchell, 2012) we are shown several ways international institutions have used to boost student engagement, and make teaching a more productive process. In one instance Geoff Mitchell shows how MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) installed large blackboards and provided chalk in the social spaces – the student commons – adjacent to classrooms, where students could revisit lecture material, grab a passing lecturer and debate and expand on material from classes. While technology clearly takes a strong position in Mitchell’s world, this back to the future installation has paid off for MIT and could so easily be adopted in our own environments. It is after all about writing, about symbols and about creating meaning – how more contextually appropriate could it be than to install a few public blackboards with chalk in our social spaces? MIT also sourced its artworks from its own students work, using digitally reproduced imagery on large screens. Contrast this with the borrowing of valuable pieces from established collections, which, along with the administrative responsibilities and costs, really does nothing beyond the decorative and the inspirational, for the mass of students using those spaces. The engagement potential of deliberately showcasing fellow students work can be clearly demonstrated in our own resource working space in the AJ building – why not elsewhere? Why not in other disciplines? Not only would this support student engagement, and reward achievement but it would contribute to ritual and ceremony as factors in the creation of the sacred within the learning space.

Adding large blackboards to student spaces with the chalk they require, could serve a similar creative purpose, as a support for drawings, doodles and graffiti as a community moderated social commentary, as well as a learning tool, multiple value from one economical installation, what’s stopping us? And for the studiously health and safety conscious among us, wiseGeek has the answers (Pollick, 2013) on the oft quoted and hugely exaggerated dangers of chalkdust.

Another way of deliberately enhancing the sacred spaces within our institutional environment is the creation of a maze or labyrinth. Walking the pathways of these complex designs is an aid to meditation and a useful tool in mindfulness and awareness development. Several tertiary campuses have these in place, sponsored or developed in-house, in various forms, sizes and positions. Brescia (The circle womens centre, 2013), in Ontario, Lenoir-
Rhyne (Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, 2012) in Columbia, and in Edinburgh (University of Edinburgh, 2013) labyrinths and mazes have been created as part of the environmental teaching tools for students and staff to use both physically and to enjoy intellectually and spiritually. I note an example of one is currently featuring in the graphic design of an AUT advertisement for the Venture Fund, imagine the possibilities of a bricked version set perhaps near the Library building.

As a working artist, the environment matters to me, as both a living physical world and as a potential canvas for work in my interacting with it. It is both source and support, as it is for all living beings, while offering opportunities to test and rest our own physical being within. One of the ways we connect with our environment is by taking temporary or long term ‘ownership’ of portions of it, metaphorically or by way of legal title or occupation. We are granted a space within it, and we immediately ‘take possession’ by changing the space around us in minor or major ways. We make our mark upon it, be it with a name plate, scratched initials in a desktop, the gift of tree planting, or hanging posters on the walls. In contemporary art circles site specificity is a genre all of its own. Responding to our environment physically creates a memory to which a concept can be pinned, and reinforced each time the memory or the environment is revisited. It also makes use of a secondary audience, and can generate inquiry, leading to further learning opportunities as the event ripples out from its initial event. Teachers in schools know that putting students work up as displayed artefacts rewards and encourages performance, and yet in many tertiary environments this is frowned upon – usually by administrators rather than those intimately involved in using the spaces. From personal experience, I know that permissions must be sought and obtained, red tape agreed to, bureaucratic hoops stepped through in order to physically act on the environment. Hence, the appeal of small guerrilla acts of public art making, posting posters, and putting coloured objects on windowsills, adding potted plants and desk furniture. But imagine for a moment the delight of a more substantial but non-violent intervention, a bright vividly striped flag, playing dance music, or spray painting a vast area of grass vermilion for example. The creatively inspired disruption might be sufficiently rewarding to balance the bureaucratic consternation and administrative consequences.

After all, is not learning about transformation, about change, sometimes
through disruption? Are not our higher learning environments all about supporting such events?

**Ignoring the obvious**

It benefits any community to occasionally take a hard look at itself. In the School of Education, I think we are inclined to pay lip service to some vital directives we pretend to have in our Curriculum design initiatives. We repeatedly espouse the importance of creativity and innovation in our pedagogy, but we do not walk the walk. As blogger Higher Edison (Schwister, 2010), speaking of Teaching as a Subversive Activity (Postman & Weingartner, 1969), points out, we do not fill in page 61, we read the words but we do not do the work. We are not any better at supporting creativity than we are at self-reflection. Just as giving our personal voice free rein within our academic writing as student or scholar, or expressing in public a personal opinion, it is a risk we fear to take. After all, we might be challenged just as the Emperor in the classic fairy tale was challenged by a child pointing out a public indecency.

And yet we should be mindfully taking many risks, for it is one sure way of making our teaching memorable. Hanging a lesson onto a memory and adding a thumbtack of fun or pleasure is an effective way to achieve our professional aim. It need not always be immediately content related either: often the memory and a concept or a term are linked this way and can be explored, or built on, at a later date. We know this from our own life experience: new learning or experience seems to attract reinforcement through similarity from the most unexpected places. Like attracts like, in our innate ability to find what we are looking for in any given phenomenon under observation. By making use of other elements of our practice, such as environmental support, peer teaching, inquiry learning and practical demonstrations we initiate what John Dewey called ‘collateral learning’ (Postman & Weingartner, 1969, p.84), that is, “the learning that takes place while the teacher is working with the intellect”. It is this experiential layering that we can make use of to build knowledge in the learner. In addition there is the example we set as teachers to be considered, how do we foster the willingness to follow their curiosity among our learners if we do not explore the ‘what if’ ourselves? We want our learners to engage and stay engaged; the element of surprise and delight can help us to support that engagement.
We need to have courage if we are to become truly subversive agents for change within our own profession. Stepping outside the box might be one step too far for some, but perhaps that’s what Sir Ken Robinson is advocating when he calls upon us to put aside old school Industrial Age methods and rise up to the challenge of the 21st century (Robinson, 2006). It is not enough to fall back on PowerPoint and Prezi et al; we should seek to upgrade our own teaching methods if we are not to be absorbed into and indeed replaced by The Machine. While there is institutional and personal professional kudos to be harvested from being at the leading edge of technology, it is called the cutting edge for a reason. There is always the sharp danger that we will be blinded by the magic lantern to the never ending value of our older more human tools, that is until the power goes off, or the excruciatingly expensive system suffers an unforeseen bug attack.

There is a payoff for having courage and taking risks. We become the heroes of our own stories, our own mythology, by building our own self-esteem and confidence. When we do that, we can then enter the mythology of our peer community and our learners (Campbell & Moyers, 1988, p.4) and do the same for them.

One way we can provide heroic pathways for our learners is to become deliberately responsive to their learning needs rather than a transmitter of information. In her book Artificial Hells (Bishop, 2012) the author refers to two experimental learning projects. Summerhill in the United Kingdom is a well known example of participatory pedagogy that has achieved longevity despite its ongoing battle with its critics. Here the learners are in the dominant power position, turning the western approach to ‘schooling’ on its head. The teaching staff has committed to relinquishing control of content and curricula, and yet Summerhill continues. The sky has not fallen in. A second experimental project Bishop outlines is the Einstein Class of 2005 developed by Pawel Althamer. This was a “six-month project to teach physics to a group of seven juvenile delinquents in Warsaw, most of whom had been expelled from school” (Bishop, 2012, p.256). She describes her experience of the project using words like ‘chaotic’ and ‘mayhem’, each of which is a frightening prospect for all but the bravest or most foolhardy of teachers, and yet the reader cannot but feel that the learners within the experiment were offered a very rare opportunity. Who knows what educative repercussions they took away from the experience?
In the end perhaps one of the most important ‘invisibles’ I keep catching glimpses of as my own higher education proceeds is the concept of situational awareness. It is this eyes-wide-open focus that facilitates peripheral vision. And it is in those realms available to peripheral vision, I think, that some of the vital strengths of my pedagogy might be found.

**Spotting the gorilla**

In examining the development of my own learning, I have situated myself as artist teacher. The term infers a foot in two different operating spheres, a physical operating as a maker of visual art, and a pedagogical performance that overlaps and is informed by the artmaking practice. While my knowledge of and experience in the pedagogical context is still very much at novice level, my embodied knowing of the art engaged process is not, and has to be granted precedence in leading my focus in the former. To get the best result from that overlapping intersection I need first to endeavour to bring the two spheres as close together as possible, and then open up that combined space to its full potential. It is an ongoing process that has to be based on continuous learning, reflective practice, and developing situational awareness.

One of the most important elements of the process for me is positioning my artist teaching self within an operating environment that allows the potential of that relational experience to develop. To locate that self-position, I must find the established philosophical approaches that I am sympathetic to, that will underpin my practice by providing first the methodology and subsequently the tools I put to productive use. Within that position is a strong discomfort with the oppressive techniques, formats, and strategies that remain within mainstream education. I share Anne Wagner’s experience:

> Quickly, we learn that to be accepted as a legitimate scholar, there are issues which are not appropriate as topics of academic investigation or to be included in one’s pedagogical practices. Such unwritten dictates, however, are in perpetual tension with my commitment to feminist and antiracism practices which compel me to value life experiences and embodied understandings as valuable sources for knowledge production.  
> (Shahjahan, Wagner, & Wane, 2009, p.61)

My embodied understandings include a deep commitment to the positive benefits of engagement with artmaking, but in order to fight the unwritten dictates of the academy, I have to endeavour to decolonise both the art studio
space along with the perceived position of “the ‘Artist’ as detached, isolated, and rebellious, and ‘Art’ as aesthetic self expression without social responsibility or utility” (Heck & Quintero, 2004, p. 49 - 66).

The purpose of bringing those two spheres together in the real world, not just in my imagined plans for the future is in essence to play a part in “Restoring the arts to center, moving them from a mythologically defined marginality is, we propose, a matter of individual and cultural survival, not simply of entertainment or political equity” (Heck & Quintero, 2004, p 49 - 66). While the commercial imperatives of the western trend towards reframing the institutions of academia into business models attempt to force art making into the far boundaries of the academy the positive benefits of ‘making’ are ignored.

It seems that art and academia are in an age where the liberatory potential of art is misunderstood at best and sabotaged at worst. Art students and non-art students alike are aware of this society’s propensity to vilify art through romanticizing and/or ignoring art but have no substantial arguments to the contrary. The question ‘why is art necessary?’ often evokes a response of simple dumbfoundedness if not resentful dismissiveness. Thinking of art as ‘necessary’ is a difficult stretch for many and not thinking of it as an intellectually aloof commercial venture involving ridiculous amounts of money is increasingly more difficult (Heck & Quintero, 2004, p.49 - 66).

Hunting down those invisible clues to success within the sacred bounds of the higher learning environment, confronting the dangers of discomfiting new experiences, and risking the unsettling imbalances caused by intellectual challenges and administrative obstacles is part of my personal search for the great hairy gorilla loose within my vision.

For who could resist the creative (and maybe subversive?) possibilities offered by a close encounter with such an incredible beast?

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Places and spaces for thinking and enquiry

Andy Begg

Abstract
The words ‘places’ and ‘spaces’ often imply the physical world, but may also suggest virtual places and spaces such as the curriculum; the learning, teaching, and enquiry environment; and the notion of the space between teachers’ and students’ ears. I see curriculum as ‘all that is planned for the classroom’ and believe it needs reviewing. I wonder, what is the place for thinking and enquiry (research) in education; and how might we create space in programmes for the many aspects of thinking? Ones responses to these questions depend on what one sees as the aims of education. In this reflective opinion piece I offer my perspective on the aims and some possible implications of them with the hope of provoking others to reconsider these curriculum issues within New Zealand education.

Introduction
The place of learning and teaching means different things to different people as the words, ‘place’, ‘learning’, and ‘teaching’, can be interpreted in many ways.

- Is the place the university, the lecture theatre, the school, the classroom, the library, the students study areas, the curriculum, or the space between the ears of the learners and the teachers?
- Does learning mean being able to make sense of material provided by lecturers or sourced from reference material, or does it mean accumulating knowledge and reflecting on it?
- Does teaching mean tutoring, lecturing, or stimulating learning?
- These questions lead to other questions such as, is teaching a necessary or a sufficient condition for learning, and does learning occur mainly in physical teaching spaces?

As educators we all have ideas about what we are doing. For me, the prime focus is learning, but before considering place, learning, or teaching, it seems logical to consider ones aims for education, what we mean by learning, and what we want our students to learn.

Exploring aims
Educational institutions all have implicit and explicit aims that may be expressed under different headings. While universities have graduate
attributes the focus more often appears to be on assessable course outcomes; and in the school sector there are key competencies but teachers and students seem more concerned with achievement objectives. In other words, it seems to me that students at both levels are more concerned with assessment than with the learning aims implicit in the activities they are expected to engage with.

For me there are two key aims for primary, secondary, and tertiary educational institutions, though these aims are often implicit rather than explicit. These two aims do not relate to content or subject knowledge that can be remembered and used, but rather, to developing autonomous life-long learning skills, and fostering enquiry skills and thinking abilities.

Developing autonomous life-long learning skills implies enabling students to continue active learning throughout their lifetime without relying on formal teaching, thus, learning skills are more important than subject content. Enquiry skills (investigatory projects and research skills) and thinking capacity are implicit in learning skills but are often listed separately and many students, at all levels of education, have not been given opportunities or encouragement to develop a broad repertoire of enquiry and thinking skills.

I imagine there is considerable agreement concerning these aims, and many educators would say that these are their implicit aims, but they are rarely the prime focus of teaching or assessment. In my experience they are mainly emphasised in the final years of tertiary study when students are doing thesis work.

Learning

I say, because of my experiences as both learner and teacher, learning is ‘coming to know’, but what is learnt is rarely what the teacher taught. I know I did not always understand what I was taught; and marking students work is evidence that what I taught was not what they learnt. This mismatch is partly due to the time needed for understanding to develop, and it led me to realise that having specific goals may be counter-productive. Marking assignments also indicated the range of abilities and understandings within classes and made me question the appropriateness of specific content objectives. These experiences have led me to continue to ask: what is my role as a teacher? What are my aims when teaching? Should I focus on the product of learning or the process of learning?
Reflecting on my own learning and teaching (Begg, 2006), I came to accept and understand a number of commonly held beliefs. These included: learning about something depends on prior knowledge; learning takes time and never ends; learning involves ideas and understandings that change as one learns; learning is influenced by language and other enculturated ways of being; learning varies according to interest and motivation; and a rich learning task is one that can be explored in many ways.

My interest in how we learn led me to learning theories that all have evidence to support them, but which also contradict each other. From my perspective, the theory that best explains learning is enactivism (Begg, 2013; Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2000). This theory is based on ideas from complex living systems and neuroscience, and is summarised by: Living is learning and learning is living. From this perspective, learning occurs all the time, and both formal and informal education is more than the accumulation and memorisation of knowledge and experience complemented by understanding. It is about thinking in many ways about what we know and do not know; about how we understand what we know together with an awareness of other ways that it might be understood; and involves knowing and thinking at conscious, sub-conscious, and unconscious levels. In my experience this thinking aspect of curriculum is not given adequate attention by educators. What is thinking?

**Thinking traditionally**

In early Western philosophy thinking was considered to be empirical (experience/memory-based, known through the senses) or rational (concept-based, known through the mind). Empirical or experience-based thinking meant thinking involving all the senses but more recently it seems to be limited to the measurable physical senses—seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting, and bodily awareness (kinaesthesia). It ignored bodily knowing at the subconscious level; direct knowing through intuition or epiphany; and phenomenological knowing (from Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and others) that acknowledges direct knowing that links not with the ‘measurable’ senses but with ‘direct awareness’ that involves contemplation or Eastern meditation.
Thinking today

Today, critical, creative, and meta-cognitive forms of thinking seem usually to be regarded as dominant. Critical (or logical) thinking means concept-based or rational thinking; though one aspect of critical thinking that is too often ignored is being explicit about the assumptions one makes—these assumptions include the logic system themselves, for example traditional Aristotelian, Boolean and Eastern yin-yang logic systems all differ.

Creative thinking involves the arts, but also all forms of logical thinking because critical thinking also involves looking for alternatives. For example, it seems to me that researchers in education, social sciences, economics, science, and medicine often make claims of causality on the basis of correlation without thinking creatively as they interrogate their data to find other factors influencing the result.

Meta-cognitive (or higher-order thinking) supplements critical and creative thinking; it involves monitoring one’s thinking. It includes identifying tasks, choosing strategies when planning, ordering stages of development, monitoring progress, considering options, and so on.

Thinking more broadly

As I see it, these three forms of thinking are not enough. My belief is that we should think of eight main ways of thinking, and not partition these as they are all interrelated and there is a need to be able to move easily between them. Thus, rather than considering these ways as ‘forms’ of thinking, I prefer to call them aspects of the thinking process. Table 1 (below) summarises these eight aspects and outlines some of their component parts.

Currently empirical and logical thinking are often grouped together under critical thinking, but thinking based on the senses and the memory is somewhat different from logical and often abstract thinking based on logic systems invented by humans. In addition, caring, contemplative, bodily and collective thinking have not, until recently, been given adequate attention.

Lipman (2003), who worked with others (e.g., Lipman, Sharp, & Oscanyan, 1980) in the philosophy for children project, has written about caring thinking. Caring has three main elements, caring for self, for others, and for all living things together with the environment. Each of these is also ‘critical’ as we make assumptions about who and what matters and how we care for
them; and these assumptions differ significantly across cultures, which reflect different aspects of ethical thinking and cultural thinking.

Contemplative thinking involves developing awareness and direct knowing (through intuition or insight). This was evident in the wisdom traditions of the past and the cultural traditions of many indigenous people (e.g., Woolff, 2001), and in the contemplative practices of people based on a broad range of spiritual and secular beliefs. Contemplative thinking arises from more than the ‘measurable’ senses although the senses can also be involved. Examples of this occur with intuition and in the ‘aha’ moments when, without thinking, ideas coalesce and one ‘visualises’ a new theory.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects of thinking</th>
<th>including</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empirical thinking</td>
<td>experience-based, sense-based, and memory-based thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Logical thinking</td>
<td>rational or concept-based thinking, and critical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative thinking</td>
<td>imaginative, inventive, and design thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meta-cognitive thinking</td>
<td>monitoring one’s own thinking, and strategic thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring thinking</td>
<td>caring for self, others, environment, and ethical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemplative thinking</td>
<td>Insight, intuition, direct knowing, and resting ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodily thinking</td>
<td>sub-conscious (reactions to stimuli)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective thinking</td>
<td>communal, cultural, and global thinking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Table 1: Eight aspects of thinking*

Bodily thinking is a form of sub-conscious thinking, and is thus a form we are
hardly aware of. From neuroscience we know that our body only consciously registers about 20 of the 10 million bits of sensory input that our sense organs register every second (Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2008). Such subconscious bodily thinking needs acknowledgement and may explain how many life forms think and react in natural settings, and perhaps should be termed direct knowing rather than bodily thinking.

The above forms are derived from traditional western ontological assumptions in which each person is assumed to be an individual. Alternatives to this include: ‘I-thou’ as a unity rather than as two individuals (Buber, 1958/1923); I as an integral part of community and linked to the land (as envisaged in traditional communities including Māori and Pasifika); I as integrated with all living things—the Gaia philosophy (Lovelock, 1979); and I as connected to and part of the world as in deep ecology (Naess, 1995/1986).

The final form of thinking in my classification is collective (or cultural) thinking. I see this as being concerned with how people in other communities think. It depends on the assumptions made and these are often taken for granted because of the language, experiences, and cultural practices shared by those within the collective. It is also related to how one sees oneself—am I an individual, or am I a being-in/of-the-world? Putting the world before oneself is evidence of one aspect of collective (or global) thinking.

**Alternative thinking categories**

While the above analysis listed eight aspects of thinking, any activity involving thinking should normally draw on many of these either sequentially or simultaneously. One could also categorise thinking under numerous other headings, including: subject based-thinking—mathematical, scientific, economic, and so on; everyday thinking—gut feeling, received knowing; practical thinking—routine thinking involved in everyday activities; ethical thinking—values thinking, relational thinking; gendered thinking—male/female/neutral thinking; cultural thinking—dependent on language, beliefs, and customs; generalising (theorising)/specialising or analytic/synthetic thinking; convergent and divergent thinking—summarising and exploring; modelling and symbolic thinking—verbal, visual, dramatic, mathematical; narrative thinking—writing and telling stories, using language; visual thinking—imagining, picturing, visualising, gesturing (body language); social thinking—values, relationality, and community; aesthetic thinking
(appreciating beauty in the visual arts, performing arts, music, craft, language (poetry and prose), design (including architecture). Within any discipline it is easy to concentrate on one or two particular aspects of thinking; my belief is that all disciplines can be enriched if we encourage the use of other aspects of thinking within them.

**Research: what is it?**

Research can be thought of as re-search—to search again; to search about (as re means ‘about’); or with the traditional academic meaning, to search for something new (although new must be interpreted as new for the student rather than new for everyone). Research and enquiry are virtually synonymous terms, and while some people privilege the term research I see no need to do so. My belief is that most tertiary students have already been involved in research when in primary or high school they were involved in project work. A student has been asked to do research when given

- a problem to investigate,
- a situation to investigate,
- an activity to report on
- an idea to explore,
- a theme or design brief to be interpreted creatively
- a design (and make) task.

This does not require the immediate teaching of research skills as higher education students have common sense and have undertaken project work at school and self-initiated home-based projects. Indeed, enquiry skills should not be regarded as esoteric skills that need to be taught, but as formalised common-sense approaches to self-directed learning. That is not to say that at some time they will not want to extend their enquiry/research skills but helping them do this on an “as-required” basis rather than a “just-in-case” basis’ is probably more productive.

Students will broaden their range of enquiry skills when listening to others report on their investigations at both the early planning stage in a class meeting, and later in concluding presentations when they describe how they actually undertook their projects. They will also develop these skills when encouraged by having a range of approaches offered to them and then investigate for themselves what these approaches could involve and decide how they might modify them.
Enquiry/research skills

Traditionally research was been seen as either quantitative or qualitative. Now a broader range of approaches is acceptable, but research is still often viewed as being limited to enquiry about something and creative projects are not envisaged as research projects. I see research as contributing something new—thus a new artwork, a new theory, or a new interpretation of something is just as much research as a more traditional research project or thesis. Further, this ‘newness’ need not be new to everyone; being new to the researcher is enough. Facilitating research does not require a recipe of methods. Nor is it satisfactory if the supervisor/lecturer only feels confident with one or two methods. In the ideal situation one has a facilitator who opens up possibilities, who enables and supports the learner to use or modify existing approaches, who encourages the development of new methods, and who allows the learner to explore their own ideas.

But what is research? I have been a high-school mathematics teacher, a textbook author, and a curriculum developer before I started my career as an academic, firstly in mathematics education and later in general education. I remember recently completing a small project that was ‘inspired’ by an academic at a mathematics seminar. He told us how he and a colleague had spent more than six months puzzling to find the answer to the question, “What is the probability that a triangle chosen at random is obtuse?” His answer, 0.75, seemed reasonable and his proof was convincing although it involved some rather sophisticated geometric arguments that I had difficulty following. On the way home I thought that there must be an easier way to prove the result. I slept on it that night and next day I proved the same result by a different approach using six lines of conditions, a graph, and a two-line conclusion (Begg, 2010). This was a new solution and proof for his question. It resulted in part from my experience using a somewhat similar approach for an entirely unrelated linear programming problem in an econometrics class some 40 years earlier; and used algebra to solve a probabilistic-geometric problem. Was this a contribution to knowledge? Was it research? Was it original work? If any of my students had done something similar I would have praised them for being creative and looking at the question very differently and I think it was research, though possibly with a small ‘r’.

While the above example may or may not be considered as research; and whether it was creative thinking or an application of previously known
associate knowledge or whatever, does not really matter. It was a form of autonomous learning/enquiry and it was original for me; and while the result is certainly not earth shattering, I certainly felt a sense of accomplishment that I would like to feel more often and to have all my students’ experience.

**Redesigning curriculum**

Taking the above ideas on board, one might ask what the curriculum would look like; so let’s imagine redesigning a curriculum for a 30-point first-year paper. Logically the starting point would be aims, and the three I have suggested were: to develop autonomous life-long learning ability; to foster enquiry, research, and creative abilities; and, to develop a broad range of modes of thinking. Next would be the paper title that traditionally reflected the content; and this could be chosen in much the same way as in the past, for example: EDUC 101: Learning theories; GEOM 103: Geometry of the sphere; and ARCH 104: Principles of domestic architecture, or any other traditionally named paper. As the three aims relate to processes, however, I would think of the title as reflecting the context of learning rather than being the content.

Traditionally (if curriculum is “all that is planned for the class”) one would consider the teaching and learning approaches. These might be: Ten small to medium-sized project-based activities related to the paper context including individual and small group project activities with about one third of the time being spent in the studio/classroom and including presentations of findings. And finally, assessment; it seems logical that this must focus on the aims rather than on subject content that is readily available. Assessment will have two forms: formative assessment, and summative assessment. Formative assessment will involve questioning participants involved in each project to stimulate a broadening of the range of enquiry abilities and thinking modes. Of course formative assessment is a teaching tool rather than an assessment one, its purpose is to stimulate learning, thus this will not influence the final assessment for the paper. Summative assessment will involve evidence of the use of a range of appropriate enquiry abilities and thinking modes to come to reasonable conclusions about the context. This will involve the lecturer looking for evidence in each project and the presentation of findings, together with the self–and peer–assessment report with each project.
Concluding thoughts

One could compare what I have suggested with current thesis work. In this situation there is (or should be) considerable formative assessment by a supervisor in consultation with an individual thesis student, but the final assessment is based on the assessment of the written thesis together with, when appropriate, an oral presentation and responses to questions at a viva. But, as my focus is different, I am suggesting we assess the process of developing life-long learning ability, the growth of enquiry/research and creative abilities, and the development of a broad range of modes of thinking, and not subject-content knowledge.

Of course one might argue, and I would agree, why have subject specific contexts? Don’t subjects partition knowledge? Isn’t making links between subjects more important than isolating them? Very few of us have taught without a content-oriented curriculum or course outline—having such a document seems to be taken for granted. What might happen if students, teachers, and communities had the freedom to decide what was learnt (and taught)? This might be regarded as an extreme position, but it is exactly what we do when we ask students to select the focus for their theses. It is also how alternative schools such as Summerhill (Neill, 1962) always managed, and in my own experience teaching in an alternative school I know it works.

If my suggestion is too radical then let’s begin with a compromise. Perhaps 50/25/25 based on content/enquiry/thinking. In conclusion, I agree with those who say that for most teachers, lecturers, and professors, the hardest thing is to let the learners learn; and within this I see learn as including enquire and think.

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A critical analysis of two educational research approaches

Neil Boland

Abstract

An increasing number of theses are being submitted in the form of a creative work supported by an exegesis. This article contrasts the exegesis with qualitative research methodology, highlighting some of the challenges exegeses and arts-based research projects have posed to the academy.

Introduction

When contemplating research, a task is to review the methodologies available and then choose the one which best fits the research project. Different methodologies are used to different degrees in different disciplines. What is common for one is less common for another. Some are established, some ‘new’ and emergent.

Behind methodologies lie intentions. These shape the methods of the approach and influence the results that are achieved. The results themselves will demonstrate an epistemological bias or slant (conversely, reflect the researcher’s intentions, wishes and hopes).

The two methodologies I discuss are quantitative research and the exegesis. Quantitative research is based on the analysis of collected data which can be input and analysed numerically, whereas an exegesis in a secular context is a scholarly text accompanying and supporting an original creative work. The latter is the methodology I am adopting in my doctorate and I deal with it in detail below as it is more of relevance to the task I have in hand.

Quantitative Versus Qualitative Research Methodology

Within social science research, including educational research, there are two main methodological approaches, two giants in the forest. They approach the mountain of research from two different directions: they are known as quantitative and qualitative methodologies. From them, many smaller methodologies have sprung. It is acknowledged that epistemological concerns
lie behind the difference in approach of these two methodologies (Bryman, 1984; Pring, 2000; Sikes, 2004).

Bryman discusses the debate over the relative merits of both and identifies a “tendency for philosophical issues and technical issues to be treated simultaneously and occasionally to be confused” (Bryman, 1984, p. 75). Pring (2000) uses Dewey’s phrase, ‘false dualism’ to describe quantitative and qualitative methodologies (p. 43). He identifies the tendency of researchers to band together in warring institutional factions, dismissing piecemeal the work of those using a different methodological approach. He warns of the danger of developing ontological and epistemological “apartheid” (ibid., p. 45) if these polarising tendencies are not held in check (cf. Bredo, 2009; Howe, 2009; Mrazek, 1994; Tillman, 2009). Clearly, methodological choice and their epistemological bases create “sharp divisions” in research communities. Cohen, Manion and Morrison illustrate this division in tabular form (2011, p. 7) separating approaches into objectivist (quantitative) and subjectivist (qualitative). Moses and Knutsen (2007) put the issue centre stage in the subtitle of their book, Competing Methodologies in Social and Political Research. While stating that most researchers and research projects tend to blend the two approaches, Lodica, Spauling and Voegtle (2010) agree that researchers can, however, be separated into groups based on their philosophical frameworks, identified by the assumptions they make about the nature of the reality being studied, claims about what we can and cannot know, and the ways in which they utilise theories and findings. (p. 13)

The epistemology which stands behind quantitative methodologies is one which has its roots in positivism: an understanding that all well-founded assertions can be proven by “scientific methods”, objectivity and/or logic. Bredo (2006) gives a thorough and informative overview of the history of positivism from Locke onwards, which helps give context to the historical situation. Creswell (2008), Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) and Pring (2000) also give an overview of the development of the quantitative approach. Moses and Knutsen (2007) take it further, tracing the development of statistical analysis back to the seventeenth century.

Perri 6 [sic] and Bellamy (2012) state as a philosophical position of positivism, as part of its epistemology, that “… in principle a theory could be reduced to a set of empirically testable general statements about expected
patterns between things we can observe, so long as we design the right kind of research instruments” (p. 306). These “empirically testable general statements” are presented numerically so they can then be analysed mathematically. This is the position of standard quantitative research. The validity and usefulness of the research project depends on the skill with which the questions (survey, questionnaire, etc.) are posed, the design of the project and the way the data is analysed.

Hoy (2010) sidesteps a potential arena of conflict and takes the discussion further when he defines the characteristics of good quantitative research:

- it poses significant questions that can be studied empirically;
- it links empirical research to relevant theory;
- it uses methods that enable direct investigation of the research questions;
- it provides a coherent, explicit, and logical chain of reasoning;
- it can be replicated and generalised across studies;
- it is transparent and is reported so as to encourage scrutiny and critique.

(Pring, 2000) sees that it is suited to research questions which lie “outside” the participants: facts, things, results, measurable data. Inner states, opinions and social relationships are less able to be quantified in this way, though attitudes at a particular point in time can be given a value and hence measured and analysed. Transformative processes, social interactions, creative processes are less amenable to mathematical analysis and processing. To quote Bryman (1984) in a statement which lacks Hoy and Pring’s even-handedness:

"Positivist approaches are taken to exhibit a tendency for the researcher to view events from the outside and from the point of view of a cluster of empirical concerns which are imposed upon social reality with little reference to the meaning of the observations to the subject of investigation." (p. 78)

This, then, is the epistemology which underpins quantitative research: an
understanding that through the sensitive analysis of numerical data representing participant responses, meaningful conclusions can be drawn, hypotheses confirmed and knowledge furthered.

In contrast lie qualitative methodologies. These typically have smaller (sometimes much smaller) sample groups. According to Scott and Morrison (2006), they “see the world through the eyes of those being studied” (p. 182), are more interpretive; their essence is a “rich and deep description of individuals” and which has reflexivity at its core. As Mayali (2000) emphasises, her research is ‘with’ and ‘for’ rather than ‘on’ children (quoted in Scott & Morrison, p. 182).

These methodologies centre on social interaction, personal development, processes of growth. According to Sikes (2004), they offer “soft” knowledge to quantitative research’s “hard” knowledge, “rich, deep data” in contrast to “hard, reliable data” (Bryman, 2001, p. 285). Their “knowledge is experiential and subjective. Weight is placed on individual accounts, experiences of the participants/researcher themselves” (Sikes, 2004, p. 21). This can be “complex and problematic” (Sikes, 2004, p. 22) and “more controversial” (Bryman, 2001, p. 265). At the same time, it can be “fluid and flexible” offering the researcher “novel or unanticipated findings” as well as “serendipitous occurrences” (Bryman, 1984, p. 78). These are not available to the quantitative researcher.

The approach behind such a methodology then is one of personalisation, of non-objective engagement, empathy, inner enquiry, holism, ethnocentrism, a joint exploration of the topic by the researcher and the researched. The epistemology of such an approach is clearly in contrast with the objective, non-engaged nature of quantitative research. Because of the engagement with those studied which qualitative methodologies require, the position of the researcher, her values and identity take on greater importance. Christina Hughes acknowledges this when she talks about reflexivity in qualitative research, that “all knowledge produced through social research is imbued with … aspects of a researcher's biography” (including ethnicity, gender, age, sexuality and ability) (2006, para. 1). Hartas (2010) describes Iano (1986) as “detesting the notion of neutrality and value-free research” (p. 20), key and highly valued features of quantitative research. The personal is both inevitable and unavoidable. It is up to the researcher to become clear about and acknowledge her own biases and intentions towards the research project and
Exegesis as Research Method

Of the different qualitative methodologies which exist, I have chosen to use that of exegesis. The original use of the word exegesis in English is theological – a critical interpretation or explanation of a Biblical text. Etymologically, it means a ‘leading out’ (Chambers, 1999).

Since the 1970s, exegeses have been increasingly used by students in the creative arts. They first appeared in Paris in the Sorbonne and were introduced into Australasian universities in the 1990s (Rowe & Carter, 2011). Their appearance however has not been universally welcomed. In his article, Some (post-romantic) reflections on creative writing and the exegesis, Hetherington states, “the academy generally doesn’t recognise [creative research degrees] as delivering new knowledge” (2010, p. 2). Their position is “vexed” and needing review despite years of publications on the subject. Brady graphically describes how, in introducing creative doctorates, the “intolerant academy” has “opened its doors to the Trojan horse” (2000, p. 5), implying that (in the conservative academy’s view) the road from here on goes only downwards.

The root of this lies in an uncertainty that a creative work is worthy of a higher research degree. The Tertiary Education Commission defines research as “original investigation undertaken in order to contribute to knowledge and understanding and, in the case of some disciplines, cultural innovation or aesthetic refinement” (2013, p. 25). Excellence in Research for Australia gives the following description: “the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies and understandings” (2009, p. 10). The Higher Education Funding Council for England mirrors this, asserting that research is “an original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding” (1999). Producing creative works is obviously original. To what degree does it create new knowledge and understanding?

Dawson (2004) argues that producing a creative work is in itself sufficient for a higher degree, saying that the work (in his case, creative writing) is “… already a dialogic engagement with theory, with language, with a range of social and cultural discursive formations” (quoted in Bourke & Neilsen, 2004, pp. 1-2). It therefore does not need to be accompanied by an exegesis. Most
other researchers do not support him in this opinion. Scrivener (2002) and Schippers (2007) argue that the worth of a creative work lies in its being a creative work, not to the degree that it creates new knowledge. Scrivener states that thinking that a creative work communicates knowledge is “typically … superficial” and does not account for the “deep insights … into emotions, human nature and relationships” which are commonly ascribed to artistic endeavour (p. 1).

Some authors identify another source of the increase in arts-based research practice. Laing and Brabazon quote Stuart Cunningham who says, “We can no longer afford to understand the social and creative disciplines as commercially irrelevant, merely civilising activities, They must be recognised as one of the vanguards of the new economy” (Cunningham, 2002, p. 33, quoted in Laing and Brabazon, 2007, p. 253). Such a doctoral degree “slots into an individual’s career” and is undertaken for “career progression” (ibid., p. 257). This clearly puts a neo-liberal spin on the arts research ball and conflicts with Scrivener’s attitude of art for art’s sake (2002).

I myself agree with Scrivener’s statement. Though career progression considerations must be borne in mind, composing music (the creative art I am taking) as such is not a career move. Neither is it principally a question of the creation of knowledge, the communication of knowledge or the acquisition of knowledge. The music exists as, for and by itself. The aim of writing music is to create music.

The transition from a creative work which is complete in itself into a valid research methodology which has its place at the academic table lies in the exegesis. The exegesis is perhaps the most qualitative of all qualitative methodologies. It is used to support, explain and contextualise creative works such as films, short stories, visual art works and musical compositions in higher degrees. There is no given format to an exegesis in this academic context. Each one is different as it centres on a different artistic work, created by an individual using a personalised artistic process in a unique context.

I call the exegesis the most qualitative of qualitative methodologies in that it is by its nature a record of a personal creative process, an inner journey. It is subjective, inward looking, heavily contextualised, socially located and personal. This personalisation is reflected in the format of exegeses which vary greatly between exegetes.
The University of Newcastle (Australia) is one of the few institutions to put concrete suggestions or requirements for exegeses in place. It states that all exegetes must “provide a rationale for the techniques and strategies adopted in the creative work and must situate them in relation to a theoretical and/or historical cultural context” (University of Newcastle, 2009). In addition, exegetes in composition “may take the form of an account of the candidate’s creative aims and decisions with regard to structure and technique as shown in the submitted portfolio” (ibid.). However, the university acknowledges that “it is not possible to stipulate a specific format for the exegesis since it is entirely dependent on the particular nature, direction and outcome of the work” (ibid.).

Barrett also gives clear, general guidelines for exegeses in the appendix of her book, *Practice as research: Context, method, knowledge*, stating,

> The function of … the exegesis is to discuss and replicate the process of … enquiry within the context of theoretical ideas and practices that are relevant to the researcher’s own work as well as within the broader context that views creative arts practice as the production of knowledge. (2010, p. 195)

Using the exegesis as a frame, I will explore the suggestions made by Rudolf Steiner (1983) in his 1923 lectures on music suited to young children. I will attempt to unpack and contextualise these comments, locating them in traditional musicological and anthroposophical theory. I will then explore how these suggestions can be translated into actual pieces of music which I will write, perform and record. I include Steiner as a critical theorist as his work clearly fulfils the requirements of a critical approach given by Neumann:

> A critical process of inquiry [is one that] goes beyond surface illusions to uncover the real structures in the material world in order to help people change conditions and build a better world for themselves. (1994, p. 74)

Through reflective and reflexive engagement, I will document issues, contradictions and tensions as they arise, explain the decisions taken and the reasons for those decisions, as well as difficulties, failures and future possibilities.

The gesture of the exegesis is of reflexivity during the creative process, a looking inward to examine and critically engage with the act of composition. This brings consciousness into what is by some regarded as an unconscious process. This in itself potentially expands the boundaries of knowledge.
The importance of creativity is frequently mentioned by writers in all fields, both the arts and science (Alcopley, 1994; Beghetto & Kaufman, 2010; Craft, 2005; Fundación Botín, 2012, among others). What is frequently contested is whether the creative process is conscious or not.

Many artists have written about this. In the words of the poet Rilke:

after the most serious reflection I have come to the conclusion that I could not allow myself the loophole of psychoanalysis unless I were really determined to start a new (if possible, uncreative) life … it seems certain that if my devils were driven out my angels also would receive a slight, a very slight (shall we say) shock, and, you see, I cannot let it come to that pass at any price (Rilke, 1946, pp. 204-205, quoted in Hetherington, p. 4)

or the composer Georg Friedrich Händel on writing the Halleluiah Chorus: “Whether I was in my body or out of my body I know not. God knows it!” (Anon., 1862).

Some creative artists rely upon unconscious inspiration. Others are more conscious, even writing manuals on what their compositional process involves (Messiaen, 1956; Schoenberg, 1975). Similar quotations (illustrating these two approaches to creative arts) can be found in the works of Plato, Cicero, Boethius, Rūmi, Beethoven, Schopenhauer, Wagner, Skryabin, Gurdjieff, Stockhausen and countless others (see Godwin, 1986, 1987).

What the exegesis as a methodology allows is the opportunity for intense inner exploration, a making conscious and documentation of the creative process. Raising this to consciousness, contextualising the creative ‘product’, recording the (mis-)steps along the way, leads to a furthering of knowledge.

Conclusion

‘Traditional’ doctorates, though now well established, only came into Australasian universities in the middle of the twentieth century. Arts-based research practice supported by an exegesis is an innovative and imaginative complement to ‘standard’ methodologies which involve the gathering and analysis of data. Brady likens arts-based research to a Trojan horse (2000, p. 5). What exegeses do offer is a flexible and sensitive approach to research in the creative arts giving the exegete scope to exercise creativity while supporting her work with an exegese of traditional academic rigour.
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Excavating a personal feminist a/r/tography

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Abstract
This idiosyncratic attempt to develop a closer understanding of feminist a/r/tography does so by relating it to the uniquely personal attitudes and social positioning arising from the writer’s lived experience. It reluctantly pays lip service to the academic template, drawing together many threads of academic research methodologies and philosophies. The recalling of influential sociopolitical changes of the past enables the emergence of a reflective understanding of the way acquired learning merges with experience and builds additional layers within memory to form new transformative knowledge.

On the surface

Is it a human conceit that power lies in the naming of things that underlies our need to develop theories that explain both our internal and external world? Jean Paul Sartre certainly thought so - “I confused things with their names: that is belief” (1963, p.123). In this paper I seek to dig a little deeper beneath my newly acquired – and still shallow research learning in an attempt to uncover some of the bones of it buried in my own lived experience.

Perhaps it is because we experience confusion as an undesirable condition that we seek desperately to avoid it by examining the world for explanations, searching and researching it to devise and construct a theory of everything that will protect a fragile and tenuous hold on this reality. Maybe then humanity can relax from its innate fear of death, and live an alternate life apart from the one described in the often quoted line from Thoreau’s Walden “The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.” (Lenat, 2009, section 9).

And yet, the determined search of the early centuries for scientific explanation did not satisfy the needs of the nineteenth and twentieth century industrial age educators, the sociologists, the philosophers – who sought to develop alternatives to measuring and weighing and counting, alternatives that became the groundwork for different styles of research approaches, many of which merge and overlap, or diametrically oppose each other.

Human communities have always found ways to contest and conflict within themselves, perhaps that very competitive discourse is the fertile soil from
which our civilization and our knowledge grows. From the individual’s perspective perhaps it is “the search for a true identity as a basis for universal emancipation” (Sawicki, 1991, p.7) and further, a “response to the discomfort that arises as these discourses become increasingly legitimate must be an openness to discarding or moving beyond them” (p.7). That openness and awareness is a fundamental part of education research and practice, as is recognition of the plurality that exists in both the internal and external worlds, and the insistence that action follows research into transformative change. Understanding becomes empowerment, enabling the freedom to make choices.

Jean Paul Sartre, man of many talents, lived and worked within a community and era that had earlier birthed the phenomenological approach. This approach requires that the lived experience of being is examined by processes of observation, from the point of view of the individual, to provide data which can then be unearthed, analysed, and unpacked to provide insight into the deeper layers of meaning. That meaning is held to be implicit rather than explicit. That insight then provides understanding that can be developed into themes that explain the phenomena under examination. “Reverse phenomenology” is a relational approach that suggests the individual phenomenon can only be authentically examined and understood from within the being, within the experience, rather than by external observation” (Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 121).

Phenomenology grew out of the combined philosophical thinking, literature, science, politics, and particular social circumstances of middle Europe in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and has been debated, argued, critiqued and developed since Heigel, Husserl and Heidegger first rejected the idea of objective research in favour of a more subjective examination of phenomena through experience (Dacome, 2004). In his book described as ‘one grump’s search for the happiest places in the world’, foreign correspondent Eric Weiner (2008) labels the fathers of the approach ‘the brooding white guys from Europe’ (p. 18) who in his opinion were not “busy being happy, (but) writing long, rambling diatribes intended to torture some not-yet-born college student in Bloomington who needs to pass Philosophy 101 in order to graduate” (p. 18). Certainly it is a densely constructed, heavily layered philosophy, but it provides a strong framework for many of our twentieth and twenty first century research theories, two of which appear to
offer rich potential for my own learning, practice and ongoing academic explorations.

Feminist theory would be unrecognisable to those eighteenth century ‘brooding white guys’ (p.18), (although Simone de Beauvoir might smile a little), arising as it does from a sociopolitical movement with its first wave roots in the mid nineteenth century suffrage movement. It was however second wave feminism, beginning in the war years of the 1940s and reaching a peak of activity from the 1960s to the 1990s (Somekh & Lewin, 2011) that generated the first specific research methodology that I will focus on in this essay, primarily because I lived this experience as a young woman, and can therefore speak of it in a valid ‘reverse phenomenological’ sense.

The second approach I will examine is a/r/tography – an even younger research methodology, also growing out of phenomenology and feminist theories (Springgay, Irwin, Leggo, & Gouzouasis, 2008). It is an approach that is gaining weight and validity by being taken up increasingly by creatives who operate in multiple roles, and from shifting paradigms. Both methodologies arise from a shared but individual sense of disconnection, that discomfort Sawicki wrote of, quoted earlier, which gave rise to conflict in turn generating questions – research questions. Resolving those disconnections required frameworks that could be found within sociological research built on the philosophies born of first the scientific revolution and then the industrial revolution, but reframed for the twentieth and twenty first century educational practitioner.

**Uncovering the personal feminist**

As a young woman coming of age in sixties New Zealand I was aware that my calm homogenized village based world was entering a new phase. New Zealand had been led by a middle of the road National Party government for almost a full quarter of a century covering a period of wealth and stability. But this was changing. We were experiencing protest, economic threats, and huge social changes. In our homes television had arrived, as a country mother Britain was abandoning us, Vietnam was on fire and the Pill was granting women control of our own fertility (Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2013). Germaine Greer addressed students from the quad at Auckland University in 1972 and was arrested for using ‘indecent language’ in public adding fuel to a bonfire of social change. Feminism, colloquially referred to as the women’s
lib movement but with much wider social ramifications had arrived to “disrupt the embedded gender assumptions laid down in education policy by the first post war Labour Government” (Middleton, 1993, p.53).

Coming out of an established middle class all girls grammar school into the hallowed grounds of Auckland University, I was the well educated, but naïve, daughter of progressively minded parents. My mother had worked since she was fourteen and had married a recent immigrant army officer, only to have him leave her, newly pregnant, to take up active duty for his adopted country. So self sufficiency and independence were strengths actively fostered by both my parents, and these were not at odds with the reconstructionist education policy that Middleton describes as being seen to form “a sound basis for democracy and for preventing the resurgence of fascism” (p. 51). And while these rational democratic ideals were to apply across the board, there were also very explicit assumptions laid down regarding gender roles that were reflected socially and individually. I have a clear memory of my very sensible parents both making clear to me that a career as an artist was simply not an option, I needed a ‘proper job’ (a proper ‘woman’s’ job, school teaching or nursing were suggested options) that would stand me in good stead until I got married, and until ‘family responsibilities allowed’ me to return to career. It would seem that for all their progressive, modernist (‘with it’ to use the contextual vernacular) politics socially constructed by the changes of the sixties, my parents were still conservatives at heart. From the distant perspective of the present day, and a small knowledge of discourse analysis theory, I cannot but acknowledge the loaded weight of the words they used to express their very genuine concern that I find the appropriate role in the rosy future they wished for me. It is that discourse analysis that can be used to focus on the revealing gender specific aspects of data collected through case studies, oral histories, narrative recording, interviews and surveys, which are just some of the methods employed by both researchers using feminist and ethnographic methodologies that draw on the wider philosophies that support them. Just as I excavate my own history in search of personal understanding so do educational researchers explore the worlds in which they must operate.

Many of those methods adopted by educationalists came out of mid twentieth century Modernism, which on a social systems level was concerned with “large scale organization of units of production, trade unions, the welfare state [and schools?] mechanisms designed to function within an economically
driven society”, (Pilcher, 2004; p.109) marrying elements of socialism to the tenets of capitalism while staying determinedly ‘non communist’ in the sense Merleau-Ponty describes in his Epilogue (1973). There is a particular poignancy in his closing chapter for me as he speaks of the sociopolitical changes wrought by the experience and ending of the Korean War, my father having served for over two years in those trenches and returned to meet the daughter child born to him. I was raised in his absence by a working wife, supported by a staunchly autocratic Victorian era educator grandfather, both of whom irrevocably influenced the rest of my life. The world was changing rapidly, and the culture shocks (Guanipa, 1998, 7th March) and generational clashes were resonating in New Zealand society as much as anywhere else. Feminism was one response to that social insecurity reflected in the questioning of individual identity.

So, what is it about this second wave feminism that has so influenced my thinking? It was the recognition and learning that we as women were living lives according to old rules that seemed somehow out of synch with the direction our society was taking. We were encouraged by the writers and thinkers of our generation to raise our consciousness to find answers to questions that we hadn’t really asked of ourselves, or of our communities, until then. We were “Driven by a sense of incompleteness” (Tennant, 2012, p.74) and we had to begin to recognise the contradictions Middleton speaks of (p.110) and find new ways to live with or to act against social positioning dilemmas and paradoxes, (Davies & Harre, 2013) becoming socialist feminists, or radical feminists, or liberal feminists, or whichever philosophical political version that empowered us to make the choice of becoming independent beings. For some of us it was to find an enemy to fight, sometimes embodied in our own sexuality, our own bodies, sometimes in the ‘other’, the male, our father, brother, lover, son, our biological mate or social dominator, our ‘owner’. It is this ‘dialectic doubt’ that Tennant speaks of that our concepts rely upon, because as he suggests if we take away the things that surround us, including the things that discomfit us, we risk self annihilation “the self ceases to exist” (p.143).

In the 1970s I had to have a male sign a television hire purchase agreement as my guarantor, any male, despite the fact I was earning a higher salary than most of the males I knew. I was very confronted by the reality of my social position as a female. But then, in 1980 I was by choice ‘given away’ by my
father, at our garden wedding, and again by choice vowed to ‘love, honour and obey’ my now legally bound spouse. There was a comfort to be found in allying myself with a socially weighted ceremonial tradition. Then some ten years later the duality rose again when I celebrated giving my daughter my last name, not her father’s. But it was my married name, my widow’s inheritance, not my ‘maiden’ name. Again, the voluntary assumption of the terms of a social ritual intersected with my lived experience and was seen through the lens of a sociopolitical philosophical ‘movement’, Feminism. The dialectic doubt I now understand had once again raised itself within my feminist ‘consciousness’ but I had nevertheless incorporated it, demonstrating the pragmatic dualism, even plurality, that was and is part of my lived and learned experience. Feminism taught both the individual and her society to recognise the gendered enabled social imperatives embodied in the multiple layers of our community dynamics. It identified that particular episteme so that women were enabled to respond to it as each woman chose. We were empowered by the recognition that we had choices. In making those choices we reflected a political ideology into real world actions, or chose not to do so.

**Tracing feminist a/r/tography**

If Feminism was about raising my consciousness – and my doubts as a woman, and learning how to find a new position in a changing society, through the first and second ages of my life, finding a/r/tography was coming full circle, resolving some of those doubts and bringing the bounty and the empowerment of some of that feminist thought with me into my third age.

A/r/tography is an approach that brings together the multiple personal selves that those of us walking the life road as artists contain within us (Barrett & Bolt, 2007; Irwin & de Crosson, 2004). It provides an overlapping sphere, an interstitial space where intersections of the different arenas of roles, philosophy, desire and practice occur. Within these sacred intersecting spaces the artist can be the researcher and the teacher without letting go of the artist as lived experience (Springgay et al., 2008). It is not a mix of methods, though it draws from phenomenology and existentialism among others as does feminism, it is a total drawing together of all the threads to bind the multiplicity of personal selves so they can see the world through one pair of eyes. “A/r/tography is a methodology of embodiment, of continuous engagement with the world (…) examining our personal, political and/or
professional lives” (p xxix). A/r/tography accepts that it is a futile proposition to attempt to take the artist out of the researcher, to force neutrality upon someone who has no alternative but to see the world and create meaning from it in ways that rely on all the senses, not just the routinely acknowledged five but all, including those intuitive senses we use but rarely acknowledge, such as balance, colour, and emotional response. It actively ‘empowers’ the artist/researcher/teacher by validating the creative work produced as a real world method of producing real world data in a research sense. A performance therefore has valid meaning in research terms. A spoken poem, a created visual image, a one act play, a dance also become methods, each provides “art as a voice for the unheard and the forgotten” (Allen, 1995, p.xv) data for reflection and analysis, by both artist researcher and her audience and the professional or academic community, providing potential answers to research questions.

Encountering a/r/tography as a research methodology was for me a profound practice related shift. Suddenly I had a real sense of clarity regarding my own position on the educational component of making art in public. Here was a methodology that granted that living experience a value in the related fields I had investments in, as sociological research, and as a true teaching activity. It was a gift that transformed the way I could view my audience from passive or active watchers to actively or passively involved learners, and myself to active teacher facilitator in a Kolb learning model sense, which demonstrates the cyclic nature of learning, through watching, thinking, doing and feeling. Rather than operating purely as a self involved performance artist, I could “as teacher-researcher, stimulate and enable others” (Irwin & de Crosson, 2004, p.79). My work became expression, method and teaching practice, open ended and exploratory in multiple senses.

In the same sense that Feminism can act as a transformative influence, a learned raising of consciousness in those within whom it resonates, be that individual or social group, a/r/tography provides a validity within both the educational and the wider sociological research community that reflects that now applied to narratology, to ethnography, to gender studies, internet studies. Art as aesthetics has always held a strong position in human society, it may even be as in The Art Instinct, Denis Dutton (2009) has suggested a biologically driven evolutionary trait. But the bringing together of artmaking in all its active performative genres, as both a research tool and a teaching
experience is particularly exciting for me. If there is a point of doubt it lies perhaps in the adoption of forward slashes that still divide the signs that represent the selves embodied in this approach. But it is only a superficial doubt rising from semiotics which irritates rather than posing an obstacle to my wholehearted absorption with the concept. The academy, as with all things new, remains divided on the integrity of the approach, hence the continued reliance on the ‘graphology’ aspect that while appeasing the assessment requirements of the examining critics also provides the artist with the opportunity to self examine via the creative act of writing. In the chapter ‘Of Mango Trees and Woven Tales’ (Irwin & de Crosson, 2004, p.117) Anami J Naths writes “With paper and pen, camera and paintbrush I record the events, using forms of literacy that I have been schooled in”. The visual image steps off the wall, out of illustrative mode, and into literacy alongside the spoken and text forms of language, included with rather than divided from accepted research methods.

**Putting the pieces together**

Division is inherent though in both Feminism and a/r/tography. While both seek to strengthen specific ways of being, in doing so they can also separate and divide one group from another. Second wave feminism, in all its political shades, is accused, sometimes justifiably in my opinion, of pushing a ‘victimisation’ (Pilcher, 2004, p.170) barrow when it holds up the masculine (in society or individualised) as the oppressing force putting the feminine ‘in its place’ (best located in the kitchen, or the bedroom if you choose to listen to the misogynists among us). There was and still can be both a lack of inclusivity and a stridency to second wave feminism that is a source of discord to the third wave of the movement. Some writers now see this contemporary version of feminism as more plural, even encompassing the often disconnected young male in our society, perhaps as an indication of generational solidarity against the ‘parent mother’, perhaps as a reaction to the power of the hairy legged bra burning lesbo femme/butch dyke that critics held up as ‘parodic’ targets (Kirby, 2006, p.44). It is an indication though of the longevity of the ideology behind the movement that a third wave is attempting to take it up and reframe it to fit contemporary popular culture, morals and desires (Pilcher, 2004).

There is a resonance here for me when I encounter the work of the
deliberately outrageous among artists singled-mindedly focusing on disruption as an artistic tool, (Bishop, 2012) my own established aesthetics are challenged, the same way Feminism challenged our parents and grandparents established social attitudes. Radical action is another shared concept/method/approach that suits many researchers in many fields.

The two versions of Feminism meet and align with a/r/tography though in that they form a readily accessible discourse around the lived experience, especially for a female practicing artist exploring higher education in order to build and enhance that art practice. Together those practicing within these approaches draw upon existentialism, phenomenology and humanism among others, picking and choosing aspects that fit together to strengthen and create a possible sacred ground, to “provide a space where practice and theory meet” (Springgay et al., 2008, p.181). Just as the complexity of the collages I build on canvases rely on the layers buried beneath the surface, these two actively lived contemporary research concepts that influence my thinking so strongly have roots that reach as far back as we in West can remember, into the generations of philosophical work that underpin Western society. The reality is Plato, Socrates and Aristotle among other middle European philosophising males, achieved a longevity that Sartre might envy.

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A personal journey from PowerPoint to empowerment: A reflection on my practice in the higher education context

Jyoti Jhagroo

Abstract

This paper presents a snapshot of an aspect of my journey as a new lecturer in the higher education university context. This aspect, my use of visual presentations, captures my inner dialogue and assumptions of effective pedagogical practices. The shift from my conservative use of projection broadcast technology in the form of static powerpoint images and text for organisational purposes to the multidirectional, web-based, interactive presentations, has evidently taken me on a journey to empowerment. Through this deliberate gaze on my own practice, my position changed from presenting to the students to co-constructing the learning experience with the students.

PowerPoint presentations seem to be the preferred mode of communication in lecture rooms today. This technology comprising a computer, data projector and a screen, more recently, a touch screen, has almost obliterated the traditional blackboard and impacted classroom pedagogy (Smith, Higgins, Wall & Miller, 2005). This paper recounts a hermeneutic inquiry on my use of projection broadcast technology predominantly PowerPoint presentations in my teaching as a new university lecturer. Time management, course content and classroom interactions were factors that logically translated to my use of PowerPoint presentations. I would not have considered my use of PowerPoint presentations to be unusual had it not been for a comment Andy Begg, whom I regard as a mentor, had made about my ‘PowerPoint’ structured lecture plans. His comment, “death by PowerPoint” which echoed the words of Carpenter (2010, p. 99) did not worry me initially because I felt that the PowerPoint had reflected my plan within the time structure of each lecture session. However, after reflecting on my first week of lectures and while planning my second session, I found myself becoming increasingly preoccupied with the comment. This pre-occupation offered the initial
stimulus for a personal inquiry of my practice.

This self-study allowed me, as a new lecturer, to not only reflect on my inner world assumptions and outer world pedagogy (McLean, 2010), but to also engage in reflective conversations with my colleagues. In effect, my journey as a reflective higher education teacher took inception. I was mindful of my responsibility in ensuring that the institution’s status was upheld through considerations of my pedagogical practices (Stefani, 2010). Furthermore, I embraced the idea of the higher education classroom as an environment of inquiry offering me the opportunity to reflect on, improve and validate my own practice (Hattie & Marsh, 2010; Jesson, 2010; Tennant, McMullen & Kaczynski, 2010). I became increasing mindful of the critical conversations I began to have with my colleagues about my use of the PowerPoint. These informal and incidental encounters provided opportunities of learning from the experiences and opinions of practitioners in higher education (Hoyrup & Elkjaer, 2006).

My wonderings were channelled towards literature on effective higher education practices. The intertwined concepts of power and classroom discourse surfaced as paramount factors that influenced the higher education teaching and learning environment. My reflections of six sessions of PowerPoint use have been examined within the theoretical underpinnings of these concepts. Literature generously offered me robust interpretations of the presentations I had compiled for each session that I taught. This knowledge served a bi-directional function. Firstly, by presenting a fertile academic platform against which my interpretations emerged, and secondly, by informing subsequent PowerPoint designs. I was in fact, engaged in “active surveillance” of my practice, almost like a “disciplinary gaze” (Schenkel, 2010, p. 73). The inner conversations and the constant modifications of my PowerPoint represented the “disciplinary” actions that informed each new PowerPoint created.

My reflections comprised journal entries of my use of the teaching PowerPoint, the student version of the PowerPoint, and classroom conversations immediately after my third year Professional Inquiry and Practice lecture and my first year English session. Tennant, McMullen and Kaczynski (2010, p. 141) refer to this reflective practice as “the journey of structured experiences.” While the teaching PowerPoint comprised approximately twenty animated slides with a variety of backgrounds, the
student version was intentionally compiled with twelve non-animated slides for the convenience of printing six non-cluttered, write-on slides per page for each of the six sessions. The teaching PowerPoint comprised more visual stimuli to accompany the focus and class discussions, and with it being unfamiliar to the students I hoped that it would create a feeling of anticipation. This anticipation or unexpected phenomenon, according to Beauchamp and Parkinson (2005, p. 97) is referred to as the “wow factor” which has the potential to not only capture the attention of learners, but also enhance engagement. My reasons for having two sets of slides may also be indicative of my inner assumptions of what constitutes effective pedagogical practice and, perhaps, the environment that I had hoped to create (Hoyrup & Elkjaer, 2006).

Prior to my first teaching session involving my use of a PowerPoint presentation, I welcomed my students with an introductory PowerPoint comprising five slides. The first slide included my title and name, my qualifications and my email address (Figure 1), and the second slide projected information about my family, my teaching experience, and titles of my masters and doctoral thesis (Figure 2). This is what I saw as important information to share, to define my being in a place of higher learning. In a sense I had presented my brief biography combined with my personal educational experiences to the students. Tennant, McMullen and Kaczynski, (2010) believe that university educators bring more to the learning context than just their knowledge and skills, they bring their own life experiences that underlie their teaching practice and their relationships with the students.

The third slide conveyed my philosophical stance of teaching and learning. Like Lemke (2010), I firmly believe that my role in the classroom cannot be
defined without considerations of the larger cultural, social and institutional context of learning. This idea of collaborative learning is portrayed in the following words that were projected to all my classes:

This course is not structured on the epistemological hermeneutic view [belief] of myself as all knowing and objective, and the text as a passive object, but rather it is premised on the ontological hermeneutic view [realities], that one can only interpret what is being experienced through one's own understanding of the situation. What we take from this course may, therefore, be informed by the different worldviews that all of us bring to this learning environment.

This philosophical stance parallels the concept of partnership between the teacher and the students in creating meaning together within the learning environment (Carpenter, 2010). This model of learning encapsulates a shared power learning ideology, ‘with your food basket and my food basket [t]he people will thrive’ (Carpenter, 2010, p. 95) where each participant brings their own worldview into the learning environment. This ideology is further established in the Tokoroa Project which asserted that the teacher was not the only one with expert knowledge, rather that students also brought their understandings, experience and knowledge into the learning context (Airini, Toso, Sauni, Leaupepe, Pua & Tuafuti, 2010). The last two slides presented an activity to illustrate multiple perspectives of reality. The fourth slide boldly stated, “the cat stared at me ...” urging the students to create a mental image. The last slide presented different images of a cat staring. This brief introductory PowerPoint presentation portrayal of who I am, may be interpreted as an attempt in positioning myself within the teaching and learning space and perhaps signalling an expectation of my lectures (Heron, 1988).

On the surface my first week seemed to have been ‘successful’ as I had completed what I had planned to achieve during the session. The linear, two-dimensional PowerPoint presentations served an organisational purpose in managing time, conversation and content. It seemed to have been the secondary driver of the session and offered me the comfort of being in control of the lesson direction, to the point of the last slide reflecting the following week’s topic and expected preparation for the students (Figure 3). In spite of this information being available to all students in the online study guide that last slide gave me a sense of completion and perhaps to the students it suggested the end of the session.
Figure 3: Last slide focused on the next session

After the session, my examination of the learning intentions on one of the initial slides seemed to suggest partnership in the words “We are learning to (WALT)…” While the use of the word “we” seems to suggest partnership, the reality is that all the learning intentions are predetermined by the course designers and almost imposed on the students. Everyone accepts this position occupied by the lecturer, one that Thomas and Brown (2011) term a mechanistic position. Within the mechanistic approach the lecturer directs the students and the learning experience towards attaining the desired result. During the lecture, I had also pointed out to the students that the bulleted notes on the PowerPoint reflected my perspective of the readings. At this point my journal entry reflected the inner conversations that I had started to have with myself, was I in total control of the learning experience? Was this perhaps, what Heron (1988) meant by a phenomenal amount of power being placed in the hands of the teacher to make unilateral decisions and consequently undermining the capacity of adult learners to make decisions about their learning?

Before the second session I had received at least ten emails from students requesting that my teaching PowerPoint be made available to them. They also commented on how helpful the student PowerPoint was especially since they had access to it prior to the session. From conversations with my colleagues, I was advised that this practice may promote absences from class. However, I believed that in a higher education environment it was imperative that I adapt my pedagogy for the students and continued to upload the PowerPoint presentation prior to the session. Through this discourse the students were
steering me towards a “new culture of learning” that embraced digital media (Thomas & Brown, 2011, p. 17). This educational approach was a shift from a teaching-based model to a learning-based model. The authors compare fundamental differences in the two models. With a teaching-based model, culture represents the environment, it focuses on “teaching about the world”, and students prove their gained knowledge through formal assessments. In the learning-based model culture takes shape from the environment, the classroom concept shifts to environments of learning saturated with digital media that instantaneously connect learners globally, and cultures a boundary-free environment of constant questions in pursuit of better understandings (Thomas & Brown, 2011). This has also been affirmed by Tennant, McMullen and Kaczynski (2010) who view that presence of digital technology in the higher education environment as an inevitable and necessary teaching and learning tool.

The second session PowerPoint slides began with re-presenting what theorists had to say in smart graphical forms with diagrams, bullet points and tabulations to create visual impact. I wondered whether this approach would constitute reinforcing learning through visual stimuli. I had considered the use of colour, the background design, and the font style and size very carefully in an attempt at making the content engaging. What became apparent was that during this theoretically focused part of the session, I could only hear my own voice, almost like a teacher monologue (Carpenter, 2010), as the students sat silently making notes on their copies of the PowerPoint slides. The PowerPoint incorporated key strategies, such as “contrast”, “repetition”, “alignment” and “proximity” often employed in scaffolding through visual stimuli (Lemke, 2010, p. 255-257). I carefully designed each slide with regards to visual communication to attract the learner through contrasting images, provide consistency through repetition, create a sense of order through alignment (Figure 4), and to reduce clutter and offer organisation through considerations of proximity (Lemke, 2010).
While the students may have been engaged, the initial part of my PowerPoint presentation did not create the desired effect with regards to dialogue. However, the second part of the session involved debates. Topics were projected on the screen and students worked in teams to develop their arguments for or against the statements. The arguments were developed from the readings made available to students during the session. Such classroom discourse that is generated from student engagement in readings that are presented as thoughts and not as truths allows students to develop profound understandings (Carpenter, 2010). The lecture room was transformed into a courtroom-like environment with each team eager to defend their points of view. Although this approach presented a particular context for the conversations, I began to appreciate the dynamic power of making meaning through conversations rather than the matter of knowledge transfer (Tennant, McMullen & Kaczynski, 2010).

In spite of the vibrant classroom discussions I was mindful of some students who chose to observe silently. This reflection affirmed Carpenter’s (2010) assertion that some students may eagerly contribute to group discussions, but may find it difficult to share their ideas within the whole class discussion forum. With my reflections grew the intense dilemma of how to initiate classroom conversations where all students felt comfortable to participate. Carpenter (2010) discussed the concepts of the descriptivist teacher and the dialogical teacher from a Freire-framed perspective. I began to see merit in the sentiment that it was easier to follow the route of a descriptive teacher, compared to a dialogical teacher which requires significantly more thought and conscientious pedagogical planning (Alexander, 2003; Carpenter, 2010; Mercer, 2003). According to these authors a dialogic classroom was
characteristic of the teacher and students collectively engaged in the learning task, learning from each other, sharing ideas, and drawing from different perspective to enhance their inquiry. The third lecture session offered the context for me to trial an activity that I hoped would initiate student conversations. I had my initial slide had a picture of a Mobius strip (Figure 5) and a subsequent slide with a group procedural writing task (Figure 6).

![Figure 5: Mobius strip task](image1)

![Figure 6: Group task sheet](image2)

The students were unfamiliar with what a Mobius strip was and had to listen attentively as I completed the task with the students while giving oral instructions. I positioned myself among the students as they moved on to the next task which required the group to complete the procedural writing task together. I had envisaged explaining the task to the students, but realised how unnecessary that was, the students were engaged in making sense of the next projected slide. My role had switched from teacher to group member in an instant while the PowerPoint briefly facilitated the progression of the lesson, until the students steered their learning in different directions away from the planned path. Not only was the session enveloped with minimal teacher talk and robust student conversations, the deviation from the schedule provided an unintended learning experience (Mercer, 2003) where the moment was seized and the students began demonstrating their own activities in their group. My concern about not completing the scheduled lesson was only momentary because the actual learning that took place was more meaningful and authentic than I had anticipated. This moment of doubt, may perhaps be associated with a shift in my perceived position of power to sharing that power with the students by repositioning myself among them (McLean, 2010). My full engagement in the group may also be indicative of my attempt
at working in partnership with this group of higher education students (Heron, 1988; Vella, 2000). I had assumed a more flexible role (Carpenter, 2010) within an environment where learning flourished beyond the boundaries (Smith, Higgins, Wall & Miller, 2005). It offered flexibility and versatility (Smith, Higgins, Wall & Miller, 2005) for both the learners and for me, the teacher.

In the fourth session I planned my PowerPoint presentation around the idea propounded by Smith, Hardman and Higgins (2006, p. 444) that whole class teaching with an interactive whiteboard encapsulates an “active teaching model” which encourages classroom dialogue. I had created an interactive whiteboard resource which allowed students to use the interactive board pens to manipulate and work on tasks projected on the board (Figure 7).

![Guided writing activity](image)

My journal entry after that session reflected an enthusiastic class that appeared to have enjoyed manipulating the symbols, images and texts on the interactive whiteboard. This is consistent with Levy’s (2002) assertion that more opportunities for discussion surfaces when students physically engage with the interactive whiteboard. The study also revealed that students are more eager to engage in conversations because of the visual and conceptual projection of information. While I was apprehensive about asking students to manipulate the images and text in front of the class, I was pleasantly surprised at how eager my class of adult learners were in trying out the somewhat new technology. From my perspective they seemed to have been unaffected by the errors that they made publicly, which is consistent with Goodison’s (2002) finding of the interactive whiteboard as enhancing the social milieu of the
learning context where students publicly learn together by making mistakes together.

As the sessions progressed I found myself becoming increasingly more adventurous when compiling my presentations. By the fifth session my PowerPoint included hyperlinks. I was able to go from my PowerPoint slide to the New Zealand Curriculum document (Figure 8) without having to minimise my screen or even connect to the internet. The hyperlink sensitive icon facilitated this transmission seamlessly. During this session as part of the ‘warm up’ activity I had requested that the students bring in a personal item to share with the class. While most of the students had brought in physical items, three students asked if they could use interactive whiteboard to project their item to the rest of the class. One student spoke about her love for dancing and she had made a video of herself dancing which was available on her social networking site. This information was retrieved within seconds and shown within the PowerPoint frame engaging the class who were, perhaps forming an impression of the student as per task at hand. The second student spoke about his family as being the most precious in life. He proudly went onto his personal online site and brought up a photograph of his family. This is what Tickner and Gallager (2010, p. 51) discuss as being student centred and student directed learning with the “socio-cultural and constructivist” paradigms. The third student spoke about his cruise on a ship to an exotic place as being the most memorable thing that he had experienced. The student went onto google maps and was able to transport the class to that place in a matter of seconds. My PowerPoint presentation had been transformed to multimodal presentations with immediate access to a range of resources (Smith, Higgins, Wall & Miller, 2005). I felt a sense of elation at the how we, the students and I, seemed to have been co-constructing meaning (Carpenter, 2010; Goodison’s, 2002; Tennant, McMullen & Kaczynski, 2010) through the interactive whiteboard.

Figure 8: The New Zealand Curriculum
My confidence and personal growth with regards to the use of the PowerPoint had been phenomenal, I no longer felt like a technical apprentice (Beauchamp & Parkinson, 2005). The sixth session included online videos of relevant curriculum stories that I was able to pre-plan and transitions to through my PowerPoint slides (Figure 9). It included a hyperlink to an online interactive storytelling site and a story writing site (Figure 10), evidence of what Smith, Higgins, Wall and Miller (2005) view as slides layered with resources. The environment had been transformed into a boundary-less learning space beyond its physical structure (Smith, Higgins, Wall & Miller, 2005), connecting the leaners with storywriters and story tellers from around the world.

During this session the students were expected to develop a teaching lesson plan from a storybook. In spite of numerous books being available in the classroom, the groups took turns in browsing through the storybook site until they found a story that appealed to them. The discussions were robust and touched on more aspects than what the physical book would have offered. Some of these conversations included aspects such a voice, pitch, pace, rewriting parts of the text on the electronic book, and creating new characters. The students’ imaginations were limitless (Beauchamp & Parkinson, 2005) as they proceeded to create their lesson plans to teach primary school children a literacy lesson. Thomas and Brown (2011, p. 18) view imagination as residing “at the heart” of today. I viewed this phenomenon through two lenses, firstly I questioned whether these higher education students on a career path to becoming teachers, were in fact, imitating my use of the PowerPoint as an effective teaching and learning tool? Secondly, I wondered whether this was representative of the media rich environment that we find ourselves in today.
The reason for the students incorporating the PowerPoint into their pedagogy was irrelevant, the fact was that the students were eager to embrace this technology. I felt the need to invite an expert interactive whiteboard facilitator to demonstrate its potential to my students and cultivate this experience into powerful learning (Thomas & Brown, 2011).

I began to look at my use of the PowerPoint in my pedagogy from different perspectives. As a reflective teacher, I found myself in constant need to gain more knowledge about the technology. When a workshop flier advertising the next step in PowerPoint presentations appeared in my inbox, I immediately enrolled. Although I did not use this tool in the six lecture sessions that informed my reflective practice, I have included the overall image of my first Prezi presentation (Figure 11) as an indication of my continued reflective learning journey within this context of constant and rapid change (Tickner & Gallagher, 2010; Thomas & Brown, 2011). As my technical skills improved I became increasingly more adventurous, moving from linear PowerPoint presentations to incorporating a more discursive pedagogical model thus facilitating learning movement in multiple directions (Beauchamp, & Parkinson, 2005).

Figure 11: Prezi presentation
By the end of the sixth session I completed a significant part in mapping my journey from structured PowerPoint presentations to interactive whiteboard presentations which permitted the learning to meander its own course through student conversations. There were times when I questioned whether the PowerPoint presentations were becoming too interactive at the risk of shifting away from the intended course work. I also felt slightly dispensable and found myself reminded of Vella’s view on the pivotal role that teachers play in creating a dialogical classroom. Vella (2000, p. 11) emphasised that the pedagogical practice that initiates dialogue does not imply that the teacher comes into the classroom discourse ‘empty-handed’, rather that the lessons are designed to incorporate what the learner brings to the environment with an intent to form links between known and new knowledge. Furthermore, the author believed that the carefully designed dialogue by the teacher in consideration of the student is imperative for effective classroom discourse to occur.

Through my reflections of my use of PowerPoint presentation I have embarked on a journey of empowerment. I have become more mindful of the underlying messages and pedagogical principles underpinning this media. I have carefully considered the assertions made by Lemke (2010) that visual images, combined with text and sound, provide multimodal stimuli and are consequently more effective in learning than traditional single mode approaches. Furthermore, through my understandings of the technological aspect of my practice, I may be contributing towards students being ready to “live, learn, work, and thrive” in our technologically rich world (Lemke, 2010, p. 244).

This self-study has given me a new thirst to keep abreast with the latest technology available to enhance teaching and learning (Tickner & Gallagher, 2005). It has empowered me to navigate, interact, and learn within a digitally enhanced environment (Lemke, 2010). Finally, I feel empowered to have stepped onto the path of becoming a critical reflective practitioner, by asking questions and confronting my use of PowerPoint presentations, a taken-for-granted phenomenon in the higher education context (Hoyrup & Elkjaer, 2006). This personal journey affirms this reflective research study as an attempt to do better things for “quality enhancement” and not to do things better for “quality assurance” (Hunt, Chalmers & MacDonald, 2012, p. 37). While I acknowledge my naivety in understanding the full impact of
PowerPoint presentations, especially with regards to the psychological perspectives, from my brief lived experience as a new lecturer, I would refute the notion of “death by PowerPoint” and argue in favour of the PowerPoint as an effective teaching and learning tool in higher education. Perhaps such technology offers one way to address the idiosyncratic needs and the preferred learning styles of our media immersed society of learners.

References


Author

Jyoti Jhagroo taught for 25 years in primary, secondary contexts, and community educational contexts in South Africa and New Zealand. Jyoti's research interests include: qualitative and quantitative designs, transitional experiences of migrant teachers and students, mathematics education, researching one's own practice in the higher education context, and school-based research.
Allied Staff in a Mobile World: School of Education iPad Research Project

Selina Gukibau, Janene Davidson, Audrey Williams and Wendy Corker

with Andrew Gibbons

Abstract
This research paper presents three studies on the impact of iPads for educational administration. The self-studies were conducted at the AUT University School of Education within a wider project that assessed the value of the School’s investment in tablet technologies. The studies focused on the impact of iPads for key administrative accountabilities. The studies indicated that iPads significantly enhanced the mobility of administrative functions, particularly when engaging with student enquiries and supporting administration of School meetings, leading to reduced paper trails, and timely gathering, processing and evaluation of information. The studies further highlighted the value of dedicated professional and specialist support for staff in the selection and use of appropriate applications for the iPad, and in addition supporting effective choices when deciding on applications to use for administrative functions. Such support maximises the investment in the technology and contributes to a strong organisational culture.

Introduction
The roles of the Allied Staff Team at AUT University typically involve a matrix of administrative and relational activities that are dedicated to the nature of the student experience. There are multiple pathways and contexts that characterise these roles. These pathways and contexts have variable impact on the student experience both as a whole and in discrete terms through the idiosyncratic nature of dealing with students case by case and group by group. In other words, the task of the Allied Staff team at the School of Education must be necessarily highly sensitive to the needs and experiences of each student.

In 2012 the AUT School of Education looked to ways in which the roles of the Allied Staff team could be augmented. A proposal was put to the Senior
Leadership Team that contemporary mobile tablet technologies be supplied to members of the Allied Staff team. With approval of the School an invitation was sent to the entire team calling for proposals from individuals who were able and willing to affect change and research transformation in the nature of the roles. The School subsequently invested in iPad2 tablets for members of the Allied Staff team.

This research report provides detailed evidence of the impact and benefits of the iPads from members of the Allied staff team. Each member engaged in independent or collaborative ‘self-study’ through which they detailed key accountabilities and reflected on changes to the performance of those accountabilities over a period of approximately four months. While not all elements of the team’s roles were augmented by the new technology, clear and significant data was obtained in relation to the benefits of mobility and access for the overall student experience at AUT. Professional development, and in particular the use of specialist support in identifying and/or developing appropriate applications emerged as a key area that can have a positive effect on administrative tasks.

**Overview of literature and method**

There is limited literature available on the use of iPads and other mobile technologies in administration and in particular in educational administration. This is in part due to the newness of mobile technologies as administrative technologies. This review highlights some key findings that are relevant to this project through looking more widely at the research on educational uses of tablets and applications and through review of the impact of these technologies on administrative duties in other professional contexts. In the review and results we refer to iPads and tablets interchangeably, although as the majority of research available, and the focus of this project, was the Apple iPad, the suite of applications referred to are ‘apps’ offered through the Apple brand.

Initial indicators from a range of literary sources indicate a belief that the iPad changes the way administrators work (Adams, 2011; Tarvin, 2012). Administrators do not have to be physically in a specific office space in order to be productive. Hence a key quality of the iPad is that it is portable, compact and light to carry. This portability then allows for enhanced access to emails, calendars, documents, spread sheets, presentations, web conferencing and
more, leading to the possibility, and certainly the assumption, that tablet-equipped employees will be more productive and efficient. There are many apps available and more being designed regularly that enable both information processing, and more recently the manual processing of client details (for instance getting signatures, and processing and accepting payments).

Another key feature of the tablet is the processing of documents, and this requires an effective e-reader application. The e-Reader is one example of an application that has many available alternatives, and hence where informed decisions are required in deciding which products to use. In addition, professional support is beneficial in order to develop a high level of use of the many possible e-Reader functions. E-readers ease administrators in storage, access and application of policy, process and governance documents as well as student files (Bush & Cameron, 2013). Research of student use of e-Readers identifies convenience and portability as key benefits (Bush & Cameron, 2013) that are relevant to administrators.

Research of the impact of tablets in business administration suggests that working with customers and clients is more interactive and efficient with more immediate results (Adams, 2011; Tarvin, 2012), ensuring more immediate connections with professional networks, better communication of ideas and products (Tarvin, 2012).

Both Kirschner (2010) and Weir (2012) provide research that indicates some potential for tablets for empowerment of administrative staff, with tools such as iPads being highly adaptable to individual users, and by providing communication tools to increase autonomy in decision making. These elements are particularly relevant to education administrative environments.

With increased awareness of the extent to which tablets can be tailored to suit a wide range of users, applications are entering the market targeted for educational administration. The company Matchbox has released an app and cloud-based product that it claims will cut up to three quarters of enrolment processing time, and allow more focus on qualitative aspects of enrolment such as the better selection of appropriate candidates (Business Wire, 2011). They point to a growth in higher education enrolments as justification for use of more efficient enrolment administration technologies. Use of tablet administrative apps leads to reduced paper trails, less storage system costs,
and heightens efficient administrative collaboration (Business Wire, 2011).

This product has revolutionised the student admissions procedure. The admissions staff can review applications on the go and cut out delays in pushing paper from one staff member to another for application approval. The entire evaluation of the student application is fast-tracked as applications are simultaneously reviewed. The admissions office can provide an effective service to prospective students and productivity is increased. Files do not go missing when forwarded from one office to another, less paper and files remain on desks, saving costs and improving the condition of our environment.

Technology is effective in engaging students in the classroom and by introducing the iPad, students become motivated to learn. Research of the pedagogical use of tablets in higher education suggests that student engagement is enhanced, and that effective use of applications leads to a wide range of associated skills development, particularly in areas related to literacy (Barrett-Greenly, 2013). Research also indicates the potential for greater student engagement through greater enthusiasm for learning, and use of a tool that is relevant to their wider social and economic contexts (Yuanyuan, 2012).

More parents are embracing the introduction of e-learning and in particular tablets in the classroom, leading to the Bring Your Own Device phenomenon (Bilby, 2013). Given these early indicators of positive effect, some universities are providing free tablets to all students (Sentementes, 2013). However concerns have also been revealed that tablets lead to greater off task activity during class and also concerns regarding the health risks (Yuanyuan, 2012). In addition, some commentators are concerned about the digital divide in terms of resource availability. Appropriate support needs to be put in place to ensure children do not miss out on access to tablets (Bilby, 2013). Not all parents can afford to buy an iPad for their child, yet parents may not want their child to be singled out as the one in the class without an iPad, so they may have to make sacrifices to come up with the money required.

iPads and other tablet technologies provide increased mobility for research functions, many of which are relevant to administrative responsibilities. In particular, data gathering is freed from the confines of the office (Business Wire, 2011; Sentementes, 2010). Universities are recognising further that the tablet makes the researcher more mobile, with less baggage to carry when out in the field (Sentementes, 2013). Communication and document sharing with
students can be enhanced (Howe, 2013).

This research highlights the importance of training to support use of new devices, and in addition to the ongoing sharing of best practices in the use of use of new and emerging technologies for communication purposes. Professional development is an essential element in the success of introducing new technologies such as a tablet and importantly in accessing good quality applications (Barrett-Greenly, 2013). The benefits of any technology are accessed through strategic support of administrative staff in order to communicate the benefits and use, and to ensure a level of comfort with the tablet and relevant applications (Barrett-Greenly, 2013) and supporting a positive organisational culture that has been regarded as a competitive advantage for any business (Barney, 1996).

The following sections provide an overview of methods and data for the three case studies in use of iPads for administrative tasks in higher education programme management.

**Audrey Williams and Wendy Corker**

Audrey and Wendy work together in both their physical space and their programme administration roles and duties. Hence it was decided that their research would benefit from a collaborative approach to self-study. Through conversation with Andrew Gibbons they developed an approach that narrowed down key elements of their role to study. This process involved discussion of key accountabilities and was predicated on an assumption that some accountabilities would be more significantly transformed than others. This necessary limitation allowed for a more focused study of the impact of the iPad and aided, in addition, a close analysis of the coherency of the programme administration role in relation to student experience.

The three accountabilities were:

- Email queries
- Programme entry assessments and student interviews
- Meetings

In addition professional development sessions on use of the iPad were attended in order to ensure that the new technologies were used wisely and effectively. Professional development was led by Hohepa Spooner, of Te Ara Poutama, the Faculty of Māori Development at AUT University. The very
informative session focused on setup, customisation, configurations and synchronisations of the iPad. Recommended iPad applications were downloaded. In addition Audrey and Wendy had the opportunity to attend a few weekly training sessions offered by AUT where valuable tips were given to enable them to maximise the use of the iPad in their workplace. Most importantly, as a significant amount of time was allowed for testing and developing familiarity, they were confident at the time of applying the new technology in the work place.

As noted above, Audrey and Wendy focused on three elements in their self-study. They chose these three aspects after the professional development and testing and trialling of the iPad with a growing awareness that these would be the areas of most significant transformation in task realisation and experience. The results, tabulated below, revealed that all three accountabilities were augmented through the iPad. The results showed an enhanced flow of information through accessibility and in addition through the immediacy of possible amendments to student related concerns, particularly through the admission process. The increased mobility made possible by the iPad resulted in more effective meetings both with students and with the academic team. The table below provides evidence of the results of the self-study focal accountabilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMAIL QUERIES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Provide programme and course information and material for prospective and enrolled students and members of the public.</td>
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<td>• Manage queries on the application process, enrolment and ensure accurate and prompt communication to students and AUT staff.</td>
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<td>Task</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student and staff queries are sent via emails which are readily accessible</td>
<td>Student and staff emails queries can be accessed with a quick response, especially</td>
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from the pc when working in the office. However, when out of the office, programme admin are not able to check emails. Urgent emails will not be answered in a timely manner and will have to wait on their return to the office which may not necessarily be the same day. When away from AUT for longer periods, emails cannot be accessed until their return to the office.

**Urgent emails from any location on campus and off campus.**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Effectiveness and Resolution</th>
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<tr>
<td>Emails are accessed from anywhere. Audrey and Wendy appreciated the easiness of staying connected to the students and AUT staff at the most demanding time of the year.</td>
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**PROGRAMME ENTRY ASSESSMENTS AND STUDENT INTERVIEWS**

- As part of the teacher education selection process, programme administrators require that students complete a numeracy and literacy assessment test and interview.
- Students book their assessments and interviews on an online website. The website is managed by Wendy and Audrey and accessed regularly to check names and number of students booked in allocated dates and time slots.
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<td>Task</td>
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<tr>
<td>Process all assessments and interviews for prospective students. On the day of the assessments and interviews, print and take the list of student names to the classroom and check attendance. There may be students who book after the list has been printed, and names not on the list this can be problematic as the administrators must identify all students before sitting assessments, preventing issues such as: students sitting the assessments without applying for a programme; booking a different date; or not submitting all their documentation. There is no way of checking the validity of the students when out of the office. There are students who do not attend the interviews and entry assessments.</td>
<td>Using the iPads during assessments and interviews helped to check the bookings website for updated bookings and cancellations. Reference to the student management system, ARION, makes it possible to check queries with documentation, specialties, correct spelling of names and so on. Students who email to inform of their non-attendance at assessments and interviews are not marked as ‘did not attend’ but rescheduled immediately. The numeracy assessments are marked when completed by the students and the team can enter the percentages immediately on the spread sheet using the iPad. Students passing the numeracy assessments are informed immediately.</td>
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due to unforeseen circumstances. These students email programme admin at the last minute to reschedule and Audrey and Wendy are only become aware of any changes when returning to the office to check emails. All the information gathered on the day of assessments and interviews have to be actioned after return to the office.

via electronic correspondence to book their interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effectiveness and Resolution</th>
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<tr>
<td>Programme administration relies on constant updated information from the bookings website. Having immediate access has supported the smooth flow of the entry assessments and interviews. Having the means to enter the numeracy marks anywhere on campus has improved productivity. This enables efficient use of time during assessments to electronically communicate with students on the next step of the selection process i.e. booking the interview.</td>
</tr>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>MEETINGS</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Attend faculty programme administrators meetings, exam board committee meetings and appropriate sector meetings.</td>
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Table 1: Results of the self-study focal accountabilities

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<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Task</strong>&lt;br&gt;When attending meetings, programme administration may require information from emails, files and ARION, which cannot be accessed at the meetings. It is likely when taking notes to omit some information that requires action, leading to delays of a few days or weeks, pending the submission of the minutes of the meeting.</td>
<td><strong>Task</strong>&lt;br&gt;In meetings Audrey and Wendy now have access to all files, emails, academic calendar and ARION if there are any queries. They can record meetings with the iPads and can capture word for word and not overlook important information. In the exam board meetings, they can change grades immediately when approved and can refer to emails pertaining to a student.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

| Effectiveness and Resolution | All requests and amendments to student enrolments and results are implemented immediately in meetings without having to wait to return to the office to refer to emails, files and ARION. |

**Selina Gukibau**

Selina’s self-study identifies and discusses the success factors in the use of iPad for the role of Administrator Student Teaching. This section first focuses on the three Key Accountabilities of Selina’s administrative role and the responsibilities. The section then explores past and present work practices and the impact of the iPad in positively affecting work outcome. For the purpose of this self-study, a model is introduced to depict the relationship between the
factors that allow iPad success and growth. This is followed by a brief discussion on two contributing factors that will enhance productivity. Due to time constraints, focus on the identified success factors have yet to be explored further, hence the brief discussion. The model is a simple illustration which indicates the course of influence of factors in relation to productivity. Selina’s self-study concludes with further recommendations for future study or research.

The core factor for student teaching administration is to ensure that all students are placed in a practicum centre in a timely fashion with correct quality assurance procedures being followed. In the past, the process of requesting to centres and kindergartens via phone followed by email was time consuming. The entire process was carried out during work hours, in the office. With the introduction and use of ‘Sonia’, the new Student Placement System, kindergarten requests are now processed as bulk requests for different placement groups. Bulk email requests correlate to bulk responses and the use of the iPad has enhanced communication and alleviated workload in the context of improved time management and effective work outcomes. Head teachers and Associate teachers receive immediate responses via email and communication on securing placements is processed in a timely fashion. A key factor to highlight is then the constant access to email and important notices (a further example of this is professional forum notices and updates). The ability to have access to emails constantly, allows ample time to always plan ahead and avoid mountain of emails to reply to upon start of work in the office.

Associate Teachers must receive the necessary documentation and payment guidelines to ensure that appropriate feedback on students can be returned promptly for processing. In the past, the manual system focused on paperwork being mailed to associate teachers before start of any practicum. In moving away from this practice and adopting the concept of electronic mail and electronic filing, the use of the iPad has been the key change agent in high stakeholder satisfaction. Evidence of this can be seen in timely responses and turnarounds where Associate teachers have contacted Selina when they have misplaced the paperwork.

The “Numbers” application has enabled Selina to continue work from home on payment administration if necessary. This application features spreadsheet, Excel and databases and is interactive. Essentially, Selina has found
that she can check the status of the associate teacher or centre payment updates from any location that has wireless connectivity. The iPad with all the appropriate applications is more than capable to support work matters of any kind.

Upon completion of a practicum, Associate Teacher and Evaluative Lecturer reports for students must be correctly recorded and documented. Previously, the manual system of hard copy reports and manual filing was very time consuming. With the introduction of the iPad Selina was proactive in developing electronic reports. She worked with the AUT Centre for Learning and Teaching mobile technology experts to select an appropriate application for the purpose of onsite electronic documenting of practicum reports. The development was successfully trialled by Evaluative Lecturers.

The application, ‘PDF Expert’ proved to be an excellent application, allowing the user to read and annotate PDF documents, make notes and save changes. At the completion of a practicum evaluation, the Evaluative Lecturer is able to complete the electronic report and have the student manually sign the report on the iPad. The report is then emailed to the administrator. Once received, the administrator can efficiently update student records on Arion/Sonia and electronically file the Evaluative Lecturer Report. In addition the administrator emails the student a “flattened” copy of the report – the student is unable to make any changes to a flattened PDF file hence protecting the reliability of each report.

The preceding data and analysis presents advantages of using the iPad as a business and educational tool. For the purpose of this self-study, an illustration of success factors is presented in a model to exemplify the link between success factors and productivity. Therefore the use of iPad for work purposes proved to be instrumental in the growth of productivity in the workplace. An illustration of this is highlighted below:
The figure above includes two factors that can contribute to the increased
benefits of the use of iPads: Relevant Training, and Positive Organisational Culture. The model outlines how integration of iPads will strengthen the success factors and hence contribute to enhanced productivity and organisational success.

To maximise the use of the iPad, it is important that staff with iPads attend training on how to use the iPad effectively and how to apply the applications that are available to use for work purposes. Staff that are properly equipped with the relevant knowledge and skills are likely to use the iPad more productively. Relevant training is highly recommended for all iPad users. Training at AUT University is provided by the Centre for Learning and Teaching (Cflat) and in particular by the Learning and Teaching Technology Experts (LATTES), however, it is also recommended that an expert in administrative applications be sought.

Understanding the culture of an organisation is important. Johnson (2000) characterised the cultures of an organisation as a web made up by key concepts such as routines and rituals, systems of control, organisational structures, power structures, symbols and stories. Organisational culture can be a source of competitive advantage (Barney, 1996). For the purpose of this self-study establishing a positive organisational culture will generate positive energy and improve productivity. The introduction of iPads by the School of Education can be viewed as a positive step to systems of control, enhancing research output and improvement in overall productivity and organisational success. The iPad can also be viewed as a productive tool in all facets of organisational systems.

From observation and self-study the introduction and use of iPads by the School of Education contributes to a positive organisational culture (Barney, 1996) in the following ways:

- Overall improvement in self-awareness, confidence and productive working environment
- Staff are more engaged and interested to learn more about advances and advancing in the world of technology
- Staff feel a sense of responsibility to keep abreast with changes and work related matters
- Academics endeavour to enhance research outputs
- Overall sense of attachment to the organisation which directly and indirectly enriches a positive organisational culture.
The School of Education ought to be proud of the investment in iPads and how this technology has contributed to a vibrant and robust organisational culture.

Janene Davidson

Janene had heard of the iPad and was curious as to how this could be applied in her job and used effectively as a tool. Coming from a strong technology–driven family, she started thinking carefully about the possibilities an iPad could offer. She was aware that iPads could be used for email and note taking, and the families she had met who used iPads had endless fun with games and entertainment at the same time using them as a tool for learning. Janene decided that the main focus should be on the day to day operations of the placement office whilst interacting with students and staff. Included in her Expression Of Interest were ideas such as minutes of meetings, a pool of iPads for Evaluative Lecturers for report writing, meetings with schools, checking email out of hours, practicum information that is mobile, accessing and maintaining e-portfolios, and increasing Janene’s knowledge of this tool so as to support other staff.

Gathering the data for Janene’s research involved a diary in Microsoft Outlook where she dated each entry and made open comments and reflections about anything related to the use of the iPad.

Some immediate benefits of the iPad included its light weight, that fitted perfectly into her handbag, making the tool very mobile. The set up process was easy and well–supported by the IT department, and the discovery of functions such as wireless internet connection (Wi-fi), photos, videos and notepad, revealed endless possibilities.

Within one month, Janene was using the iPad to record a training session that later became useful for the day to day use of the iPad. Janene started to meet with students and was able to demonstrate how they could access their placement information, public transport website and google maps – tools students use for placement. The students enjoyed this interaction and appeared more confident once they were shown the placement tools. Another useful function was the ability to transport and view work files at home. This was especially useful when at home sick, well enough to work, but not well enough to be back in the office. The iPad worked as a second screen to Janene’s laptop and she was able to start catching up on lost work. Checking
work email each day before coming to work also became a great time management tool. Although not responding to these emails, she was able to filter the less important emails and prepare mentally for the beginning of the day, helping her to focus and prioritise work at the beginning of each day.

One of the interesting questions Janene had was whether the iPad could be used by Evaluative Lecturers who visited students on placement. It was through another member of staff that she discovered the finer features of ‘PDF Expert’. After creating a form in Adobe and using with the features of this app she created an iPad version of the Evaluative Lecturer Report Form. Education staff are now using their iPads to take into the field, produce reports and email them directly to the placement office for processing and filing. This has become a great time saver, eliminating the waiting time to view and to scan reports.

Towards the end of 2012, Janene took her iPad on a Professional Development trip where it not only became the second screen while she worked with her laptop but also a great mobile tool for connecting to the office. Using the internet via wireless connection Eduroam she was able to log into the work drive and continue to work. The iPad application used to do this is called WebDAVNav. PDF Expert was useful for demonstrating the use of the iPad for the Evaluative Lecturer Report to placement staff at Waikato and Victoria Universities. While away photos of the people and places were taken on the iPad and used upon return to easily produce a report on the trip. Upon her return, Janene shared her ideas and uses that were discovered on this trip. As a result she was able to support staff while they set up their iPads with IT and CFLAT and help answer some staff questions.

Through Janene’s gathering of data on her experience it was evident that the iPad had become an extension of home/work and, rather than a blending, it had become a tool to be used in both worlds. Her family welcomed the iPad and they all showed an avid interest in the new technology at the same time as respecting it as ‘mum’s’ work tool – mum suddenly became “cool and clever”. At home Janene found herself able to quickly check email while waiting for the jug to boil. Answering urgent email enables better service and also clearing the inbox of “sent to all” emails that are not relevant to her role. Doing this de-clutters busy working mornings and clearing the mind to focus on the important tasks of the day. At work, in breaks, she also saw the benefits of quickly checking in on home email to act on any family events if
necessary. With her family being busy the iPad has connected her with teachers, doctors, banks and visiting friends making the organisation at home smoother.

In the future Janene sees the possibility to demonstrate to schools the functions of the placement system, the use of iPads on practicum with the ability to teach Associate Teachers how to complete their reports and view placement data.

The iPad has given Janene a sense of belonging to the workplace while increasing her knowledge of technology. She observed feeling supported in her role by being given this “cool tool” to use. Further to this she has felt empowered to share with and support students, staff, Evaluative Lecturers, Liaison and school staff, who are often also learning how to use an iPad and/or the School’s placement system.

This research has presented a few challenges. While keeping the diary, Janene noticed that the usual tendency to be wordy in note taking presented a personal challenge of making sure she was succinct in reflections so that thoughts could be quickly and clearly communicated. During her Professional Development trip she found that she had to make sure she stayed at destinations where WiFi was available and discovered that some hotels charged extra for the wireless internet use. At home and work, she is challenged to find the right balance so that one does not encroach on the other.

Janene developed a set of recommendations from her experience:

- 3G being available for off-site work or Professional Development;
- All administration be given an iPad;
- Practicum evaluation staff be provided with access to a pool of iPads;
- Guidelines, hints or permissions from management could be documented for balancing the use of the iPad at home and work. Using ethical work practice and being aware of priorities could be included in this;
- A regularly updated list of apps be published;
- The iPad be taken to schools to introduce and demonstrate the placement system and for survey purposes;
- Future research be done on producing course materials for practicum in an iPad format for use on practicum.
Conclusion

This research has shown that iPads can play a pivotal role in individual and collective productivity. The identification and the analysis of factors leading to the success and productivity may of course vary from person to person, however, the results above show some strong consistencies across the three self-study projects.

The team has developed an understanding of how the administration role can be deepened and widened with the use of the iPad. This new tool has encouraged the team to learn, enquire and discover new ways of making its many critical tasks more efficient and productive which leads to positive outcomes for the students, lecturers, and the wider School and Faculty. The iPad’s use in the administration of placements has been enhanced by its functionality, portability and with new apps being available every day. The merging of ideas, embracing technology and learning how technology blends with each administrator’s everyday lives can be seen to lead to greater job satisfaction and time saving, resulting in a less stressful life and indicating that the iPad is a tool for the future of the School of Education at AUT.

In addition, through this research the team developed a more critical awareness of the wider applications of iPads and other mobile technologies for keeping people informed and connected.

This research has indicated the value of engaging in both research and professional development to support the implementation of any new technology. Professional development is an important element that supports the effective implementation of any new technology and this is particularly the case with tablets given the availability of a wide range of applications that should be carefully analysed before application. The AUT Centre for Learning and Teaching provides this support through its LATTE system, and this support was used effectively during one of the iPad research projects above. It is recommended that a similar support network be developed for administrative specialisation.

References


Authors

Janene Davidson specialises in student teaching practicum for Bachelor of Education Primary student teachers at Auckland University of Technology. She works closely with primary schools, and manages reports for both the BEd and international placements, advising students, evaluative lecturers, and keeping track of student practicum requirements. Janene has studied Psychology and Counselling Theory at Open Polytechnic.

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Audrey Williams works with the Auckland University of Technology Early Childhood Student teachers. She manages the programme administration of enrolment and selection, student completions, and graduation and promotes the programme in the Auckland region.

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Abstract

The adoption of ICT in Higher education for teaching and learning has grown enormously over the past decade. Today the majority of educational institutes are integrating technology in their teaching and learning experiences. As a result of changes in technology and means of communication, learners are now becoming more and more mobile and integrating technology in their learning. The emphasis is on anytime, anywhere learning. Along with the changes in technology, the use of social networking tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and SMS are continuing to grow. Drawing on recent literature on use of digital tools and informal learning, the authors argue that much learning takes place outside of formal educational settings. They look beyond the modernist narratives of adult development and consider the possible implications of how teaching and learning are impacted by social and informal networking in the digital world.

Introduction

The interest in social media to support higher education has led to a wide range of digital tools being brought into the classroom. As a result of this, a number of studies have investigated the use of digital tools in higher education (Timmis, 2012; Conole, De Laat, Dillon & Darby, 2008; Doukas, 2008; Hung, Tan & Chen, 2006). This literature also points to the potential of social media to facilitate educational transformation in the future, where learning would be more dialogic. Schwarz (2011) suggested that young people are moving away from the use of phone to text based communication especially instant messaging. Students today are using a number of digital tools and spaces like email, social media like blogs, text messaging, and instant messages. Conole et al. (2008) suggested that technologies have impacted on how students learn and how they use technologies to communicate and share information. As a result of changes in technology and means of communication, the focus of learning has shifted. As Doukas (2008) pointed out it is no longer accumulation of information. Learners now have to negotiate multiple interpretations of reality. They need to select and make best
use of information. Learning has shifted from print materials to digital modes. Learning therefore takes place in a range of places outside the classroom. Learners today are flexible learners and knowledge is acquired through co-operative efforts and this also means relating to the world that surrounds them.

Timmis (2012) in her study has explored the use of instant messaging amongst students and how these conversations offer peer support to students in light of severe cuts in funding for universities, which affects the support structure available to students in higher education. Timmis argued that in such a climate of technological innovations and cutbacks in funding for higher education, the technological tools that students use may become important and on-going support structures for students. This study not only looks at the use of digital media by students but it also explores how peer support and learning are constructed through these dialogues amongst students. It illustrates how students use instant messaging tools to support each other and establish a community of learners to create and construct knowledge (Timmis, 2012).

**Mobile learning technologies**

One consequence of innovations and advances in technology is that mobile learning has become a popular learning tool amongst educators and learners. Use of mobile technologies has enabled learners to use devices such as cell phones, Personal Digital Assistance (PDAs), portable game devices, handheld tablets, and laptops. These devices have made it possible for learners to learn anywhere anytime, as technology allows computers and other devices to be moved about easily without losing connection to the network (Akintola, Ojokoh, Boyinbode, 2012). Schwarz (2011) suggested that there is a shift in interpersonal communication from face to face interaction to instant messaging amongst young people. Students use a number of digital communication tools and spaces like university email system and social media like blogs and mobile text messaging. The interest in digital communication to support higher education has led to investigations of students’ use of a range of digital tools (Timmis, 2012; Conole et al., 2008; Hung et al., 2006). Mobile devices can “increase students’ enjoyment of and participation in active learning exercises” (Mayberry, Hargis, Boles, Dugas, O’Neill, Rivera & Meler, 2013, p. 214).
A number of related researches have been carried out by several authors. For instance, Akintola et al. (2012) have discussed the advances in mobile technologies, pedagogical implications and implementation of these technologies in a university learning context. Hung et al. (2006) provide an educational perspective on how mobile and wireless technologies can be adopted meaningfully for learning. They argue that “in order to engage a learner, the learning process should be derived from an authentic demand of interest to the learner” (Hung et al., 2006, p. 19). The authors point out that learning needs to be relevant for it to be effective and there must be a link between learning and application. This means that learning must be contextual and have relevance to real world situation (Hung et al., 2006). Koszalka and Ntloedibe-Kuswani (2010) have discussed the learning potential of mobile technologies. The authors suggest that when students are using mobile technologies they are not passive receivers of information but they are engaged and interact with a range of educational resources in informal settings. Therefore, the learners are not just receivers of knowledge as in a formal classroom but they are co-constructors of knowledge. Mobile learning is associated with learners sharing knowledge and they are not located at a fixed location. They access information and resources they need there and then as they have questions. Teachers today interact with students beyond the classrooms through emails, instant messages, and other digital means. Teaching and learning has become more flexible. Learning takes place in different spaces like cafes, parks, galleries, and other locations (Warger & Dobbin, 2009). So, the learners are not just receivers of knowledge as in a formal classroom, they are co-constructors and creators of knowledge. This brings to the fore the value of students being empowered as agents of knowledge creators while using digital means. A number of studies have been conducted that focus on the use of digital media (Timmis, 2012; Conole, De Laat et al., 2008; Doukas, 2008; Hung et al., 2006). However, few studies have explored the spaces of learning amongst students who use social media in informal learning contexts. Before discussing the potential of social learning spaces in education, it is important to acknowledge some perspectives of informal learning and social networks.

Informal learning and social networks

Informal learning draws largely on socio-cultural perspectives. In educational theories, Vygotsky (1986 cited in Edwards, 2004), for instance, proposed that
learning is enhanced in social and cultural contexts. However, the concept of meaningful connections to support learning has been in existence for centuries. John Dewey, for instance, proposed the term ‘social capital’ to encompass an understanding of the importance of associations among individuals (Plagens, 2011). Over time, related concepts have emerged with contemporary sociologists such as Bordieu's (1996) concept of ‘networking.’ Networking is considered to be “connections among individuals within or across groups” (Plagens, 2011, p.49). More recently, Stephen Downes and George Siemens (2004) proposed ‘connectivism,’ a learning theory that proposes that learning takes place through networks and connections within these networks. Tschofen and Mackness (2012) add that factors such as “socialization, technology, diversity, strength of ties, and context of occurrence” (p. 125) determine the learning process within networks. This theory is especially visible in the ‘digital-age’ where learning and interactions take place through social media technologies (Chen & Bryer, 2012). Buckingham Shum and Ferguson (2012) add that group processes play an important role in knowledge construction in social learning spaces. That is students draw upon individual group members’ knowledge and skills, their ability to use tools effectively, and teamwork.

The connections within groups of students, specifically with international students have been studied by Montgomery & McDowell (2009). These connections and interactions were found to be an invaluable resource that international students draw upon in their student life. The researchers discredited the common belief that international students need to immerse with local students in order to learn effectively. Instead, they found that the advantages of informal learning networks among the international students themselves were manifold. Apart from mastering communication skills, pedagogical benefits included comprehension of subject knowledge, and support regarding acclimatisation to a new country. The study also revealed social benefits to learning, namely that learning took place through group work and discussions and students used these opportunities to master communication skills. A relevant idea one can draw upon is the question whether this kind of learning could be regarded as part of ‘real learning’ or separate from the formal learning that students were exposed to (Montgomery & McDowell 2009). In a related study on this aspect, Matthews, Andrews and Adams (2011) recognised student voices in determining the effectiveness of social learning spaces wherein learning occurred outside of formal class time.
Students emphasised the advantages of collaborative networks in supporting their learning and comprehension. Furthermore, students reported that informal interactions contributed towards a sense of belonging; a space where friendships were forged and developed across all students regardless of the levels of study and programs that they were enrolled in. The added advantage of skills development, specifically problem solving, sharing of thoughts and idea generation, were acknowledged too.

In the digital age, learning and interactions are taking place anywhere and any place through social media technologies like Facebook, Twitter and other means. These social learning spaces are crucial factors influencing the way students learn. Madge, Meek, Wellens & Hooley’s (2009) study explored the advantages of using Facebook as a means of supporting online learners. The pedagogies of social networking and other aspects of using Web 2.0 technologies in education have been generating a lot of interest. The researchers explored this phenomenon with a group of students in a British university and found that using Facebook seemed to support students not only in establishing and strengthening social relationships but also in supporting students through study. Facebook was found to aid transition into university where students had an opportunity to establish connections with students also studying the same courses in a simultaneous process. Students used Facebook to informally discuss academics, although this was not always the ulterior motive of using Facebook. In this regard, it was interesting to note that students did not consider Facebook to be a tool for academic work, dismissing it to be more of a social networking tool rather than an academic one. Those that did acknowledge its use in academia attributed its use as a means of tracking schedules and other administrative roles. This research noted that Facebook is but one aspect of a student’s networking practice (Madge et al, 2009). In similar vein, Melheim (2007) has explored how technology has shaped students’ learning beyond formal classroom setting. The author has pointed out the benefits of the use of technology in informal settings and how it builds students’ self-esteem by empowering them to take ownership of their learning. It allows space for exchange of ideas, meaningful collaborations and social learning experiences. Indeed, effective use of social media to facilitate learning could help link informal learning to traditional formal learning environments (Chen & Bryer, 2012).

Related to the question of informal learning is the student learning
experiences in today’s globalised world. In this context, Bassett (2012) looks at the challenges faced by students, including a growing number of international students, to become effective early childhood practitioners and “become academically literate at the same time” (p. 23). The author further emphasises the potential of Web 2.0 tools like Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Flickr to build a community of learners to support their learning. Similarly, Lisbôa & Coutinho (2011) have explored how the use of social websites by students may contribute to the formation of informal learning environment to construct knowledge. They suggest that such informal spaces can be used to support and encourage the in-service training of teachers. Given that technologies have now made distances shorter and spaces closer, Buckingham Shum & Ferguson (2012) state that social media spaces have dual benefits. “Friends become learning peers and mentors, informal endorsements are developed into verifiable accreditation, information exchanges become learning conversations” (p.9).

**Conclusion**

Innovation in technology has changed the face of teaching and learning today. Tertiary institutes are populated with students who are techno savvy in their use of mobile devices like Smartphones and IPads. A number of studies have investigated the use of these digital mobile devices in teaching and learning (Timmis, 2012; Conole et al, 2008; Doukas, 2008; Hung et al, 2006). However, there is little investigation into the experiences of students using these devices. With the growth in the Internet and other digital technologies, a number of students are using platforms or social media like Facebook and MySpace to communicate. This has created a virtual community of learning. This may be a platform where students interact socially but it can also serve as a medium of communication and expression. Students discuss various topics online using these mediums. This can lead to construction of knowledge through informal learning beyond formal classrooms. This opens up an interesting space to explore, especially in relation to the socio-cultural contexts of the learners, which has become very diverse in the global movement of people from one continent to another. The authors thus put forward the question of how do these students use these informal technologies in their learning to foster intellectual exchanges and lead to collaborative knowledge creation.
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The impact of an international volunteering experience on individual career development

Paul Fitzmaurice

Abstract
Volunteering has recently been perceived by many in the career development industry as a viable strategy for career enhancement, as a means of gaining valuable work experience and developing skills sought by employers. International volunteering is carried out by people driven by a range of motives and values, which often change as a result of the international volunteering experience. These experiences provide individuals with a broad set of opportunities to enhance not just their career development, but a variety of other benefits that cannot always be predicted prior to such experiences. Literature on the topic of international volunteering largely focuses on the improved employability of returned volunteers, the resulting career decisions that emerge, and the changed values and clarity of motives for volunteering. While the relationship between international volunteering and career development is not always predictable or straightforward, it is often transformational for the volunteer, with career development remaining a significant aspect for international volunteers.

Introduction
International voluntary work is growing both numerically and in its importance as a means of contributing to development programmes and humanitarian aid worldwide (Sherraden, Stringham, Sow, McBride, 2006). It serves as a means of allowing people to serve in different capacities for various periods of time, in a wide range of contexts. Globalisation appears to have accelerated the growth of international volunteering, but has corresponded with a slower pace of relevant research (Lough, McBride and Sherraden, 2009).

Often referred to as international voluntary service (IVS), it is purported to allow ordinary people an opportunity to become involved in development work, humanitarian aid, the promotion of peace and understanding across international borders, as well as offering technical assistance and training for
the benefit of others throughout the world (Sherraden, Lough & McBride, 2008). During the process of making such contributions, volunteers themselves often benefit via personal growth, development of self-confidence, intercultural competence, and a greater commitment to civic and global engagement (Sherraden et al., 2008). Enhanced career development is often a further significant outcome, and includes benefits to the volunteer such as improved employability, clarity in relation to future career decisions, and changes in values that contribute to greater self-awareness and understanding of personal motivations.

As a career practitioner with a strong interest in volunteering, the author has previously been an advocate of this approach as a career-enhancing strategy, largely within the university context in New Zealand. The development of a volunteering strategy within one tertiary education context has led to several events that promote volunteering held on university campuses in New Zealand. Volunteering is perceived to be a useful career strategy because of its potential to contribute to student and graduate employability, particularly in an economic downturn when acquiring paid employment is likely to be more difficult. Although this may seem like a less-than-altruistic motivation for anyone to volunteer, it is nevertheless an approach that is understandable and worthy of consideration when bearing in mind options for gaining valuable work experience and thereby furthering the career potential of individuals. The international aspect of this study was partly brought about by personal involvement in short-term volunteer work in Fiji, Thailand and most recently Timor-Leste, which has fuelled the desire to research this topic in more depth.

While positive benefits will often result for volunteers’ career development, these are not automatic, and may incur other less-than-desirable consequences, including outcomes related to the host communities in particular. Potentially negative aspects of international volunteering include conscious or sub-conscious imperialistic attitudes with a resulting reinforcement of inequalities between the developed and developing worlds (Sherraden et al., 2008). One example cited is the preponderance of gap-year programmes for young people (Simpson, 2004). In a somewhat sceptical fashion, these have been portrayed as nothing more than a means to combine tourism, adventure, with supposedly “making a difference”, as well as the unspoken possibility of allaying guilt over the volunteer’s wealth and privilege. The danger is seen as potentially making little meaningful
contribution to the host community, and perpetuating the myth that such programmes create long-lasting improvement to such communities, when this may not actually be the case (Sherraden et al., 2008).

**Employability**

The idea of improving one’s employability by way of engaging in an international volunteering experience seems a desirable, although not automatic, outcome for the volunteer in particular. Employability refers to the knowledge skills and attributes likely to be required of those seeking employment in the future, and is enhanced by a wide range of factors. Generic skills such as communication skills, teamwork skills, problem-solving skills, initiative and enterprise skills, planning and organising skills, self-management skills, and technology skills, have been recognised by projects including the Employability Skills Framework, which was developed in Australia (ACCI & BCA, 2002) and based on research of Australian employers’ views. These and other skills are commonly referred to among career professionals working in tertiary education in Australia and New Zealand.

Skill development as a result of international volunteering certainly contributes to individual employability, and the abovementioned skills, together with cross-cultural communication, are recognised in a quantitative study produced jointly by Australian Volunteers International (AVI) and Monash University (Brook, Missingham, Hocking and Fifer, 2007). These skills “are both highly valued by employers and well-developed in volunteers” (p.1). Although this report was likely to have been produced for the purposes of promoting AVI volunteers to Australian employers, it declared that 87% of returned international volunteers had acquired or improved one or more skill, with 57% improving on three or more skills. Repatriated volunteers are “well prepared to deal with the globalised workplace” (p.2). Career development of international volunteers is therefore positively impacted by their experiences, and employers also benefit from this. Despite some reservation on the part of employers toward the skills and experience accrued by volunteers, many volunteers also developed the attitudes of responsibility, communication, creativity and commitment, all of which the majority of employers are likely to respect. The study further asserted that “International volunteering programs are transformative experiences that
develop and foster generic tough skills in volunteers” (p.23).

An organised period of IVS will usually include positive outcomes for the volunteer such as skill development, personal development, intercultural competence, language skills, international knowledge, and subsequently a greater involvement in civic and global affairs, according to Sherraden et al. (2008). IVS potentially increases the capacity of the volunteers’ in leadership, language, communication, problem-solving, team-building, and interpersonal relations, which all contribute to employability. Although some employers may not always give appropriate recognition to the overseas experience, many still recognise the personal development and attitudes of returned volunteers in areas such as self-confidence, self-awareness, maturity and independence. Sherraden suggests “The potential is high, therefore, for IVS to be a transformative experience in the lives of volunteers” (p.409).

The experiences of managers as both volunteers and the employers of volunteers can provide an interesting perspective on employability and professional development issues. In 2006, the Chartered Management Institute in the UK (Cook & Jackson, 2006) produced a research report that focussed primarily on managers, although it certainly has applicability to volunteers in non-management roles as well. The expressed purpose of the research was “to evaluate the professional development benefits of volunteering” (p.1), with a call to employers to recognise the skills developed by volunteers as well as exhorting individuals to consider the career development advantages that volunteering could provide.

A large proportion (94%) of Cook and Jackson’s (2006) participants ”agree or strongly agree that long-term overseas voluntary activities broaden skills and experiences, and 48% claim that it increases employability” (p.3). “Long term” is defined here as a minimum of two years. Eighty percent of repatriated volunteers referred to increased confidence and skills as a result of their placement. The authors also alluded to the difficulty of minimal recognition by employers of the benefits to their organisations of an employee with overseas voluntary experience. However, those who did employ returned volunteers were largely positive.

A higher education perspective on employability and skill development as a result of international volunteer experience is provided by Richardson and Mallon’s (2005) study of 30 British expatriate academics, who had crossed
national borders in search of, among other things, enhanced career opportunities. Although not discussing volunteering specifically, this is still a useful perspective on the experiences of one type of occupation. Their conclusions lacked the primarily positive outcomes of working overseas, mostly because of two significant stipulations offered by some of the younger participants in the study. The first was that long-term career benefit was partly influenced by the country the expatriate travelled to: regions including New Zealand, Australia, Western Europe, USA, and some parts of East Asia were looked upon as more beneficial, whereas Africa, Eastern Europe and the Middle East were perceived as less attractive. Two-thirds of respondents also stipulated that career benefit was relevant to the content of the work itself. They highlighted “that for overseas experience to be recognised and rewarded it must involve identifiable competencies and knowledge as determined by their institutional criteria for tenure and promotion” (p.415). This seems an interesting proviso for a group that also highlighted adventure and life change as two of their primary motivations. It would seem that separating themselves from the “institutional criteria” was not necessarily part of the adventure!

Many employers are increasingly seeking candidates who have some understanding of cultural diversity. (e.g., Brook at al., Cook & Jackson). Crossman and Clarke (2010), who also represent the higher education perspective, carried out a study of 45 employers, academics and students, with the aim of discovering links between international experience and graduate employability. They present a worthwhile case for international volunteering as a means to develop experiential learning, personal networks, and language skills. The additional attributes of intercultural adaptability and global competency allude to qualities such as open-mindedness, initiative, flexibility, empathy and co-operation, which all contribute to the employability of the individual, and in some measure stem from international experience. These authors draw upon a significant amount of prior research, and conclude with the assertion that international experience, in the form of volunteering, internships or paid work, makes a solid contribution to the preparation of graduates for employment.

Superior employability and an increased desire for studying social sciences among returned volunteers, represented significant outcomes of research on youth volunteering in Europe provided by Powell and Bratovic (2007). They concluded that, as a result of international volunteering experiences, that:
“Employability, the potential to be able to find employment, is a much more common outcome than employment.” (p.30) Despite this conclusion, the authors acknowledge that volunteers’ personal growth resulting from their experience is a more dominant outcome. Increases in maturity, independence, confidence, and self-esteem commonly occur for young Europeans, with career development a secondary result.

**Career Decisions**

Career decisions are prompted by a myriad of circumstances and experiences, and international volunteering is no exception. In addition to the evidence that supports improved employability among repatriated volunteers, research into the topic has revealed the impact of the experience on future approaches and decisions regarding career, including the commitment to undergo formal education where necessary.

Lough et al. (2009) investigated 291 international volunteer alumni who had been expatriated overseas via two US-based organisations WorldTeach and Cross Cultural Solutions [CCS], subsequently presenting self-reported volunteer outcomes. They discovered that returned volunteers from both organisations believed the overseas volunteering experience was “transformational – or life changing” (p.4) with respect to further career direction, with many of these later pursuing educational opportunities in a range of disciplines. It was noted that “Many respondents concluded that volunteering internationally changed the course of their lives and increased their commitment to international or social and economic development” (p.5). The report also suggested that “international volunteering helps to define volunteers’ educational and career objectives” (p.30). Resulting study options as a determination of this career change included international education, international law, non-profit management, language studies, public health and international development. After returning home, many volunteers also began to work “closely with immigrants, refugees, or other internationals” (p.30).

Similarly, repatriated Australian volunteers also attributed their overseas experience as significant to a subsequent change in career direction. Brook et al. (2007) reported that 61% who made a significant career change, by either remaining in the same industry with a new job (32%), starting work in a new industry (22%), or remaining overseas in another capacity (7%). Overall, 53% of returned volunteers reported their experience as useful in seeking
employment or advancing their career.

Powell and Bratovic (2007) suggest that, along with personal growth and enhanced employability, international volunteering engendered positive consequences on previous career indecision. They report that voluntary service is also found to be a useful means testing out career ideas, thereby contributing to the career decision-making process. Interestingly though, these authors seem to be in the minority by suggesting that long-term follow-up of volunteers as the most accurate method of measuring career, skills and employment outcomes.

Career intentions is also one aspect of a research study of 145 international volunteers carried out by McBride, Lough and Sherraden (2011) that speaks to future career change as a potential result of international volunteering. They assert that “International service provides exposure and immersion to develop these… intentions” (p.969) and that even short-term volunteer experiences overseas “can begin to prepare participants for longer term engagement and future international service” (p.970). Unlike other similar research, this study used a comparison group of non-international-volunteers over the same period. Measuring career intentions quantitatively involved examining the degree to which respondents intended pursuing a career “related to in international or social and economic development issues” (p.972). They discovered that prior to the survey there were minimal differences between volunteers and non-volunteers in this regard, but following the overseas experience of the volunteers there was an appreciably higher intention to pursue a development-focused career path. This suggests the nature of the experience of international volunteering, what was seen, felt, done and reflected upon, was the crucial difference in subsequent career intention.

A review of the Canadian Volunteer Cooperation Programme headed by Universalia (2005) evaluated in detail a wide range of results that focussed on returning volunteers. One of their more significant findings related to the level of influence the experience had on the direction of their subsequent choice of career and/or education. Specifically, 46% of the respondents reported their experience as affecting subsequent career decisions “to a great extent”, with a further 40% affected “somewhat” (p.50). Re-focussing of personal study also resulted in many cases, even among volunteers who had not yet completed a qualification. Additionally, a number of returning graduates subsequently
pursued additional qualification in areas relevant to their experience, including development and education.

Although dating back almost 20 years, a brief but relevant study of 37 Australian volunteers (Bell, 1994) sought to draw out information relevant to returned volunteers including their resulting changes to study choices and career. Of the volunteers in this survey, 62% changed careers as a result of their overseas experiences, with the corollary that “the likelihood of volunteers changing careers is directly related to the period of time spent overseas” (p.35). Among those with longer assignments (up to 5 years), 74% made a career change, while those having shorter assignments (at least 2 years), 50% made a career change. Bell concludes with the observation that “it appears that many returned volunteers experienced substantial career development throughout their AVA terms and beyond” (p.36).

Linking career theories to volunteering (Michalos 2010) is an interesting topic for career practitioners, providing some evidence that volunteering will have a positive effect on the prospective careers of those who participate. Future career decisions are linked to Person-Environment Fit (Holland, 1973), Life-Span Development (Super, 1953) and Social Cognitive Career Theories (SCCT) (Lent, Brown and Hackett, 1987). Analysis of the PEF relationship to volunteering proposes a range of occupations typical of volunteers and their correlation with Holland’s hexagonal model. Despite the somewhat linear relationship between personality and occupational suitability that is characteristic of PEF, this is a useful indicator of success and career fit for volunteers.

Super’s Life-Span Theory affirms career exploration and enhancement of self-concept as achievable through volunteering. Super’s theory also incorporates the value of non-work roles as equally significant for career development, and although not specifically referring to international experiences, verifies volunteering as a valuable strategy for career development. SCCT components that relate to volunteering include self-efficacy, outcome expectations and personal goals, which link to activities and their outcomes applicable to volunteering. A question such as “Can I volunteer and do it successfully?” is an example of this approach. Michalos (2010) reminds us that volunteering can be an opportunity to explore career options at any stage of life, providing that curiosity is allowed to thrive as a fuel for exploration and a pathway to a resulting career decision.
Motivations and Values

Volunteering in general and international volunteering in particular have received a reasonable amount of consideration in relation to the personal values and motivations of volunteers. Values are inherent in the individual, and are determined by a wide range of factors throughout a person’s lifetime, and form the basis of motivations that in turn prompt action towards becoming a volunteer. It is widely recognised in the career development industry that personal values will often have a significant impact on career choice, and will likely change throughout a person’s life. Congruence between values and career will create personal meaning and engender individual commitment and motivation to the fulfilment of that career. Any change in values will therefore potentially affect both motivations and career as a result.

Volunteer overseas development work was the focus of Hudson and Inkson’s (2006) research, one aspect of which examined motivations of volunteers. In many cases there were multiple motives for volunteering, including a combination of altruism, search for meaning, challenge, adventure, long-held desire, the opportunity to experience a different culture, and for career-enhancing purposes. Altruism included the concepts of helping others less fortunate, giving back, and the sharing of skills. These authors discovered evidence of “discontinuity and pro-active change” (p.310) and high levels of openness as significant career characteristics of many volunteers, hence the presence of a “readiness” factor regardless of career implications (p.310). The authors classify these people as those seeking a Protean career – one where there is minimal ties to a particular organisation, and characterised by being highly motivated by their own values, and who are generally adaptable and self-directed. However, only a minority of participants in this study seemed to consistently perceive the experience through the lens of their own career development.

Strength of motivations for returned international volunteers was surveyed by Lough et al. (2009) with the resulting data indicating that the desire to gain skills for a job was not in the top six motivations of participants. Meaningful experiences, making a difference by helping others, gaining cross-cultural understanding, and acquiring language skills were all ahead of the career development imperative. However, they did report that volunteering “for career preparation” was regularly mentioned, particularly among those in the teaching profession. The opportunity to either prepare for or advance their
careers was seemingly still part of the overall motivation, even if not the most significant one.

Espoused motivations by returned Australian volunteers (Brook et al., 2007) were dominated by the desire “to help other people or do something useful” (55%) followed by “adventure or travel” (24%), “a need to try something new” (10%) and “personal change” (5%) (p.13). Career or professional development was reported by 14% of volunteers as a significant motivation. Similar to Hudson and Inkson’s (2006) conclusions, multiple motivations often occurred.

Amongst managers who volunteered, Cook and Jackson (2006) reported that 79% expressed the desire to “give something back” and “to improve things and help people” as major reasons for volunteering (p.3). This altruism seemed to be mixed with the concurrent, although secondary, desire to maximise career and professional development, with only 10% reporting this as the primary motivator. Among this group there was the desire to increase skills related to management functions such as strategic understanding, coaching and mentoring skills, networking, and negotiation skills.

Motives for expatriating among academics (Richardson & Mallon, 2005) included adventure, travel, life change, family reasons and to enhance her career opportunities, although only one participant said she had made the choice specifically to improve her career. In spite of this, career concerns were reported to be a dominant consideration when assessing the overall value of the overseas work experience. “They expected it to provide an ‘edge’ in the academic labour market primarily because of the perceived internationalization of higher education.” (p.415)

The motives of Irish volunteers involved in social care work were considered as one aspect of MacNeela’s (2008) research, distinguishing between self-oriented and other-oriented motives. The likes of “giving something back” is obviously from the latter category, with the potentially more self-serving career development motive as belonging to the former category. In some volunteer organisations the career motive was not always well received. However, the notion of “volunteering as an exchange” (p.130) seemed to provide a middle ground between the two categories. Bell (1994) also reports a mixture of motives among volunteers, suggesting there were “generally a mixture of self-interest (i.e., personal development) and altruism” (p.34).
Inkson and Myers (2003) highlight the experiences of New Zealanders self-initiated “OE” (overseas experience) examining the effects on career development as a result. Although not specifically focussing on volunteering, similarities exist with their perception of the career benefits of OE, such as the sometimes improvisational nature of life in another culture that in itself has the potential to develop personal skills and characteristics that contribute to the career potential of the individual. Exploration is a further common theme among the OE demographic, as are a range of other motivations including “autonomy, independence, adaptability, transience, self-directed learning and multi-culturalism, (all of which) are increasingly requirements of careers.” (p.172)

Negative Impacts

In contrast, Devereux (2008) and Simpson (2004) warn that short-term volunteering, especially some gap-year programmes or organisations promoting volunteer tourism, can do more harm that good, and are likely to be unhelpful for the host community. Devereux primarily focused on capacity development and sustainability, providing a perspective on international volunteering that cautions against the paternalistic or imperialist approaches that only satisfy “a self-serving quest for career and personal development on the part of well-off Westerners” (p.358). Such programmes may provide short-term career enhancement for the volunteer, but likewise may “become a new form of colonialism, reinforcing an attitude of ‘it’s all about us’ by their emphasis on short-term ‘helping’ over learning” (p.360).

Devereux is not afraid to address the potentially negative effects of IVS, but responds to his own questions by stating that any benefits gained by the volunteer tend to be reciprocal rather than automatically paternalistic, for the simple reason that the act of volunteering is most often “an exchange of skills (for) personal learning” (p.362).

Sherraden et al. (2008) also highlight the downside of volunteering, but from the perspective of who is able to volunteer in the first place. Is the choice of being able to volunteer internationally only limited to people of means from wealthier nations? While the experience may offer these volunteers an understanding of international affairs and a step up for their career, it has the potential to minimise the positive impact on both host communities and
volunteers of lesser means. “Those who volunteer will continue to reap the benefits… using host organizations and host communities as a rung on the ladder of personal advancement, without making lasting contributions and providing avenues for advancement to those who are ‘served’ ” (p.414).

Conclusions

Across a range of occupational areas (management, teaching, social service, education, etc.) and via research conducted in various parts of the world (Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Ireland, UK, USA, Europe), career development has been seen to be positively impacted by an international voluntary experience. These effects include enhanced employability, readiness to embark upon a different career direction, and an understanding of one’s motives and changed values as a result. In many cases these themes overlap within individual research reports.

Ascertaining new skills or improving existing skills as an international volunteer contributes to employability in many instances, and is commonly reported by many returned volunteers. This includes a wide range of skills that many employers usually value among their staff, providing they are able to appreciate the personal and career benefits accrued from working overseas. Typically, communication, self-confidence, intercultural understanding, leadership skills, problem-solving, language skills, and maturity are enhanced to some degree due to the international experience.

International volunteering experiences have been reported widely as life-changing and transformational for many repatriated volunteers, both personally and vocationally. Career indecision can be reduced, clarity of career direction improved, and commitment to further education relevant to overseas work developed. Career changes, while far from universal, were certainly a feature of many returned volunteers who had gained different perspectives of life and of the world.

Volunteers’ motives were examined, although rarely in the context of both before and after the IVS experience. Career development was one among several reasons to engage in IVS, however more often primary motivations were cited as travel, giving something back, and experiencing a different culture. Overall, motivations appeared as both self-serving (e.g., travel, career, experiencing another culture) and altruistic (e.g., giving something, being useful, helping others).
A change in personal values is reported by many volunteers (Brook et al., 2007; Hudson & Inkson, 2006; Universalia, 2005) as one of the more significant aspects of their experience. Although motives prior to and IVS experience appear not to have been researched widely, personal values were often reported as changing or enhancing, and therefore potentially having an impact on career as a result.

Success for all parties is also partly contingent on the attributes and capacity of the volunteers themselves prior to their assignment, although little research has been done on this aspect. Factors including the volunteers’ prior skills and knowledge, motivations, previous international experience, and life stage are all potential determinants of positive outcomes, even before the international volunteering assignment begins. The Canadian study (Universalia, 2005) in particular affirmed the likelihood of a “deepening or reaffirmation of …values and beliefs” (p.48) among those who had previous overseas experience.

Richardson and Mallon (2005) simply and accurately state that “the relationship between international experience and career development is complex and multi-dimensional” (p.417). This offers a telling summary and useful stimulus for further research into IVS and its impacts on individual career development.

Overall it appears the international volunteering experience is largely positive, and can usually be considered as “a process of two-way learning” (Brook et al., 2007, p.2). It also has ‘the potential to positively affect volunteers and host organisations’ (Lough, 2009, p.5) and can be offered as a strategy that results in helpful and tangible outcomes for both the volunteer and the host community.

References


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Professionalism – A straight forward equation?

Kerry Langdon

Abstract

Professionalism is a complex and multi-faceted concept. Within the early childhood sector it is evident that the professional status of teachers is still contested. This is heightened by neoliberal policies which call for accountability and meeting standards, therefore, reducing early childhood educators’ ability to practice autonomously. The view of professionals being defined through specific attributes, such as ethical practice, accountability, specialised knowledge, and autonomy must be considered in relation to the early childhood context. An alternative, but relevant, view of professionalism is one which allows educators the agency to develop their own professional status, and recognises the relational aspects of the work. The recent governmental push to increase numbers of educators who hold formal qualifications has heightened the debate surrounding the professional status of early childhood educators. However, I propose that the professional practice of educators cannot be guaranteed through a formal qualification, and other contributing factors must be considered.

Professionalism is a concept which encompasses many different aspects. It can be viewed from a variety of perspectives, and therefore lacks a precise definition (Brock, 2011). The term ‘professionalism’ can be used to describe the attitude or behaviours of a person in any field, but is also commonly seen as describing a person’s competency, knowledge base and qualifications (Brock, 2011). It is also apparent that ‘professionalism’ may be bestowed upon certain careers through public recognition and high salaries (Brock, 2011; Small, 2008). Professionalism is also considered to be linked to the level of training required for an occupation. The knowledge and skill acquired through gaining a qualification is considered to raise the amateur status of an occupational group (Brock, 2011; Small, 2008).

The nature of ‘professionalism’ for early childhood educators in New Zealand consists of many varied and complex aspects. In fact, across the globe this is recognised as a complex and contested matter, which must take into consideration the unique local setting and societal views (Dalli, Miller, & Urban, 2012). Professionalism in the early childhood context must recognise the relational and ethical considerations, while allowing for the many different systems of knowledge and decision making strategies (Dalli, Miller
One aspect of the professional or non-professional status of early childhood educators is that which comes from the views of society. Grey (2012) states that over the past decade, in New Zealand, the increase in the level of early childhood educators who hold a teacher’s qualification has influenced their professional image and identity. Despite the recent emphasis on the importance of early childhood educators becoming qualified, it is interesting to note that they are still perceived to hold a lower professional status than primary and secondary school teachers. This is reflected in the lower pay rate of teachers employed in the early childhood sector. This has added fuel to the debate about what defines ‘professionalism’ and how this applies to early childhood educators (Small, 2008).

One definition of a professional is “an expert who can assess, plan, adapt and act with flexibility” (Gibboney, 1998 as cited in Fromberg, 2003, p. 179). Using these criteria it is fair to propose that early childhood educators in New Zealand are professionals. The national early childhood curriculum document Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996) states that the educator must consider and respond to the individual needs and requirements of children. To do this effectively the educator would need to be capable at assessing and planning, and would need to be flexible in their approach. However, as professionalism is such a complex and multifaceted concept, this definition may be seen as simplistic.

A more complex view of professionalism is that which proposes professionalism is not static and based on external standards or values, but is formed, through on-going debate and discussion by the teachers themselves (Grey, 2012). This view of professionalism requires the teacher to reflect upon their own teaching practice. It recognises the knowledge teachers have, on which they base decisions and actions, and highlights the relational aspect of the work. Grey (2012) proposes this way of defining professionalism supports the autonomy of early childhood educators, allowing them to exercise their own agency and fit more comfortably into the traditional mould of professionalism.

An alternative view of professionalism is that which suggests specific characteristics will be evident in professional practice (Fromberg, 2003). Dalli (2012) offers that due to the complex nature of the early childhood
context, it is not possible to define professionalism using a set of skills or qualities. Instead, consideration should be given to the local situation, society’s views and the many interpersonal and ethical aspects involved (Dalli, 2012). However, using these specific attributes related to professionalism as a starting point, it may be possible to consider the professional status of early childhood educators in New Zealand in comparison to international counterparts.

A specific characteristic evident in professional practice is that of ‘ethical performance’ (Brock, 2011; Fromberg, 2003). This characteristic suggests that early childhood educators should recognise the potential powerlessness of their clientele, and practice in a manner which supports the child’s competence in culturally appropriate and meaningful ways (Fromberg, 2003). A self-regulating code of ethics is seen as contributing to the professional practice of teachers (Brock, 2011). Early childhood educators in New Zealand have access to an aspirational ethical guide called *Early Childhood Education Code of Ethics for Aotearoa/New Zealand* (Early Childhood Code of Ethics National Working Group, 1995). This document claims that the existence of a code of ethics makes a public statement about the professional status of early childhood educators (Early Childhood Code of Ethics National Working Group, 1995).

The New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC), an autonomous crown entity aimed at promoting the professional status of registered teachers, has also produced a code of ethics for early childhood educators. This document is called the *Code of Ethics for Registered Teachers* (NZTC, 2004). This presents four fundamental principles to guide registered teachers in their professional interactions. These are: autonomy; justice; responsible care; and truth. It also lists four areas, to which registered teachers must be committed. These are commitment to learners, to parents/guardians and family/whānau, to society, and to the teaching profession (NZTC, 2004).

The *Code of Ethics for Registered Teachers* (NZTC, 2004) illustrates the uneasy relationship between the political and ethical realms of early childhood educators’ professionalisation (Small, 2008). While teachers propose their professional status should justify their autonomous practice, this conflicts with the reality that their actions are subject to and influenced by politics (Small, 2008). Brock (2011) concurs, stating that traditionally, professionals had more freedom to act autonomously, with control over their
responsibilities and actions. However, as accountability to Government has increased through Ministry of Education regulations, it has affected the levels of autonomy for early childhood educators (Brock, 2011).

Autonomy is widely recognised as a concept which signifies professional practice (Brock, 2011; Fromberg, 2003). This may refer to the autonomous practice of the individual or to the professional autonomy of the field. Within the early childhood sector autonomy of the field is difficult as it is largely governed by a set of external regulations. In New Zealand individual teachers are required to meet a set of minimum requirements to become a registered teacher, and to become licensed, centres must meet certain criteria set by The Ministry of Education. Licensing is not the only time that centres services are assessed, as the Education Review Office externally evaluates services at three yearly intervals (New Zealand Government, 2010). Furthermore, the ECE Taskforce has emphasised external accountability for early childhood centres through recommending the requirement of centre performance reports which would be directly linked to obtaining Government funding (New Zealand Government, 2010).

Increasing levels of accountability create a challenge to a centres ability to practice autonomously and will likely cause deeper scrutiny of individual practices. However, Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996) recognises the diverse nature of early childhood education in New Zealand, and is structured to allow each centre to act autonomously in creating a unique programme based on their philosophy, environment and learning community (Dalli, 2012).

Internationally, particularly in English-speaking countries the early childhood education sector is being influenced by growing neo-liberalism. This market driven, competitive, neoliberal model has seen many early childhood care and education centres become focused on creating profits, attracting business and generating returns on government investment (Moss, 2010). Neoliberalism is seen to have eroded the professional status of educators in New Zealand, by reducing their ability to act autonomously, placing greater emphasis on efficiency and accountability, with less focus on equity, social justice and the quality of education (Codd, 2008). This is also evident in the Australian early childhood context, with regulations and policies undermining practices based on professional knowledge, decisions and autonomy (Aiken & Kennedy, 2007). Duhn (2010) suggests that from a neoliberal perspective teaching
becomes an isolated skill, which drives teachers towards measurable outcomes, often with the incentive of financial reward or promotion.

A high level of expertise and skill is recognised as essential for professional practice (Brock, 2011; Fromberg, 2003). Historically, the early childhood sector has utilised an unqualified workforce, however, over the past decade there has been a significant increase both internationally, and in New Zealand of teachers who hold formal qualifications. Brock (2011) suggests that educators who undergo formal training acquire greater skills in problem-solving and making decisions, which support effective relationships with other professionals and clients.

Specialised knowledge is recognised as attributing to professional practice (Fromberg, 2003; Brock, 2011). Fromberg (2003) explains this as having the knowledge to theorise; what you do; how you do it; and why you do it in a specific way. This allows professionals to implement strategies based on a knowledge base which moves beyond their personal experience and opinion (Fromberg, 2003). It would appear that the importance of the specialised knowledge of early childhood educators is becoming more widely recognised.

In 2010, the New Zealand Government established an independent advisory committee to report on and provide recommendations for the early childhood education sector. In its document, *ECE taskforce; An agenda for amazing children: Final report for the ECE taskforce* (New Zealand Government, 2010), the committee recommends that regulations should require a minimum of eighty percent of staff in early childhood education positions to be registered teachers, with the remaining twenty percent studying toward a qualification, having other relevant expertise or being a fluent speaker of a language other than English. It also recommends providing incentives for teacher-led services to reach one hundred percent of registered teachers. These recommendations are proposed as a means to ensure the high-quality of early childhood education services (New Zealand Government, 2010), therefore suggesting that the knowledge and skills gained by teachers during their formal training is recognised and seen as imperative to providing high-quality education services.

Although ‘quality’ in early childhood education is difficult to define, it is commonly accepted that, highly trained teachers are a critical component to high quality early childhood education programmes (Campbell & Ramey,
International research shows that attendance in high quality early childhood education settings enhances the educational results for children, leading to improved social and economic outcomes of young adults (Engle & Black, 2008; Murray, 2012; New Zealand Government, 2011). Therefore, the ECE Taskforce (New Zealand Government, 2011), recommends that raising the quality of early childhood education is of great importance and that the way to do this is, in part through requiring greater levels of staff qualifications. It is summed up in the statement, “The drive to higher quality across the sector needs to be continued through greater professionalism – as measured by qualifications of service staff” (New Zealand Government, 2011, p.4). The writer’s position on this statement is that it is ill-advised to assume that qualifications are directly linked to quality and professionalism, without considering other influences in an authentic way.

The previous Labour coalition government implemented a policy which required early childhood centres to reach a standard of having all staff, in training or qualified, and registered by 2012 (Carr & Mitchell, 2013). Policies such as this have been recognised as increasing the professional status of early childhood educators. However, in 2009 these standards were replaced with a new target of eighty percent registered teachers by 2012. These targets combined with cuts to funding have seen smaller community based centres struggle to survive, while those operating under large, corporate models have boosted the shift toward early childhood education becoming a business with the goal of generating profit (Duhn, 2010).

From my personal experience I would argue that professionalism and high quality care and education is not always directly related to the level of qualifications an individual holds. My own children attended a home based day care during the early 1990s. At this time it was not a requirement that the home day care provider held any type of formal qualification. Using the knowledge I have gained during my University study I consider the care and education my children received in this setting to be exceptionally high. I believe it was extremely beneficial and supported their holistic well-being and development. This highlights the possibility that high quality care and education can be provided by individuals who do not hold formal teaching qualifications, and that the importance of personal characteristics and attributes should not be over looked.
Dalli (2010) explains that the view of those involved in early childhood education as being ‘motherly’ and acting out of ‘love’ and ‘care’ has hindered the professional status of teachers. She goes on to state that these discourses of love and care should not be ignored, but should be explored, discussed in scholarly settings, and seen in a new way which allows them to become a recognised part of teaching practice (Dalli, 2010).

Campbell and Ramey (1995) propose that although their research shows positive benefits of early childhood education, it does not confirm that out-of-home care was a key element. They suggest, however that these benefits may be gained by supporting and educating parents to provide environments which respond appropriately to the needs of the child and provide opportunities which enhance cognitive development.

A large number of practising early childhood educators in both New Zealand and Australia were educated in an era when programmes emphasised developmental theory. This can lead to difficulty implementing a curriculum based on socio-cultural theory (Farquhar & Fleer, 2007). This reinforces the proposal that it cannot be assumed that qualifications are directly linked to the quality of early childhood care and education programmes, and that there are other factors which must be considered. It appears that traits, such as a genuine love and relationship with the children are at risk of being overlooked, as the sector is being increasingly steered toward more measurable outcomes. While early childhood educator qualifications provide an extensive and valuable knowledge base, they are unable to guarantee the personal qualities of individual educators which are so important.

References


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Professionalism: A situated concept

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Abstract
This essay critically discusses the nature and various views of professionalism in early childhood education. It explores contemporary macro factors—neo-liberalism, privatisation and corporatisation of early childhood services—which are presenting new professional challenges in Aotearoa/New Zealand. It concludes by urging professionals to play an important role which is to increase community and government awareness of what those macro factors might mean for children, families and the profession. It also encourages professionals to facilitate children’s opportunity to have a critical voice as active citizens rather than treating them as the ‘empty vessel’ or ‘blank slate’ (Adams, Vossler, & Scrivens, 2005; Duhn, 2010).

Professionalism: Various perspectives
“Professionalism is a situated concept, embedded – like our understandings of children and childhood – within specific historical, socio-cultural, organisational, economic and political contexts” (Miller & Cable, 2008, p.138).

The statement above shows the complex and multifaceted nature of professionalism. The swiftly changing nature of society and related shifting attention of government policy suggests that a static certain perspective of professionalism is no longer appropriate (Grey, 2012). For the last decade, there has been a period of rapid change in Aotearoa New Zealand that has affected the professional image and identity of early childhood education practitioners. The emphasis on ‘professionalism’ in education has led to a discussion on the meaning of ‘professional’, and the applicability of the prevailing definitions of what it means to be professional to early childhood practitioners (Grey, 2012).

According to Grey (2012), there are three different perspectives on professionalism. The first idea is the traditional lens, whereby a set of attributes defines a professional. These attributes are thought to “differentiate those worthy of professional status from others” (Marsh, 2008; Nurse, 2007, as cited in Grey, 2012, p.9). Examples of these attributes include gaining expert knowledge prior to the actual practices, complying with the boundaries
and regulations of the profession, and following the code of ethics of the profession (2012). This perspective was also evident in a national survey conducted on New Zealand early childhood teachers. From this survey (Dalli, 2008), three main themes emerged as central conceptual features in how professionalism is defined by teachers in education and care settings. One of the themes was specialist knowledge and practices. Respondents regarded general knowledge about children and of the theory of early childhood education as essential to professionalism. They also considered qualifications, training and continuous professional development as a means to achieve these (2008).

The second view is a standards-based view of professionalism that foregrounds the gaining of a qualification and complying with professional codes of ethics. So for EC teachers in New Zealand, the Graduating Teachers Standards set by the Teachers Council (2007) and two codes of ethics (NZEI Te Riu Roa Early Childhood Code of Ethics National Working Group, 1995) can be examples. One major criticism of this view of professionalism is that teaching and learning can be reduced to measurable technical outcomes through those frameworks of standards and competencies (Moss, 2006, as cited in Miller & Cable, 2008). Osgood (2006, as cited in Miller & Cable, 2008) also argues that regulatory frameworks can make practitioners comply with prevailing constructions of professionalism and that practitioners’ empowerment can be threatened by the regulatory view stemming from such an agenda.

The third view is an alternative perspective of professionalism based on the complex, unique and highly relational work that EC teachers perform, and the values underpinning this work (Dalli, 2006, 2008, as cited in Grey, 2012). This view is founded on the idea that to consider teaching as individual work that can be accomplished in isolation is not appropriate because of the importance of interactions to teaching young children. In this view, teaching is seen more as a facilitator of a complex set of interconnected relationships (Grey, 2012). Grey (2012) suggests a useful framework for analysing the complexity of professionalism based on the five perspectives of quality in early childhood education suggested by Katz (1994). The ‘top-down’ perspective is related to the externally structured criteria including the Graduating Teachers Standards (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2007). The ‘bottom-up’ perspective can be used to evaluate how teachers create the
professional relationships with children and their families. The ‘outside-inside’ perspective means the professional roles that teachers fulfil within the communities they are in, such as advocating for children’s rights throughout the community, or mentoring student teachers (Grey, 2012). The ‘ultimate’ perspective is the way that EC teachers are perceived by the community and the society at large. This view is underpinned by society’s beliefs and values, and is moulded by the changing political policies (Grey, 2012; Katz, 1994). The last perspective, the ‘inside-out’ view, refers to the way that EC teachers form their own identities as professionals through reflection and articulation of their professional practice (Grey, 2012). This alternative perspective of professionalism accepts the contested feature of professionalism as one that a critical reflection and discussion is always incorporated. In this way, professionalism in early childhood education is always “in the process of being socially constructed – an open-ended on-going discussion” (Grey, 2012, p.11) that is continuously changing and evolving (Grey, 2012).

Conceptions of teacher professionalism also vary different across countries (Marsh, 2008). For example, when Webb et al (2004, as cited in Marsh, 2008) compared perceptions of teacher professionalism in England and Finland, it was concluded that in England teacher professionalism is connected with a drive to increase standards and ‘commercialised professionalism’, whereas the main emphasis for teacher professionalism in Finland is on empowering teachers. In England, there was found to be the development of a more professional workforce, through the reform process. Although this move has been generally welcomed by those who have been working to improve the status of EC practitioners, there were concerns that the ‘professionalism agenda’ could be used as a way to control and regulate and therefore constrain the autonomy of EC practitioners (Miller & Cable, 2008). In Finland, professionalism in ECE is identified by diversity, whether on the community or the individual level, or “the level of the working unit” (Dalli & Urban, 2010, p.90).

There were also different ways in which students and preschool teachers interpret the notion of professionalism as evidenced by a study conducted in two different Swedish universities. In this study, the notion of professionalism was explained in the two categories: attitude and knowledge (Dalli & Urban, 2010). As for the category ‘attitude’, both the preschool teachers and the students put emphasis on their professional behaviours. With regard to the
second category, ‘knowledge’, they both talked about the ability to apply their knowledge according to various situations (Dalli & Urban, 2010). When they were asked to express how a professional teacher acts in a preschool, it was shown that the students were more aware than the preschool teachers of the broad picture of the ethical approach and the holistic pedagogical ideas. Another important point to note was that preschool teachers’ perspectives on children were more in “the shape of the psychological theory including developmental stages” (Dalli & Urban, 2010, p.62), whereas students had a perspective drawn from postmodern theory and saw the child as a construction (Dalli & Urban, 2010).

Neo-liberalism and its impacts on the notion of professionalism in New Zealand

New Zealand educational discourse and policy have been dominated by neo-liberal education reform over the last two decades (Duhn, 2010). Hoyle (1995, as cited in Adams, Vossler, & Scrivens, 2005) suggests that a new perception of teacher professionalism was developing due to the new right ideology underpinning these ‘reforms’. Since the neo-liberal reforms of the 1980s and 90s, the State tried to redefine “the status of the teacher from that of an ‘autonomous specialist expert’ working in partnership with the State towards that of a ‘skilled technician’” (Adams et al., 2005, p.180) required to carry out state policy and curriculum and assessment procedures and packages (Adams et al., 2005). These reforms contradict the view of professionals that emphasises the development of teachers as reflective practitioners who are able to combine existing professional and personal knowledge and use action research to support their own important enquiries into their classroom practices. The ‘skilled technician’ perspective of teachers has been described as reducing teaching ‘good practice’ to a series of pre-determined skills or abilities (Codd, 1995, as cited in Adams et al., 2005). The professional view of teaching draws attention to process rather than products and has a more open-ended manner in designing curriculum, allowing the development of unpredictable outcomes and the development of abilities including imagination, creativity and critical thinking. The technical model of teaching, however, puts emphasis on specific learning outcomes that are developed for all areas of the curriculum and asserts that teacher accountability should be monitored by student accomplishments and teachers’ conformity to their employment contracts (Codd, 1995, as cited in Adams et al., 2005).
This increasing control over teacher professionalism along with the ‘skilled technician’ perspective of teachers, have coincided with the emergence of a ‘new language of learning’ (Codd, 1997, as cited in Adams et al., 2005) employed to explain, justify and change our view towards education and teachers throughout the entire education system (2005).

**Privatisation and corporatisation of early childhood services: Education as business for profit**

As mentioned earlier, one of the impacts of neo-liberal education reform has been the reform of teaching into a profession that is potentially more definable and openly accountable (Small, 2008, as cited in Duhn, 2010). Another influence is the “increasing marketisation of education” (Duhn, 2010, p.49), which is a specific concern for the EC sector, both in Australia and New Zealand (May & Mitchell, 2009, as cited in Duhn, 2010; Woodrow & Press, 2007).

In Australia, there has been a substantial shift in the nature of childcare provision from the community-based sector to the private and for-profit sector that offers most long day care places throughout Australia (Woodrow, 2005). This domination of private sector long day care has tended to shift policy considerations away from “children’s needs to issues of profitability” (Woodrow, 2005, p.284). Residualisation has been another impact of private sector dependency in Australia. When the private sector takes the low cost, higher profit components of the provision, residualisation takes place. The limited supply of places for children under two is an example that shows this phenomenon as that age group has the highest cost of provision. Accordingly, the community or ‘public’ sector has to be the one that provides for these children and families with more complicated requirements (Woodrow, 2005).

In New Zealand, there is also the strong presence of ‘the market’ as evidenced by a large private sector (May & Mitchell, 2009, as cited in Duhn, 2010). According to ECE taskforce (2010), there was a significant increase in the percentage of for-profit EC services from 26% in 2000 to 40% in 2009. The current warnings over this increasing privatisation of the sector reflect anxieties over the corporatisation of ECE and “a shift towards education as business for profit” (New Zealand Educational Institute-Te Riu Roa, 2007; Woodrow, 2007, as cited in Duhn, 2010, p.51).

As privatisation increases, questions can be raised in New Zealand concerning
the ability of the private sector to ensure that all children have access to ECE that is provided by “qualified, registered EC teachers or, in other words, by a professional workforce” (Duhn, 2010, p.51). Another concern is that there is a possibility for some private centres, especially if fewer or lower-qualified teachers are employed, to overlook “the spirit of Te Whāriki” (Nuttall, 2013, p.85). While many private centres understand the significance of carrying out an age-appropriate curriculum, there are continue to be reports of others concentrating on worksheets and preparation for school at the expense of creative child-led play and exploration (Nuttall, 2013). A trickle-down impact of National Standards in New Zealand primary schools is a further concern, as the EC curriculum could be further narrowed by it. These possibilities show how pedagogy and curriculum as well as the management of centres can be driven by new right ideology. The way neo-liberal ideology can affect early childhood provision is also explained by Duhn (2010). She talks about the clear underlying rationale that private providers will be responsive to the market and consumer demand will determine what sort of ECE services are in need. Increased privatisation and corporatisation raises concerns in relation to equity of access and accessibility of services (May & Mitchell, 2009, as cited in Duhn, 2010).

An example of corporatisation in New Zealand

The way corporatisation can affect the notion of professionalism in EC services can be shown by an example of the New Zealand-based Kidicorp experience. Kidicorp promotes an education-as-business-for-profit perspective that attempts to situate Kidicorp as a major nationwide supplier of high-quality EC services. One of Kidicorp’s marketing points is that the demands for quality education from their local customers are to be met by their centres. They believe that there are opportunities for informed customer choice due to the different attributes of each centre (Duhn, 2010). They try to take care of the “business stuff” such as the use of funding and spending and at the same time allow teachers to concentrate on their teaching. Here their underlying rationale is that business and teaching are “mutually exclusive” (Duhn, 2010, p.52). However, this kind of understanding can limit the role of the teacher to operational or implementation issues, while management and owners, who may have no formal qualifications in ECE, frequently make decisions on the use of funding and spending (Jesson, 2001, as cited in Keesing-Styles & Hedges, 2007). This shows how corporatisation can change
the traditional position and responsibilities of EC teachers, including “the collegial decision-making and shared leadership” (Keesing-Styles & Hedges, 2007, p.178) which are crucial and specific aspects of professionalism in ECE (Duhn, 2010).

The nature of the relationship between those involved can also be influenced by privatised services and fierce competition between the various service providers to attract enrolments (Keesing-Styles & Hedges, 2007). In this market, business-like model of education, there are shifts from schools/centres to providers, from families to purchasers, from students to consumers and from teachers to technicians. The use of language here shows that there is not only a shift in the relationships but also in the position and function each will perform (Adams et al., 2005). This new way of understanding the relationships can raise issues. For instance, by perceiving students as consumers, students can be regarded as sponges that soak up and consume just what is provided to them, instead of being considered as active constructors of their own learning and experiences. In this view, the education can be also viewed as knowledge transmission or skill acquisition (Adams et al., 2005).

Another issue stemming from corporatisation of ECE relates to quality. For example, in the current Kidicorp setting, ‘quality’ means measurable standards that are applicable to all centres under the Kidicorp umbrella, while ‘professionalism’ can offer a Kidicorp-specific framework for teacher behaviour. In this context, professionalism can become the continuous expression of striving towards measurable outcomes (Duhn, 2010). This could raise issues for those teachers who work within “the guidelines of the code of ethics and its commitment to its four fundamental principles of autonomy, justice, responsible care and truth” (New Zealand Teachers’ Council, 2004, as cited in Duhn, 2010, p.52).

**Implications for early childhood practitioners and policy makers**

As mentioned above, the increased privatisation and corporatisation of EC services is an issue of concern. As an EC practitioner, I believe that EC professionals have an important role to play by raising community and government awareness of what privatisation might mean for children, families and the profession. We can do this by working more closely with families and communities, beginning with small scale or local efforts (Keesing-Styles &
Hedges, 2007).

Another important implication is that as professionals we need to facilitate childrens’ opportunity to have a critical voice as active citizens rather than treating them as the ‘empty vessel’ or ‘blank slate’ (Adams et al., 2005; Duhn, 2010). This is because fierce competition, privatisation, and corporatisation have not only driven a change in the way professionals are viewed, but in the way children are viewed, as mentioned before. By encouraging children to make active decisions and to participate in their communities, rather than regarding them as the consumer–subject to be fed information like a sponge and taught blindly, the early childhood environments can become places for recognising and celebrating children’s competency, creativity and potential. I believe we can open up possibilities for children by considering their work and perspectives seriously in order to reposition their status in the world. I would also like to strongly suggest that policy makers commit to listen to the voices of children and facilitate children’s agency by consulting them when designing educational policies (Woodrow, 2005).

Conclusion

In conclusion, I have critically discussed the nature of professionalism in early childhood education. By looking at various perspectives towards professionalism, it could be seen that professionalism is “something fluid and constantly changing and evolving” (Grey, 2012, p.10) rather than being fixed and static. Neo-liberalism and its impacts on the notion of professionalism in New Zealand were also explained. A new perspective of teacher professionalism has developed due to the new right ideology underpinning reforms. Under the neo-liberal reforms, the State has redefined “the status of the teacher from that of an ‘autonomous specialist expert’ working in partnership with the State towards that of a ‘skilled technician’” (Adams et al., 2005, p.180). Another impact of the reforms is the “increasing marketisation of education” (Duhn, 2010, p.49) which raised a variety of issues such as a shift towards education as business for profit. Although there were various attempts to define what professionalism means, I believe professionalism in early childhood education requires “critical exploration, rather than premature definition” (Dalli & Urban, 2010, p.150).
References


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The challenge of intercultural competence in early childhood education

Anne Grey

Abstract

This article explores the challenge of forming intercultural competence for early childhood teachers. By drawing on relevant international and national literature it outlines the models and broad frameworks that guide teachers in forming intercultural competency. It makes the point, that as many of these models have been formed from a western perspective, although helpful, they are still limited. Alternatively, a review of recent research studies completed in Aotearoa by researchers who are immigrants themselves, provides insights into the perspectives of immigrant children and their families. It is concluded that it is important for early childhood teachers to be aware of their own cultural lens, and to initiate relationships with families that lead to intercultural competence and understanding, but that this is only likely to happen if families first feel that their culture is acknowledged and accepted.

Introduction

Like many countries throughout the world, Aotearoa New Zealand has become part of the global transnational migration movement. This wave of migration has resulted in a multicultural and multilingual society. Nowhere is this felt more than in Auckland, where 56 per cent of the Auckland population is made up of immigrants, signifying that what it means to be an Aucklander has radically changed (McCullough, 2013). The majority of migrants in recent years have come from Asia, and as part of the criteria for entry are that applicants at the early adulthood stage of the lifespan (the median age of overseas Chinese in New Zealand was 34.2 years old) and have a job offer, this suggests that most immigrants were of child-bearing age (Wu, 2011). The changing composition of society has an enormous effect on the mainstream education system (Gray, 2009), particularly for early childhood education, as this is the first transition for children into a setting beyond the family. For this reason, it is important that early childhood education teachers develop intercultural competencies that will support both teachers and children to interact positively within the early childhood setting. The following
discussion explores the challenges of intercultural competence for early childhood teachers.

The concept of intercultural competence

There is no clear definition for intercultural competence, and several different terms are used to describe this broad concept. Some of these are multiculturalism, cross cultural adaptation, intercultural sensitivity, cultural intelligence, transcultural communication, cross-cultural awareness and global citizenship. Each term has a slightly different nuance, but all refer to the same broad concept that in this article is referred to as intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2011). It has been suggested that there are several important aspects to consider in relation to intercultural competence: that it is an ongoing process of learning; that it requires critical thinking; attitudes of respect, openness, and curiosity are fundamental to its development; and that it requires an ability to see the world from another’s perspective. Furthermore, it is thought that an individual has intercultural competence when they can see relationships and connections between cultures, both within and outside of their own culture, and are able to mediate and interpret these for themselves and others (Bryam, 2000).

It has also been suggested that it is important to be aware of one’s own cultural limitations, to acknowledge the integrity and value of all cultures and to regard cultural diversity as an opportunity for learning (Le Roux, 2002). Hence, intercultural competence involves lifelong learning where we learn about cultural differences and integrate them into our identity. It is important to also understand that intercultural competence has an affective domain that relies on trust and respect, a behavioural dimension that relies on aspects such as body language and a cognitive dimension that incorporates knowledge of and insights into the world (Risager, 2000). From yet another perspective, intercultural competence is seen to be made up of multicultural awareness, multicultural knowledge and multicultural skills (Han & Thomas, 2010). It has been stressed that intercultural competence does not involve adopting another culture’s values, attitudes, customs or dress in a way that can be considered patronising or manipulative, as well as a sign of disrespect for one’s culture of origin. Nor does it involve forming generalisations or stereotyping other cultures (Le Roux, 2002). Instead, it involves forming an interpersonal, intercultural space (Risager, 2000) where connections can be
built and learning can take place that contributes to a new cultural identity for all those involved.

A model of six distinct stages has been developed to explain the acquisition of intercultural competence (Bennett, 2004). The first three stages relate to ethnocentrism. These stages are denial of cultural difference (disinterested in cultural differences), defence against cultural differences (where one views one’s own culture as the only viable one), and minimization of cultural differences (where one’s own cultural view is experienced as universal). These three stages all reflect ethnocentrism, or lack of intercultural awareness and competence. The next three stages reflect ethnorelativism, where one’s own culture is experienced in the context of other cultures. These three stages are acceptance of cultural difference (accepting one’s own culture is experienced in the context of other cultures), the second is the adaptation of cultural difference (one’s worldview is expanded to include relevant constructs to form other worldviews), while the third is the integration of cultural difference into one’s identity. This third stage describes individuals who have the ability to move in and out of different worldviews in a constructive manner. This model does not suggest that individuals necessarily move from one stage to another, or that individuals who reflect integration of cultural difference are better people. It does, however, describe the differences in intercultural competence, and indicates that some people are more adept at experiencing intercultural relations than others.

It must be noted, however, that the above viewpoints about intercultural competence have all been written from a western perspective and so privilege western ways of knowing. As there is no acknowledgement of the possibility of other non-western perspectives (Oliha, 2012), individuals may be discouraged from exploring diverse viewpoints that provide deeper insights. The critical awareness that is an inherent part of intercultural competence should provoke an examination of the dominant ways of knowing that inform our understanding. Additionally, continuous reflection must occur on ways to be more inclusive so that spaces are created for individuals and groups to connect across cultures.

**Intercultural competence and early childhood education**

It has long been recognised in early childhood education that effective teaching requires respect for diversity as a way to encourage children to
accept diversity and difference amongst individuals and groups in a positive way. For over twenty years, information on an anti-bias approach to setting up an inclusive environment for young children, culturally responsive teaching practice, culturally and linguistically responsive practices, and culturally responsive teaching have all influenced early childhood education. Despite such discourses on inclusive teaching practices, evidence suggests that teachers lack intercultural competency as they experience difficulty in incorporating diversity into their practice (MacNaughton & Hughes, 2007). Moreover, it is recognised that although the children in early childhood centres are becoming more culturally and linguistically diverse, the teachers are still predominantly white, middle class and female, and so have different values, beliefs and attitudes to the children they are teaching (Lee, 2010).

The lack of intercultural competence can be a concern because it has been suggested that the more difference there is between the teacher’s and the child’s beliefs, attitudes and values, the less likely it is that the child will learn successfully. MacNaughton and Hughes (2007) contend that the teachers’ own racial and cultural identity influence their understanding of diversity, and if they belong to the dominant culture and have no personal experience of being marginalised, they feel less pressure to develop intercultural competence. Elsewhere, it has been suggested that intercultural competence is one of the most important factors in preventing the marginalisation of students (Hosoya & Talib, 2010). One viewpoint from the United States (Han, West-Olatuhji & Thomas, 2011) states that early childhood teachers are hindered from developing intercultural competence because they lack self-awareness as to the influences of their own beliefs and values on their teaching practice and how this impacts on the teaching practice of children. In other words, there was a denial of cultural differences (Bennett, 2004), and teachers failed to realise that they taught from who they were as a person. The evidence Han, West-Olatuhji and Thomas give to support this viewpoint is that African American children achieve better when taught by African-American teachers. Other evidence that supports the view that cultural misunderstanding can disadvantage children is given by the statistics from the United States that highlights the extremely high number of Latino children that are in special education services (Schoorman, 2011).

Early childhood teachers are ideally suited to include intercultural competence in the curriculum as the curriculum is drawn from the children’s
interests (Schoorman, 2011). The development of social competence has always been considered an important part of a child’s early childhood education. However, as social competence is always relative to culture, conflict can arise when the culture of the teacher differs to the culture of the children and their families. Teachers may misinterpret the children’s behaviour if they do not have an adequate understanding of the cultural norms of a child’s culture. This highlights the need for teachers to hold more than their own view of social competence, and to be able to view social competence as including more than western views only (Han & Thomas, 2010). It can also be emphasised that if early childhood teachers are able to understand that cultural differences are an opportunity to teach respect about diversity and inclusion, then they are adding a valuable dimension to the child’s understanding of social competence. Using the children’s interests and their own cultural values and beliefs gives an authentic basis in the curriculum for incorporating the values of diversity in a way that underpins social justice (Schoorman, 2011). This includes the important role that teachers play of integrating the children of immigrant families into the mainstream education system, and ultimately, into society.

It has been suggested that for teachers, awareness of one’s own cultural identity is crucial as it impacts not only on the style of teaching, but also defines the way the teacher interacts with others. Moreover, it is suggested that cultural awareness and intercultural competency is not always a linear developmental process, but can be multi-faceted and situationally influenced, and that individuals do not become open and sensitive to others unless they have a positive sense of self, and an acceptance of their own cultural group. Gonzales–Mena sums up the situation by saying:

You can’t remove from your cultural framework the ways you relate to children and guide their behaviour, plan a curriculum, set up the environment, handle caregiving routines, and carry out parent education. Your behaviours are determined by your values, which are cultural, familial, and individual. They are also determined by what you consider normal, which can be influenced by your race, ability, social status, income, sexual orientation, religion, age, and/or the messages you have been given about yourself in regard to these aspects of your background and identity. (Gonzales-Mena, 2008, p.14)
The context of Aotearoa New Zealand

In Aotearoa New Zealand, cultural competency is an expectation for graduating teachers. The Graduating Teachers Standards outlined by the New Zealand Teachers Council (2007) state specifically that teachers:

- have content and pedagogical content knowledge for supporting English as a second Language (EAL) learners to succeed in the curriculum (Professional Knowledge Standard 1 (d);
- know how to develop metacognitive strategies of diverse learners (Professional Knowledge Standard 2 (c)
- Have an understanding of education within the bicultural, multicultural, social, political, economic and historical contexts of Aotearoa New Zealand (Professional Knowledge Standard 3 (c)
- Demonstrate high expectations of all learners, focus on learning and recognise and value diversity (Professional Practice, Standard 4 (c)
- Promote a learning culture which engages diverse learners effectively (Professional Values and Relationships, Standard 6 (e)

In the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, the document Tātaiako (Ministry of Education, 2011) further explains the significance of intercultural competencies for supporting Māori learners. The competencies outlined in this document are about “knowing, respecting, and working with Māori learners and their whānau (extended family) and iwi (tribe) so their world view, aspirations, and knowledge are an integral part of teaching, and of the culture of the school or ECE service” (p. 4). Reflecting the Māori world view, the intercultural competencies have been described as:

- **Wānanga:** participating with learners and communities in robust dialogue for the benefit of learners’ achievement.
- **Whanaungatanga:** actively engaging in respectful working relationships with Māori learners, parents and whānau, hapū, iwi and the Māori community.
- **Manaakitanga:** showing integrity, sincerity and respect towards Māori beliefs, language and culture.
- **Tangata Whenuatanga:** affirming Māori learners as Māori; providing contexts for learning where the language, identity and culture of Māori learners and their whānau is affirmed.
- **Ako:** teachers taking responsibility for their own learning and that of Māori learners.

These intercultural competencies, although framed specifically for teachers to work with Māori children, can also form a broad framework for working with
Recently research studies have been completed in the context of early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand that provide insights specifically into the experiences of new Chinese immigrant children and their families. Chan (2006) conducted a case study of two Chinese toddlers and their families who attended a mainstream early childhood centre. It was found that many teachers deliberately treated all children the same, regardless of culture, because of a belief that stages of development were universal. Chan believed this was because the teachers themselves were monocultural and only had one lens, that of the dominant culture, to view the world. Chan further explained that the Chinese values of collectivism and Confucian beliefs teach children not to be assertive or self-interested, so it is normal for their families to make decisions for them. This is in contrast to the values held by many early childhood teachers who encourage individualism and exploration in children, so children are encouraged to learn through play. This led one teacher to conclude that Chinese toddlers were unable to initiate play, to be independent or explore because they were over-protected. Although Chinese families expect their children to play, they do not see this as a learning process; the mothers in this case study reported that they taught their toddlers at home in a more formal way. Chan also observed that although both toddlers spoke fluent Chinese, they did not speak, either to each other or to anyone else, nor did they use private speech. Chan points out that if Chinese children do not use any speech, it makes the teachers’ role much more difficult. Although misunderstandings were formed by both teachers and families, Chan makes the point that if Chinese parents are to become more involved in early childhood education centres, the impetus to build the relationships must come from the teachers, because of the status that is afforded teachers in China.

Wu (2011) completed a study that investigated the perceptions of eight mothers who had recently arrived from China and their experiences of early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand. These mothers were quiet in their interactions with the early childhood education centres that their children attended, but were nevertheless aware of and involved in their children’s early education. The mothers had all been middle class professional women in China, but were aware of the ethnic divide that existed in New Zealand society between Asian immigrants and the rest of society, so sent their
children to mainstream early childhood centres so that they would integrate more easily into mainstream New Zealand culture. The mothers had concerns about some practices in the early childhood education centres, such as small children in the woodwork area, or playing with water on a cold day, but stated that they did not complain to the teachers. One mother explained why she remained silent:

The teachers are all professionals. They have their own way of teaching. Maybe the parents shouldn’t interfere too much, otherwise why don’t you just take care of your own children then? Anyway, they have different ways of teaching. If you want children to integrate into (local) society, you learn in their way. (Participant comment: Wu, 2011, p. 82)

The parents appreciated play as a medium for learning on one level, but had doubts on another: “I quite like their way of learning. For example, learn through play. But the learning is a bit slow. It looks like kindergarten hasn’t taught anything except for telling some stories and singing some songs.” (Participant comment, Wu, 2011, p. 96). Mothers were, however, able to recognise the learning that did take place. One mother reported:

I should thank the Little Forest Centre. My son learned a lot in the centre. One day, to my surprise, he came and asked me: “Mummy, do you know which planet is the furthest away from the sun?” I knew in Chinese it was (Chinese characters), but I don’t know the name in English. He said to me, “Do you know, Mummy, it is Pluto.” (Participant comment, Wu, 2011, p. 96)

These mothers also complemented the children’s learning from the centre by teaching the children at home. They felt it was important that Chinese language was taught and one mother used traditional Chinese methods of teaching, so the children were exposed to different learning and teaching methods. The mothers reported that early childhood teachers did not understand that many Chinese immigrant children speak more than one Chinese language at home, and that English was often their third language. They also felt that the wide ethnic and cultural diversity amongst Chinese immigrants was not understood. Wu advocates that early childhood teachers be supported to deconstruct their assumptions through critical analysis that would require them to move beyond their comfort zone of certainty.

parents are challenged by how to parent their children according to the traditional Chinese values when these sometimes conflict with the new cultural context. These parents manage to retain their sense of self-efficacy by actively teaching their child within the family context, rather than openly voicing their disagreement to the teachers. The parents reported that language difficulties and their minority status prohibited them from discussing values with teachers, but they also said that their children needed to be aware of the mainstream values if they were to integrate into New Zealand society. All the parents interviewed by Guo said that academic skills were important, and that the early childhood curriculum did not provide for these, so the conflict was resolved by teaching the children academic skills at home. Guo makes the point that although the children were learning from both cultures, there was no connection between the two. Guo also stressed that the cultural conflict between the Chinese parents and the early childhood teachers was not addressed as it remained hidden. Furthermore, the funds of knowledge that the Chinese parents could have contributed to the centre remained unrecognised. Hence, although early childhood teachers pride themselves on building a partnership with parents, this did not really exist with the Chinese parents that Guo interviewed. Guo believed that the Chinese parents would share their cultural background if they had felt more empowered by the centre to do so.

In another study, Guo and Dalli (2012) conducted a multiple case study of the experiences of eight Chinese immigrant children’s learning experiences in a New Zealand early childhood education centre. This study gave insight into how the children used the cultural tool of Chinese language to mediate their learning in the centre. It was observed that children are able to use critical thinking skills to allow them to boundary cross and culture switch from one culture to the other by using the strategies of mixing, transferring and borrowing from one culture to another. The children observed spoke Mandarin to other children in the centre and actively sought out Mandarin speaking children if they were unsure of something. The children gained their sense of belonging by playing with children who were linguistically similar, so the two languages formed complementary cultural tools to support the child’s learning.

Chan (2009) explains that a superficial understanding of multiculturalism can reinforce ethnic stereotyping as it can negate individual differences by
presenting children with cultural universalisms. Often the diversity amongst Chinese people goes unrecognised. Chan believes this can result in early childhood teachers unconsciously imposing racist views on children. Chan explains that as immigrants experience transnationalism, their identities are constantly being negotiated and revised. Chan believes stressed it is important for early childhood teachers to critically reflect on their own culture as well as the cultural identities of the children and families they encounter. Chan believes that this would make it more likely that parents with limited English would be listened to, and that immigrant children are afforded the same opportunities as all other children. Chan warns, however, that inter-cultural competence will only be built if the families first perceive that their culture, values and beliefs are acknowledged by early childhood teachers.

Conclusion

This paper has reviewed the literature that outlines models of intercultural competence, and the recent empirical research that has investigated the experiences of immigrant Chinese parents and their children in early childhood settings in Aotearoa New Zealand. The models of intercultural competence clarify the issue by categorising the dispositions, knowledge and skills needed by teachers in order to become inter-culturally competent. Although this provides a useful guideline, it perhaps oversimplifies the challenge itself. Moreover, these models have been critiqued as being formed by the voices of the dominant culture and therefore reflect predominantly the voices of the status quo. The research, on the other hand, reflects the dynamic complexity of the experiences of new immigrant children and their families. Each case study presents a different context and a challenge that is situationally defined. Moreover, the research has all been conducted by researchers who are themselves from the ethnic minorities being researched, so the nuances and insights they describe may not be visible to others. As they report, many of the conflict and disconnects that form a barrier to intercultural competence for early childhood teachers remain hidden and so unresolved. However, it is clear from the research that the ultimate challenge to form authentic relationships with new immigrant families lies with the early childhood teacher, because of the status of the teacher in comparison with that of the parents. It is also clear from both the literature and the research studies, that the challenge of intercultural competence will be met through respectful dialogue and continual striving for interpersonal understanding that can be
acknowledged as a place for new understandings and possibilities to be formed.

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Self-Regulation in Foundation and Bridging Education

Terri Brian

Abstract
Why are some learners able to become autonomous and self-regulated, taking responsibility for their own learning while others seem to be almost actively resistant? This article examines some of the possible reasons for this and presents a discussion of the process involved in becoming an independent learner. It appears that the capacity and inclination to become a self-regulated learner in a formal educational environment is largely related to learners’ self-belief, cognitive skills and their ability to actively self-monitor and evaluate. This article suggests that, by attempting to understand some of the factors that influence capacity for self-regulation, educators can design programmes, curriculum and learning activities that teach and encourage it.

Introduction
In 2003, the Statement of Tertiary Education Priorities [STEP] recognised the increasing importance of foundation learning and its development from “a relatively marginal position within the tertiary education system to being a core activity” (Ministry of Education, 2006, p22). Internationally, and within New Zealand, the terms ‘foundation’ and ‘bridging’ are used to define a variety of educational programmes that seek to develop a range of skills and attributes. According to the Ministry of Education (2002), these include literacy, numeracy, technological literacy, communication skills, teamwork, ‘learning to learn’, and self-confidence. Most commonly, the term foundation education is used to refer to certificate programmes with courses at New Zealand Qualification Authority (NZQA) levels 1 - 3. These programmes are designed to develop literacy and numeracy skills for those learners who need considerable preparation to pathway to either a diploma or a degree program. ‘Bridging education’ generally refers to programmes at NZQA level 4 that incorporate literacy and numeracy learning outcomes, as part of a staircase to degrees and higher level education (Trewartha, 2008).

Traditionally, foundation programmes were deficit-based and concentrated primarily on skills development. More recently, they have moved to models...
based on the pedagogical belief that learners need to build strategic, institutional and disciplinary confidence through courses that provide integrated and contextual learning (Dison & Rule, 1996). Additionally, White (1994) suggests that, most importantly, bridging education should enable learners to learn how to learn rather than simply receive facts. Successful foundation and bridging education, therefore, is that which develops independent learners who can succeed as critical thinkers at higher levels of education (Trewartha, 2008).

**A personal perspective**

As a Foundation Studies and Bridging Education tutor, it has become increasingly apparent to me that there is also a need for students on these programmes to be able to take responsibility for their own learning. This allows them not only to exercise greater control over where, how and what they learn but to fully engage in the learning process in educational as well as social contexts. This notion is based on a Freirian socio-cultural model of education and the belief that education should be democratic, encouraging students to use their developing skills to critically analyse their place in society. Education enables students to understand cultural assumptions and biases and to learn how to challenge the status quo. In this way they are able to use these skills to transform their lives and the society in which, they live (Degener, 2001). As Freire (1993) states:

> Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity [a pedagogy of dehumanization] or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. (p. 34)

Fundamentally, I believe that educators have a responsibility to ensure that learning is a liberating rather than an oppressive process. Arriving at this philosophical destination has been a roundabout journey that began with my first experience as a tutor in a community-based adult literacy education programme. Learners participating in these programmes are largely self-referred and mostly want to learn one or two key literacy skills that will be of benefit to themselves, their families or their communities. Stroombergen, Rose and Nana (2002) suggest that personal, social and economic wellbeing are facilitated by growth in learners’ knowledge, skills, competencies and
attributes. Freire also believed that education that seeks to develop great human beings, who are valuable contributors to society is perhaps more important than developing academic competence and achievement (Korthagen, 2004).

My journey then took me to the other end of the philosophical pendulum and into workplace and vocational education. In this context, literacy takes a very functional form and underpins the tasks necessary for individuals to contribute to and participate in society. Functional literacy is the ability to perform a multi-faceted set of tasks in order to meet a range of personal, social and workplace needs (White, 2011). Within a functional approach, learners are taught how to use information in order to perform specific tasks, achieve goals and develop knowledge and potential. At the time, this seemed to me, to be a logical and pragmatic approach to literacy, and indeed, education. After all, adult learners are largely motivated by need and, if there is no necessity to acquire a particular skill in order to complete a given task, then why teach it?

During my four years as a Foundation Studies and Bridging Educator, I have reflected on my teaching practice in relation to what students really need from this programme and what it delivers. As a result, I have found myself examining my previously held and seemingly opposed educational philosophies and adopting a position that combines the two. I believe that Foundation Education should encourage learners to examine their assumptions about their place in the world and to apply what they have learnt in ways that will eventually benefit themselves, their families and the wider community. However, in order to be fully prepared for further study and employment, students still need the functional and technical literacy skills required to research, write academically and present information. These ideas appear congruent with research showing that in general, Foundation or Bridging programmes provide academic, emotional and social pathways into tertiary education and that the skills and knowledge gained are transferred into society through the lives of students (Walker, 2008). Unfortunately, this transferability is not guaranteed and explicit teaching and explanation is therefore required (Bedford, 2006). How then, can educators encourage this transfer of skills between social and functional contexts? What kind of learning needs to occur and what are the environmental and educational factors that might support it? Why do some students seem more ready than
others to employ an independent learning approach and take responsibility for
their learning?

Initially, at the start of my inquiry, I declared my interest in investigating self-directed, independent learning and methods to encourage it both in and out of the classroom. I proceeded with a literature review that attempted to identify some of the key themes associated with this approach. To begin, Bembenutty (2011) and Brookfield (2013) suggest that it is difficult to think of academic success if students are not self-directed and self-motivated learners. Brookfield defines self-directed learners as those who are able to decide for themselves what to learn, how to learn it and, how well it has been learnt. Rather than experts, institutions or authorities deeming what is necessary, self-directed learning hands the locus of control to the learner.

A self-directed learner is seen as making free choices that reflect dreams and aspirations from a range of limitless possibilities. It seemed that what I thought I meant by self-directed learning and how it was generally defined by the literature, were not the same thing. Self-direction of learning and the freedom to choose topic, time and place of study were only part of what I meant when I began my inquiry and so I started to look for alternative ways of defining my ideas. What I was in fact, most interested in was the internalised process of learning itself and how learners become capable of independently transferring knowledge and skills into different contexts. According to Bembenutty (2011), to be self-directed, learners must be able to sustain cognition, motivation and behaviour while self-monitoring their learning and reflecting on their progress. Additionally, Zimmerman (2000) claims that self-directed learners have the capacity to engage in a cyclical self-regulatory process whereby they establish standards, regulate beliefs and motivation, select learning strategies, and monitor and evaluate their progress towards pre-determined goals. The notion of a cyclical process, explaining how learners might become responsible for their own learning, and whether they are able to use this learning outside of the classroom, seemed far closer to the pedagogical approach I was looking for. As Roeser and Peck (2009) suggest, “the cultivation of awareness and wilful self-regulation are preconditions for deep learning, freedom of thought, creativity, harmonious social relationships, and myriad forms of personal and social renewal” (p.23). According to Zimmerman (2010), learners are self-regulated to the degree that they are meta-cognitively, motivationally, and behaviourally active
participants in their own learning process. They are able to generate thoughts, feelings, and actions to attain their learning goals. Additionally, Lewis and Vialleton (2011), maintain that self-regulated learning is almost exclusively associated with empowerment, agency, democratic participation, and personal responsibility.

**Processes and skills**

Now that I had defined what I actually meant, I needed to understand the process and the skills learners might need in order to apply it. To begin, Pintrich (1995), believes that the dimensions of self-regulated learning are behaviour, motivation and cognition. According to Zimmerman (1989), self-regulation comprises of forethought, performance and self-reflection. Forethought can be defined as the beliefs that precede efforts to learn; performance as the processes that occur during learning and self-reflection as occurring after learning and influencing learners’ reactions to that experience.

Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) suggest that, in order to become self-regulated learners, students must be able to assess the task, considering goals and constraints; evaluate their knowledge and skills, identifying strengths and weaknesses; plan their approach, to account for the situation; apply various strategies and monitor their progress and reflect on whether their approach is working so that they can adjust or restart the cycle as needed. Although these skills generally become more important at higher levels of education, they tend to fall outside the content area of most courses, and consequently they are often not taught (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). If this is indeed the case, what are the issues that need to be addressed in order to incorporate these skills into the curriculum?

Zimmerman (2010) suggests that there are five common underlying themes to consider. These are student motivation to self-regulate; the process by which, students become self-aware; the methods that self-regulated students use to attain academic goals; the influence of the physical learning environment and acquisition of the capacity to self-regulate. McCombs (2012) also proposes a process or series of steps leading to effective self-regulation. The first is goal setting or motivation in which, learners select goals and define what is important to them. In order to achieve this step, they must know themselves and have realistic expectations of what they can accomplish, while also understanding their responsibility for taking an active role in self-
The second step in this process is planning and strategy selection whereby learners have the opportunity to take action and select appropriate strategies. This implies that they must have knowledge of cognitive and meta-cognitive skills including self-monitoring, self-reflection and self-evaluation. The final step, according to McCombs, is performance, execution and evaluation whereby attention to task is maintained, progress is evaluated in relation to goals, affect is regulated and necessary action is taken. For the process to work effectively, it is critical that learners develop self-awareness alongside self-monitoring and self-evaluation skills. These theories both highlight similar themes and seem to me to be the most succinct and straightforward ways of thinking about self-regulation of learning. I have chosen the three themes I consider to be central to understanding the process, in order to examine them in more detail.

**Motivation**

Pintrich and De Groot (1990) claim expectancy, value and affect are the three key components of motivation. When given a task, students ask themselves, “Can I do this? Why am I doing this? How do I feel about this task?” Those who believe they are capable, that the task is interesting and important and have goals including mastery and challenge will engage in more metacognition, use more cognitive strategies, and are more likely to persist.

This view is supported by Bandura (1997), who claims that thinking, feeling, motivation and behaviour are linked to individuals’ cognitive beliefs about their capability or efficacy to exercise control over their lives. These beliefs influence cognitive and affective structures including the abilities to symbolise, learn from others, plan alternative strategies, regulate behaviour and engage in self-reflection. Bandura (1997) also suggests the higher the level of self-efficacy learners have over their lives, the higher goals they will set and the better their achievements. Therefore, a strong belief in self-efficacy leads to performance through goal setting and analytical thinking.

According to Brookfield (2013), the extent to which self-regulation is possible, is connected to self-efficacy and whether learners believe that they are capable of learning effectively in this way. It is thought that self-efficacy information is based on several key factors including learners’ recognition of the degree of successful task completion; observation of others modelling the development.
task; received feedback; and feelings before, during, and after engaging in a task (Margolis & McCabe, 2006). Motivation to engage in and achieve tasks is thought to be highest when learners believe they can accomplish them. Those with high self-efficacy beliefs are generally more able to select, apply, and monitor their own use of a large number of learning strategies. They are also more likely to believe in effort and incremental growth of knowledge and skill acquisition and to be intrinsically motivated and task oriented. These learners often have concrete, multiple images of themselves, are supported by families and society and do not fear failure (Al-Harthy & Was, 2010).

In contrast, learners with low self-efficacy beliefs about their capability to succeed may have trouble motivating themselves. Highly-anxious students, or those who have had negative previous educational experiences may be ineffective and inefficient learners who do not use appropriate cognitive strategies, may not be persistent and may avoid difficult tasks (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990). If learners believe they cannot succeed at certain tasks, they may superficially attempt them, give up quickly, avoid or resist them (Henk & Melnick, 1995; Walker, 2003; Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002).

Cognitive and Metacognitive Skills

Cognition is defined by Cherry (n.d.) as the mental processes involved in gaining knowledge and comprehension such as thinking, knowing, remembering, judging, and problem-solving. Schraw, Crippen and Hartley (2006), maintain that cognition consists of understanding, problem solving skills and critical thinking strategies. Metacognition on the other hand, refers to learners’ automatic awareness of their knowledge and their ability to understand, control, and manipulate their cognitive processes (Vockell, 2008). Schraw and Moshman (1995), describe metacognition as having two main components.

Firstly, knowledge of cognition includes learners’ understanding of themselves, how they learn, and the factors that influence their performance. It also contains their knowledge of learning strategies and processes in addition to why and when to use them. Secondly, regulation of cognition refers to the ability to select appropriate strategies and allocate resources, alongside self-monitoring and self-evaluation of learning processes. Academic debate surrounding the constructs of metacognition and self-regulation of learning has mostly failed to determine whether they are in fact, essentially
the same thing. After conducting extensive research, Fox and Riconscente (2008), could only conclude that “metacognition and self-regulation are parallel and intertwining constructs that are clearly distinct yet mutually entailed.” (p.18). It appears that, while they have many similarities, metacognition is mostly ‘thinking about thinking’ (Flavell, 1979), while self-regulation also takes into account learners’ relationship with the entire learning process and the social environment in which, it occurs.

Reflection

According to Dewey (1923), reflection is the understanding of the relationship between what we try to do and what happens as a consequence of our action. The act of reflecting causes learners to make sense of what they have learned, why they learned it, and how that particular learning took place. Additionally, reflection is about linking one increment of learning to a wider perspective and seeing the bigger picture (Race, 2006). Active reflection can help students evaluate their learning experiences and often to see them from a different perspective. As Biggs (1999), points out, effective reflection shows not just what an experience is, but what it might be as an improvement on the original. However, reflection is not solely a cognitive process and involves emotion and affect which are central to learning (Boud & Walker, 1998). It can be seen as both a structure to aid cognition and improve existing understanding and as a method for promoting autonomous and deep learning through enquiry. Dewey (1923), Kolb (1984) and Boud (1995) view reflection as a cyclical process through the lens of experiential learning. Within these models, learners clarify what they know, identify what they need to know, synthesise new and existing knowledge and evaluate their understanding.

There are a variety of perspectives and theoretical approaches that attempt to explain how and why self-regulation of learning occurs. I have chosen to briefly outline those I consider to be the most closely aligned to my educational philosophy and teaching practice. Knowledge of these theories can help shape programmes and curriculum that encourage self-regulation of learning and embed teaching of the necessary skills in learning activities.

Operant Theory

This approach emphasises external factors such as modelling, verbal tuition, and reinforcement. Initially, external cues are provided and learners’ ability to self-regulate is gradually developed. Over time the external cues are faded,
short-term reinforcers are reduced and learners are able to take over the self-regulatory process themselves (Mace, Belfiore & Shea, 2012).

**Phenomenologist Theory**
Dependant on development of self-system knowledge structures and processes, this theory emphasises learner self-awareness, self-monitoring, self-reflection and self-evaluation. It is also dependent on development of the concept of self as active agent and therefore as responsible for learning outcomes and behaviours (McCombs, 2012).

**Social –Cognitive Theory**
Self-regulation is viewed not as a general trait or developmental level but highly context dependant and learners are not expected to engage in self-regulation equally in all domains. This approach also highlights four levels of development whereby learners observe, imitate, actively control and then self-regulate their learning (Schunk, 2010).

**Discussion**
With examination of the self-regulatory process comes an awareness of the implications for programme and curriculum design and therefore my teaching practice. According to Bedford (2006), curriculum design and implementation of bridging programmes should be informed by understanding and modelling of self-regulated learning. Additionally, the design and implementation of curricula that includes facilitation of student self-regulation in the early stages of tertiary study is empowering for students particularly those who enter bridging education (Du Bois and Staley, 2004). Fingeret et al. (1994) maintain, however, that educational programmes need to negotiate new power relationships between teachers and learners. Self-regulation of thinking and learning is only possible if learners are able to choose and control critical dimensions of their study such as topic, time and outcomes. Without choice and control, strategies are unlikely to be learned or willingly self-initiated and value is unlikely to be attached to self-regulation (Zimmerman, 2010). In general, collaborative activities, emotional support, and the challenge of engaging with diverse fellow learners, enable testing and adopting of new ways of thinking and acting.

Teachers act as catalysts for learners by employing an enabling style without prescribing content, providing resources without structuring all activities, and
serving as a reflective mirror without being the only source of feedback and reinforcement (Helsing, Drago-Severson and Kegan, 2003). Factors influencing learners’ capacity for autonomy and self-regulation can include among other things notion of self, personal or structural constraints and levels of academic development. Bembenutty (2011) maintains that many learners arrive at post-secondary education without the requisite self-regulatory skills and may exhibit difficulties such as the ability to set academic goals or identify appropriate learning strategies. Similarly, Helsing, Drago-Severson and Kegan (2003) suggest that not all learners are developmentally ready to take responsibility for their learning. This can sometimes be attributed to the conflict between expectations of schooling such as traditional teacher-led instruction and the learner-centred approach necessary for self-regulation to occur. Many of the students on the Foundation programme have never had the kind of educational experience that allows self-regulatory skills to develop.

Educators often tend to focus on learners’ ability to be self-regulated, critical thinkers who can welcome multiple perspectives on a given issue however, this may not be very supportive of those at a lower developmental level and who expect teachers to act as authority figures and keepers of knowledge. These learners may feel confused and overwhelmed when asked to take a more active role in their learning. This has often been my experience with Foundation students and I am aware of the tensions that can arise when learners resist goal-setting or do not make the decisions about their learning that I would like or expect them to make. Helsing et al. (2003), argue that while it is important for educators to expect and reward learners’ efforts to demonstrate higher levels of thinking, it is also necessary to find ways of meeting them at their level and to show them explicitly how to become more responsible for their learning. Additionally, cultural backgrounds, personalities, or beliefs about schooling and authority need to be considered as these may cause discomfort with the demands of self-regulation. Many Foundation learners will have to overcome greater obstacles to become academically successful and may have fewer resources to do so. It is therefore important for educators to recognise that self-regulation may be difficult for those who are not accustomed to making life choices, or who do not have the skills and experience that support making independent learning decisions.

As Tisdell and Taylor (1999) suggest, all adult educators have philosophies embedded in both what is believed about learning and teaching and what is
done in practice. While there may be philosophical commonalities, we each bring a unique and distinct world-view to our teaching and classrooms. The experience and values of teaching staff as well as those of key stakeholders have a huge influence on the focus and effectiveness of programmes. This inquiry has taken me on a journey that began with an intuition about what I believed learning should be. It has evolved into an examination of my pedagogical values and beliefs and has caused me to evaluate and adjust my view of my role as an educator. Almost incidentally, this inquiry has itself required me to use self-regulatory skills and as a learner, I have been interested to note my levels of motivation and engagement throughout. I have very much relied on my self-efficacy beliefs to enable self-motivation and goal setting, I have needed to employ a wide range of cognitive and metacognitive skills to research and present my choice of topic and, I believe that I have maintained a high level of self-evaluation and reflection throughout. Thinking about self-regulation and its potential for freedom and social change for Foundation learners, it is easy to become idealistic. It is however, important to remember the social, environmental and political constraints within which, the programme operates and to consider how I can best work within the given framework. Nevertheless, it is possible to draw a number of conclusions in relation to self-regulated learning and to suggest how these might be applied in a Foundation learning context:

As a tutor, it is important to consider how the levels of experience, cognitive skill and self-belief of my learners, coupled with the influence of the social structures within which they live, affect their ability and willingness to engage in self-regulatory behaviours. Many learners arrive at post-secondary education without the requisite self-regulatory skills (Bembenutty, 2011). Therefore, modelling and explicit teaching of these behaviours, including reflection and self-evaluation (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; McCombs, 2012), need to be incorporated into Foundation and Bridging Education programmes alongside cognitive skill development (Du Bois & Staley, 2004).

In order to encourage learners to willingly self-regulate, we also need to provide them with elements of choice and control over their learning (Zimmerman, 2010). I am attempting to employ problem based approaches to learning wherever possible and these have so far proved to be the most effective way of encouraging independent and self-regulatory learning behaviours (Tinto, 1997). By designing and developing curriculum,
assessment and learning activities that focus on identifying strengths and needs and, linking these with goal setting, cognitive strategy and self-evaluation, we can increase learners’ feelings of self-agency and motivation (Bandura, 1997; McCombs, 2012). However, as Helsing et al. (2003) suggest, it is necessary to consider different levels of learner readiness for this approach. This is certainly apparent between programme levels and underlines the need for a scaffolded approach (Mace, Belfiore & Shea, 2012; McCombs, 2012; Schunk, 2010). In addition to formal learning, comments and observations from colleagues and students suggest that relationship building and socialisation are an important element of the Foundation and Bridging Education programmes. By creating positive and supportive learning environments, we can foster feelings of belonging and ownership. This helps to build learner confidence and self-belief that, in turn, contribute to the development of self-regulatory behaviours (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Bandura, 1997; Margolis & McCabe, 2006; Brookfield, 2013).

Foundation and bridging education are about setting learners on the path to self-discovery and self-determination so that they are gradually able to shape their own worlds (Degener, 2001; Freire, 1993). However, because formal education is always constrained to some extent by organisational and stakeholder expectations, it is necessary to consider how we can encourage self-regulation while still delivering prescribed academic learning outcomes.

My own values and beliefs will also influence my teaching practice, and therefore, the experiences of my learners. Although independence and autonomy are qualities valued by education systems underpinned by western values, belief systems and epistemologies, these may be unfamiliar or uncomfortable concepts for some learners (Hemphill, 2001).

**Conclusion**

Freiran models of adult education suggest that the purpose of adult basic education is to enable learners to actively liberate themselves from oppression. These models are based on the culture and experience of learners and give them considerable control over their learning and educational activities (Spener, n.d.). In contrast, functional literacy is perceived broadly as the level of proficiency necessary for individuals to perform effectively in a range of contexts and activities (Scribner, 1984). Educational models that support transferability of skills across contexts can help to support learner
agency and sense of self. Furthermore, providing learners with the skills and knowledge to take control of and responsibility for their own learning is a major indicator of academic success (Bembenutty, 2011). The cyclical process of self-regulation is one in which students are able to apply appropriate learning strategies, maintain motivation and evaluate their own progress towards pre-determined goals. Self-regulated learning leads to awareness, deeper learning and freedom of thought and is closely associated with democratic participation, and personal responsibility (Roeser & Peck, 2009; Lewis & Vialleton, 2011).

The range of writing and research on self-regulation in education makes it difficult to clearly understand what it is and how it can be encouraged. Zimmerman (2010) and McCombs (2012) propose models of self-regulation that suggest common themes that in general can be summarised as different elements of learner motivation and self-awareness. They include the application of metacognitive skills and the ability to self-monitor and evaluate progress. Zimmerman (2010) additionally suggests that the learning environment plays a major role in facilitating self-regulation. It appears that often, self-regulation is expected or implied in learning activities but that many learners do not have the requisite skills to engage in these behaviours.

Many Foundation Studies learners begin study ill-equipped to manage the demands of a self-regulatory learning environment and it is therefore important that the necessary skills are modelled and developed in the classroom. Fingeret et al., (1994) and Zimmerman (2010), suggest that self-regulation is only possible if learners are able exercise an element of control over their study and that, without choice and control, self-regulatory strategies are unlikely to be learned. Although self-regulation would appear to be a necessary and expected part of adult education and lifelong learning, it is important to consider some of the implications and possible limitations of this approach. According to Tinto (1997), successful foundation and bridging education programmes focus on improving the quality of learning through the process and not just content or outcomes.

From a curriculum and assessment perspective, there are specific learning activities and methods of delivery that can be incorporated in delivery to encourage self-regulation. Tinto suggests that these include modelling and explicit teaching of self-regulatory behaviours and encouragement of reflective practice. Problem based and collaborative approaches to learning
have proven to be effective ways of encouraging independence and fostering socialisation, however it is important consider different levels of learner readiness and ability. Edwards and Usher (2001) suggest that within a postmodernist system, as educators, we must always be aware of our own prior knowledge and ways of knowing to be able to engage fully in understanding our practice. Hemphill (2001) further warns that the use of generalised concepts such as ‘individual’ and ‘motivation’ may marginalise those learners and educators who do not conform to dominant interpretations and whose cultural, physical, and social backgrounds and values are not reflected. By gaining an understanding of self-regulated learning and its role in personal agency, pedagogical approaches can be adopted that encourage transferability through deeper engagement in the learning process. In this manner, learners are able to become better equipped to deal with the demands of the learning environment and to apply their skills in a range of contexts and situations in ways that will benefit themselves, their families and the wider community.

References


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Terri is a tutor on the Foundation Studies Programme at Northtec in Whangarei and teaches Academic Skills at levels 3 and 4. Terri’s teaching and learning philosophy is based on creating educational opportunities that are relevant and accessible to all learners irrespective of their social, political, cultural or economic circumstances.

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Remembering Philippa Gerbic

Ross Bernay and Jane Morgan

Philippa Gerbic is remembered as a genuine person. Her funeral in August 2013 revealed aspects of her personal life that may have been less well-known to colleagues and students. She was much loved by her extended family and extensive circle of good friends. People at Philippa’s funeral spoke of her enthusiasm for life, her wide range of interests and her grounded attitude. We believe Philippa showed the same enthusiasm and approach in her work. Her ability to span law, business and education disciplines was commendable. In her concurrent roles at the university, as an educator, ethics coordinator, doctoral supervisor and researcher, she offered a wealth of knowledge and experience to each of these areas. She was both thoughtful and practical.

Undertaking doctoral study stretches the boundaries of intellectual ability, into metacognitive space that is both uncharted and uncertain. In relation to doctoral study a supervisory role has a marked impact on the doctoral journey towards successful completion of a qualification. As doctoral candidates we recognised that Philippa retained a pragmatic approach to her supervisory role, and in doing so, she normalised the doctoral process. Her enthusiasm at embracing a project—providing practical suggestions—was refreshing. She aptly navigated through a quagmire of possibilities in the early stages of the doctoral journey, providing her wisdom and practical advice to ensure progress was made. She was personable. When talking about projects, she was able to understand the personal investment of the candidate and never undermined this investment, or the importance to the individual. She did challenge, but in such a way that it appeared her candidates were co-constructing knowledge, utilising the skills of both supervisor and candidate to a new and elevated mutual understanding.

It is true that a doctoral study must be scholarly and rigorous and embedded in philosophical and theoretical frameworks that underpin the research. Philippa was however able to defuse the sense of overwhelming ineptitude that often confronts a candidate when confronted by the “ologies”, whether philosophical or methodological, and deal with the process at hand. She did this so well, with empathy and a “can do” attitude. Thinking of learning in a
space where knowledge is never static but in a constant state of change, where new language is acquired and used in novel ways, Philippa revelled in the creative process. Doctoral candidates working with Philippa would know they were creating something special, embodying new knowledge, and would leave supervisory meetings with a sense of purpose, pregnant with possibilities. Further, Philippa inspired her candidates to rise to the occasion and achieve their goals. We pay tribute to Philippa Gerbic as a scholar, an analyst, and above all as a person who showed an exemplary ability to walk and talk with others, in both her professional and personal life.

Authors

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In Memoriam: Nicky Chisnall

Steven Arnold

The name ‘Nicky’ comes from Western folk legends as the one who saved the daughters of the poor.

Weaving.

There is a spinning wheel in Nicky’s house – by the door.

Spinning wool, prepares it for weaving. Montessori education, prepares a child for life.

Weaving was in the title of Nicky’s masters and the thread is evident in her doctorate as a metaphor. And so weaving, somehow, becomes in my mind, a metaphor for Nicky’s life.

Carding, winding.

I was lucky enough to know Nicky for over 20 years. She contributed much to the Montessori world and the world of education. She was already a Montessori trained and experienced teacher when I met her. She had taken trainings in both America and England. Her children, as her inspiration to join Montessori, were educated in New Zealand’s first Montessori primary school, which she helped establish.

Spinning spindles, Spinning, Spinning. Spinning.

Nicky and I worked in acting co-Principal roles during the early stages of the school’s development. The school turned 25 this year, and while I was at the celebrations I had to stand alongside Nicky, only in my thoughts. Nicky and her partner were to open 4 schools. Her partner, David, served as president twice on the National Montessori body. Nicky completed her Master’s Degree.


MANZ – Montessori Aotearoa New Zealand (the Montessori national body) were planning for a Montessori degree in New Zealand, however, in the
1990s, a moratorium loomed over the providers of initial teacher education, there were to be no new programmes.

By using the special character of Montessori as the point of difference, AUT was eventually able to start a teacher education programme, with Montessori as the only specialty. Our BEd was to become the world’s first (and only) degree with a Montessori component in the state recognised teacher registration. Nicky was the founding staff member for the ECE programme.

*Weaving, weaving.*

Nicky completed her a doctoral thesis entitling her to a PhD, and at over 500 pages many would argue that her doctorate represents the equivalent of two separate theses – one on the history of Maria Montessori’s life and her role in social justice; the other section is on the need for student teachers to use critical self-reflection in their teaching.

So if Montessori is the thread, and Nicky was the shuttle that pulled Montessori in and out of all of these situations, what is the waft, where is the weft?

*Back and forth. Back and forth.*

The waft are the yarn threads – the long running structures on which the pattern is built: the four schools, the Masters and Doctorate degrees, the relationships with Early childcare centres around Auckland, New Zealand and the world; Nicky’s family, her son Alistair, daughter Jenny and husband Dave; Nicky’s love of New Zealand, roses, music, her parents, family, cousins, and friends.

The weft is the colour and connections that are now in the mat that Nicky has woven. Nicky also drew strength from social justice, doing what was right. She became ever more aware of the role of the under-represented in society, including and especially women and ‘daughters of the poor’. It has many colours, many patterns, has many stories and it has touched many lives. Traces of the mat can be found in speeches at conferences, representations on committees, academic research, creative wisdom, gentle guidance, support for parents, and, of course, her favourite – working with children.

*Back and forth.*

She had determination, a strength of character, a clear vision, a resilience, a
gentleness, a calmness, a dignity, and a wild explosive temper when frustrated. All of which are useful in pulling threads together. She was to delicate and artistically create her own Whāriki. Her mat, of course, had the wisdom of the ECC curriculum document with the same name, from which she also gained strength.

*All tied up, taken down from the loom.*

Of course - when the shuttle stops, the weaving is done. The shuttle is now still.

If the thread is well spun and strong, the cloth woven from it will equally be so. The quality of the cloth depends upon it. In this symbolic sense the Mahatma's emphatic assertion: "I have consideration only for those who spin", is very right. It is indeed the principal thing to be considered, because cloth woven from threads without resistance has no value. (Maria Montessori (1949) – The Absorbent Mind, p 349)

Nicky you have woven a wonderful mat.

*Whāriki Woven.*

*Haere, haere, haere*

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