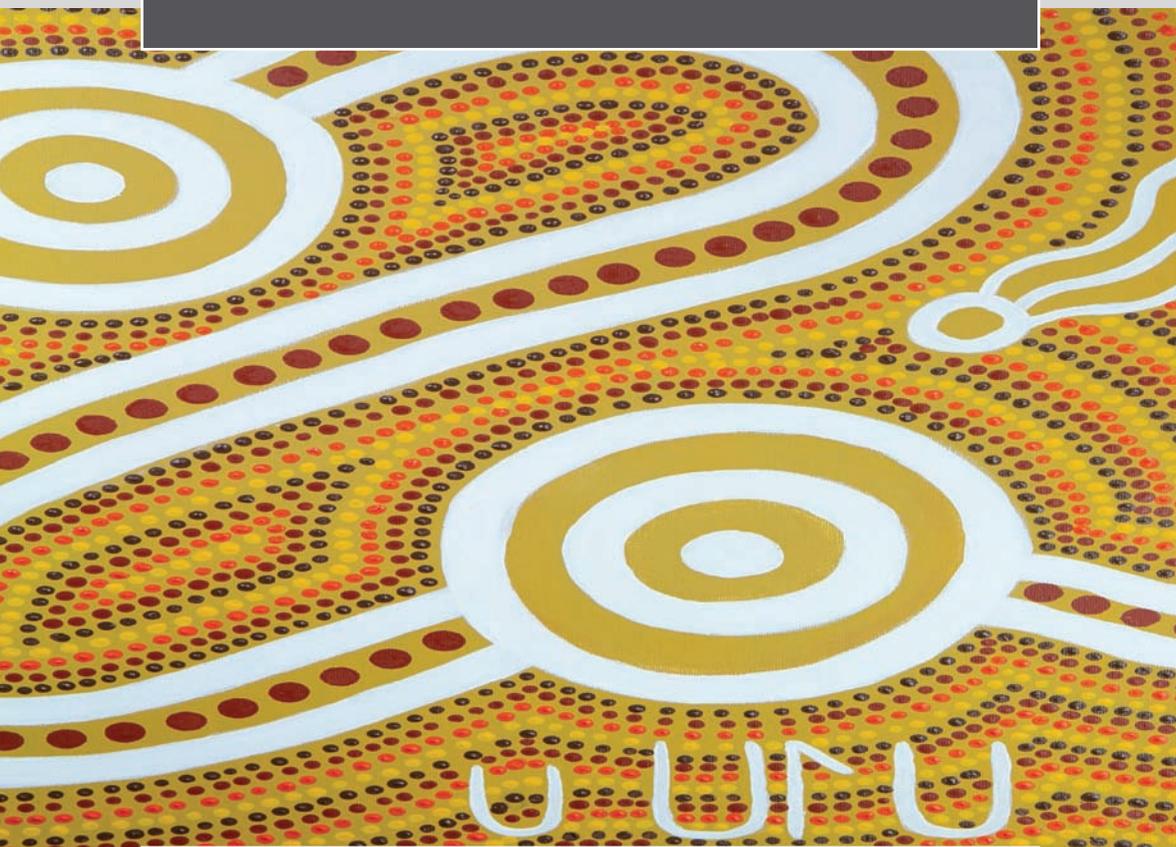


Pedagogies for the Future

**Leading Quality Learning and Teaching
in Higher Education**

Robyn Brandenburg and Jacqueline Z. Wilson (Eds.)



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Pedagogies for the Future

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Leading Quality Learning and Teaching in Higher Education

Edited by;

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and

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THE COVER: *PEDAGOGIES FOR THE FUTURE*

The cover is a specially commissioned artwork by Bonnie Fagan, Manager of the Aboriginal Education Centre at the University of Ballarat and a member of the Wadawurrung Australian Indigenous community. Bonnie's painting and story explore her Aboriginal insights and approaches to learning and teaching in the chapter "A Conversation with Bonnie Fagan." The telling of her story in this book has been endorsed by an Elder of the Wadawurrung community, the traditional custodians of the land on which the University's Ballarat campuses reside. The editors are grateful for permission to include it and pay their respects to the Elders of the Wadawurrung community, past and present.

Bonnie's story is one example of the wide range of approaches to learning and teaching, or pedagogies, represented in this book and summarized by Professor John Loughran in the chapter "Stepping Out in Style." It is a poignant and powerful reminder of the need to look widely across disciplines and cultures, and explore deeply within each, for the pedagogies that will enable us to connect with increasingly diverse audiences and maximize learning opportunities for all students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Pedagogies for the Future is the result of a team of educators coming together to discuss ideas, innovations and possibilities for enhancing and developing learning and teaching in higher education. It has been a privilege for us, as contributors and editors, to work with this inspiring group in leading the development of this book.

We would like to thank the authors who have so generously shared their pedagogical practice, discussed their philosophies and contributed to the development of a lively, engaged and collaborative higher education learning community. Throughout this process we have reflected on our own learning as educators, researchers and writers of our practice and created quarantined spaces for dialogue. We are most grateful to all our colleagues for their contributions.

We are sincerely grateful to the student cohort at the University of Ballarat. We have the privilege of teaching a diverse and enthusiastic group of learners and without their responses and feedback we would not have the deep insights into the ways that our learning and teaching have impacted on their learning and their overall student experience. Their engagement and willingness to both endorse and challenge our teaching efforts provide the stimulus for us to strive for constant improvement in our pedagogy.

Special thanks to our colleagues at the University of Ballarat who have provided support and encouragement, especially to Professor Lawrie Angus, the past Dean and Head of the School of Education, and to Professor John McDonald, the current Dean and Head of the School of Education and Arts. Both have been influential in our development as educators, researchers and academics who aspire to challenge the status quo, take professional risks and research and implement creative and innovative practices that take learning and teaching philosophy in higher education in new and challenging directions.

We would also like to express our appreciation for the critical feedback on draft chapters provided to us by reviewers who gave their time freely to help ensure the quality of the contributions. We express our gratitude to the following people who have supported, inspired, and challenged us as we developed the manuscript for this book: Professor John Loughran, Dr Doug Lloyd, and Ian Boyle. To them our heartfelt thanks.

Finally, special thanks to our families and friends for their forbearance, support and encouragement through the highs and lows of what has proved a challenging but immensely rewarding project.

Robyn Brandenburg & Jacqueline Z. Wilson

THE AUTHORS

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ROBYN BRANDENBURG & JACQUELINE Z. WILSON

PEDAGOGIES FOR THE FUTURE

Leading Quality Learning and Teaching in Higher Education

Learning and teaching form the core of university work. Although such a statement may seem a truism, it is ultimately through teaching that the university derives its *raison d'être*. This truism also directs us to a relatively un(der)examined aspect of university life: that is, the many and complex issues that either directly or subliminally impact on the learning experiences of tertiary students, together with the no less complex role played by their teachers in providing and sharing in those experiences.

The genesis of *Pedagogies for the Future* lay in discussions amongst a group of passionate teacher educators – Amanda McGraw, Sharon McDonough, Jacqueline Wilson and Robyn Brandenburg – and is one of the outcomes of our newly established research group, “Better Pedagogies: Researching Learning and Teaching”. Better Pedagogies is an inclusive group of educator-researchers committed to enhancing learning and teaching in higher education through critical conversations, pedagogical research and innovative practice. As teacher educators, we shared from the outset an intense curiosity about learning and teaching and the ways in which our individual practices and approaches to teaching impact upon student learning. While we all have individual styles, histories and approaches, our conversations led us to examine our practice and through this we realized that while teacher education is not a distinct discipline as such, there were some common yet sophisticated approaches and practices that emerged as themes for us. In moving beyond our School of Education and Arts, we engaged a broader community of teacher researchers from disciplines across the University of Ballarat, and began to instigate conversations about pedagogical practices as a way of coming to deeper understandings about the features of our university approach. Better Pedagogies became a banner under which we discussed our learning and teaching; *Pedagogies for the Future* is one outcome of our collaboration.

The broader group’s initial meeting included fifteen teachers from across the University who were invited to discuss ideas and practices linked to their experiences of learning and teaching. The University of Ballarat (UB) is a regional university that has been recognized for its quality learning and teaching, receiving a “five stars” teaching rating four years in a row. It is also a national leader in graduate employability, with over 80 percent of its students embarking on careers after course completion. These successes provided us with stimulus for discussion, and prompted

us to explore what such accolades signify. A number of key questions arose: What does a “five-star” rating *mean* to learners and teachers – that is, what does it actually say about the institution, about those learners and teachers who identify with the institution, and whose perceptions and definitive practices are instrumental in producing such outcomes?

The response from that original group left no doubt that these questions were poignant and powerful and we were all enthusiastic about seeking answers. As a group we welcomed the opportunity to collaborate, explore, explicate and share our learning and discoveries; we wholeheartedly embraced the inherently multidisciplinary nature of the project. Our initial meeting adjourned with everyone fully engaged in a search for their own individual answers to the central question: just what *is* effective teaching in a tertiary setting?

Pedagogies for the Future therefore represents the culmination of our collaborative efforts – a team of university teachers researching and reflecting on learning and teaching at UB. The authors’ contributions to this book represent one way in which a university can identify high-quality pedagogical practices in multiple disciplines. However, the book breaks new ground: many, if not most, books published about learning and teaching in higher education draw on authors from multiple institutions. In *Pedagogies for the Future*, we have gathered a community of teachers from one centre of learning. The book presents an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary perspective, incorporating contributions from history, environmental science, human movement and sport science, philosophy and education. The authors, early and mid-career academics along with senior members of the university, employ an eclectic range of research methodologies including narrative, critical inquiry and self-study of teacher educator practices. A number of the authors have also been acclaimed for their teaching scholarship, both internally (Vice Chancellor’s Awards for Teaching Excellence and UB Citations for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning) and nationally (Australian Learning and Teaching Council citations).

The structure of the chapters varies. Some chapters are presented as narratives; others as conversations; some focus primarily on practice; others highlight the personal background on which their connection with students is based. Some consider in depth the characteristics of UB’s students that contribute to the institution’s unique culture. And, just as the authors’ various contributions exemplify their diversity as thinkers, learners and teachers, we anticipate that the reader will benefit from adopting a flexible and diverse view of each chapter. Engaging with the authors gathered here may take multiple approaches, from selecting single contributions as a matter of interest, to examining each chapter for pedagogical strategies or the range of research methodologies, to engaging primarily with the experience, concepts and philosophies that underpin each author’s chapter. While each of the chapters therefore has merit in its own right and could thus be used for a single purpose, we believe that taken together as a whole, their contribution to the broad field of education research and pedagogical conversation has profound potential.

We have multiple objectives for *Pedagogies for the Future*. As a group of teachers we have challenged the status-quo in pedagogical practice; we have interrupted and addressed stereotypical approaches and perceptions of learning and teaching in higher education; we have forged inter-disciplinary connections and a new dynamic across our university and catalysed new conversations and approaches to researching practice and we have acknowledged and facilitated the power of student voice. In this way we have showcased exemplary and contemporary research-based practices that engages students and places them at the centre of the learning process

As Tom Russell (1997) suggests, how we teach is the message. To understand where we might move in terms of future pedagogies we need to understand where we are now and the factors that impact on our practice as teachers. While *Pedagogies for the Future* captures pedagogical approaches, philosophies and practices from diverse perspectives, the fundamental rationale is to foreground quality learning and teaching in higher education. We hope that readers will be challenged in their thinking about their own pedagogical approaches to their teaching and learning, whatever the learning and teaching context.

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Russell, T. (1997). Teaching teachers: How I teach IS the message. In John Loughran & Tom Russell (Eds.). *Teaching about teaching: Purpose, passion and pedagogy in teacher education*. London: Falmer Press. (pp. 32–47)

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STEPPING OUT IN STYLE

Leading the Way in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

INTRODUCTION

Pedagogies for the future is an ambitious and challenging concept in higher education, not least because although there is an expectation that higher education should be at the forefront of cutting edge practice, for many reasons it often struggles to live up to that expectation.

Change can be challenging in higher education. Funding and bureaucratic constraints, combined with prescribed institutional objectives and strategies can create barriers to innovation; even though that is far from the intention. So, in many instances, it can be difficult for individuals to feel free to step outside of the everyday and allow their creativity to flourish and to break new ground. Further to this, sometimes it can be that what at first glance appears straight forward and simple is in fact extremely complex and sophisticated. For example, to the untrained eye, teaching can easily appear to be a straightforward task. To the casual observer, it is not immediately obvious what is going on below the surface of practice and so the dominant image can be quite illusory. Because this image persists, the dilemmas, uncertainties and messiness of teaching that demand so much of a teacher may go unnoticed by others. As a consequence, expert teachers make teaching look easy (Russell 2007) because so much of what teaching involves is simply not seen by others. Bullough (2012) explained this situation well when he stated that:

In education, most of the important issues come in the form of dilemmas to be managed, not problems to be solved. On this point, Dewey's statement that "intellectual progress usually occurs through sheer abandonment of questions altogether ... We do not solve them: we get over them" (Dewey, 1910, 1933) is unquestionably germane. ... His concern is for the sort of knowledge that enables purposeful and effective action even though in the important matters of life and most certainly when confronting problems of education that knowledge is always partial, never fully adequate. (p. 346)

Brandenburg and Wilson, through this volume, illustrate that they more than recognize the complexity of practice and understand what that means for leading change in higher education. What stands out in the nature of their response is that,

with the critical mass of educators with whom they have collaborated, they have made a decision to act in a positive and productive manner and to confront what so often is conceived as rhetoric with a fine dose of reality. As their text more than demonstrates, by placing practice at the centre of the research enterprise, their concern to document their learning of, and insights into, practice is explicitly designed to make a difference; to lead the way. One key aspect of highlighting that leadership is through the focus on student voice.

STUDENT VOICE

The importance of voice has been well noted in the literature as an area that does not always receive the attention it requires or deserves (Hargreaves, 1996; Heaton & Lampert, 1993). That lack of attention is all the more evident in relation to student voice (McIntyre, Pedder, & Rudduck, 2005).

It can be that in higher education there are many “excuses” for not listening to, or actively seeking out, students’ views. With the ongoing massification of education and the reliance on the traditional lecture format for the delivery of information, a situation exists whereby that “delivery” overshadows more prescient students’ learning needs. Ignoring the reality of students’ experiences can therefore become a defence mechanism, or form of protection, from the imperative for innovation and change in practice so crucial to developing pedagogies that are responsive to ever-changing expectations for learning and the nature of the conditions of that environment. However, being responsive to change and developing pedagogies for the future can lead to immediate and powerful outcomes:

[P]edagogy was radically different from anything I had ever experienced, and I began to realize why I so detested the remedial courses I had taken in previous college attempts. Such courses lacked significant challenge, and they did nothing to expose me to any of the exciting ideas that make a discipline worth learning or study worth persisting in. I was exposed to an explosion of ideas – many with which I would grapple for months, if not years, after completing the courses – and I was challenged (and required) to develop critical reading, writing, and reasoning skills. Education was suddenly meaningful and relevant. (Keene, 2008, p.1)

It is not hard to imagine the difference it can make when teachers choose to listen to, and learn from, their students. If they decide to act as a consequence of that learning, their students benefit. Not surprisingly then, any argument about pedagogies for the future must be cognizant of student voice. Student voice must be taken seriously. Student voice must be sought out, carefully listened to, and responded to in a genuine and thoughtful manner.

Nicol illustrated the importance of student voice for her teaching through studies over a number of years. In so doing, she learnt a great deal about the value of student voice for her practice. She described the important difference between listening

to, and listening for (Nicol, 1997), and how that seemingly simple distinction dramatically impacted what she heard, and as a consequence, how that listening impacted her practice. Further to this, she also argued the need to develop an inquiry stance through practice in order to move beyond resistance and to begin to learn to listen to, and learn from, students (Nicol, 2006). As all of Nicol's work clearly demonstrates, data matters. By seeking alternative perceptions of situations and developing a range of data sources, she became better informed and illustrated how she moved beyond taken-for-granted assumptions of practice.

Brandenburg has a similar background of challenging the taken-for-granted and learning from her students in order to redefine her practice (Brandenburg, 2004, 2008). It is little wonder then that her collaborative endeavours with Wilson and their colleagues have highlighted how they have focused on student voice not only to better understand and respond to learning needs, but also as an impetus for changing practice. It is perhaps this reciprocal relationship between teaching and learning – the essence of pedagogy, (Loughran, 2010) – that needs to be to the forefront in accepting the challenge to develop pedagogies for the future. As is evident in this text, challenging the status quo is crucial to enhancing students' higher education learning experiences.

Keene (above) certainly made clear what it meant for her to be challenged to learn and how that was driven by the innovative and thoughtful approach of university professors who wanted to make a difference. What Brandenburg, Wilson and colleagues do through their focus on pedagogies for the future is create an expectation of such learning and to shift it to centre stage. Studying that shift has benefits not only for the individual teacher in terms of their practice, but by documenting and sharing those experiences, they also make those benefits available for others. In making analysis of teaching and learning experiences available for public scrutiny these authors demonstrate a significant aspect of what Shulman (2000) described as the scholarship of teaching. By conceptualizing teaching as a scholarly activity, the expectations for the development of new knowledge of practice is commensurate with that of any other discipline and accords with a major purpose of academia. Hence, developing pedagogies for the future is not just a "good thing" in relation to the development of knowledge and practice of teaching and learning, it is in fact a fundamental mission of higher education itself. However, as Emmett suggests, confronting assumptions and constructing opportunities for learning requires scaffolding, and for a teacher to understand the implications of scaffolding, reflection on practice is crucial.

REFLECTION

Even a cursory scan of the educational research literature illustrates a constant ebb and flow over time of an enduring lynchpin of pedagogy; the notion of reflection. Dewey (1933) most certainly highlighted the value of reflection as a fundamental element of practice in ways that have reverberated down the generations. However, when

Schön (1983) described framing and reframing he challenged our understanding of that which initiates and/or sustains reflection in new ways. Schön's approach to "seeing into problems of practice" through framing and reframing was a powerful reminder of the uncertainty of practice and how skilful, knowledgeable and capable any teacher needed to be in order to manage the dilemmas, issues and concerns at the heart of pedagogy. Through his description of what he described as the "swampy lowlands", Schön deepened our understanding of teaching. He illustrated how the ability to perform well in the swampy lowlands required sophisticated knowledge and skilful approaches that went way beyond technical efficiency.

In the swampy lowlands there are numerous problems, not all of which are able to be planned for in advance, or responded to in structured ways. By highlighting the need to be able to frame and reframe practice, Schön began to show that there were many different pathways to learning and that alternative perspectives were crucial to navigating that terrain. Fagan and Gell clearly illustrate alternative pathways to learning that draw on the need to frame practice in different ways. Being able to break free from the traditional and see a new path, much less to walk that path, is something that requires a reflective stance and a willing heart. Brandenburg, Wilson and colleagues clearly encourage and support such an approach in pursuing pedagogies for the future.

A good example of looking ahead and understanding what transition from one situation to another might entail is raised through the work of McDonough. She draws attention to what it means to learn to think like a teacher educator and does so through a self-study methodology (Hamilton et al., 1998). Interestingly, self-study has its roots in reflective practice so it is not surprising that the value of reflecting on teaching and the act of inquiring into one's own teaching might come together when considering how change might be enacted and sustained in higher education.

It is hard to imagine how the development of pedagogies for the future could seriously be considered in the absence of reflection and inquiry, but how the learning from such work might be documented and portrayed can sometimes create new challenges. Approaches to sharing learning about pedagogical advances are important in pursuing scholarship of teaching and for inviting others to build on those advances in meaningful ways.

SHARING LEARNING

As noted earlier, spanning all aspects of academic work is the fundamental need to publicly share learning outcomes. Such sharing is crucial in order to build and advance knowledge in ways that might be useful, applicable and valuable for others.

Wegner (1998) described communities of practice as places in which the development and support for collegial learning could be shared and enhanced. Whether it be through encouraging risk taking, experimenting with, or co-constructing teaching, communities of practice can help shift participants' learning from being an

isolated and individual activity to something based more on collaborative practices in a socially mediated environment.

Collegial support and trust are crucial elements of a community of practice and they are central to what it means to push the boundaries of “doing and sharing” in learning about pedagogy. Whether that be through layered stories in the form McGraw describes, or through the time, effort and energy necessary for mentoring in the way Mooney and Gullock outline, or as a consequence of the desire to “push the boundaries” to encourage the development of critical thinkers in the manner Mummery proposes, sharing the outcomes of those efforts is imperative if change is to be more than an individual activity for the pedagogically committed. In many ways, it could well be argued that Brandenburg and Wilson have created a community of practice with their colleagues and that this text is a tangible product resulting from their joint learning. That alone would be a fine achievement; however, as is evident in this text, the product is not a limiting outcome. The sharing of their learning through this text is something that can now act as a catalyst for others to do the same.

CONFRONTING REALITY

At the outset of this chapter I suggested that in order to develop pedagogies for the future, higher education needed to move beyond rhetoric. Of course, by higher education, I mean the players within that sector. That means then that learning needs to be seen by teachers in higher education as a priority, and by learning, I mean deep learning in the way suggested by Nolton.

It can be easy for a teacher to assume that, having completed the syllabus, students have learnt that which was delivered, and in many ways the crowded curriculum can create a barrier to deep learning. In attempting to cover large amounts of material, depth of learning can be the first casualty. But it is not always a curriculum issue that is the major blocking factor. Just as teachers have beliefs about teaching, so too students have ingrained beliefs about learning.

In a study of his own teaching, Northfield (see Loughran & Northfield, 1996) was struck by the apparent difference between his intentions for his students’ learning and his students’ expectations for their own learning. He saw the two views as contradictory. He was teaching in ways that were designed to encourage his students to be active and responsible learners, while his students viewed learning as something to be done to them; something that was the teacher’s responsibility, not theirs.

Deep learning requires critical thinking skills and, as Nolton notes, although “it might be scary it’s good for you”. However, from a learner’s perspective, knowing what is “good for you” is not quite as straightforward as it might appear. For some, it can be dependent on the ability to suspend judgement. There is a clear need for learners to allow the challenge of learning to take over as opposed to being

constrained (or restrained) by existing views and beliefs about the status quo of teaching and learning in higher education. Students may well experience a sense of dissonance if their experiences of learning are not congruent with their expectations for learning. Therefore, it may mean they do not fully engage with, or trust, the situation as their previous experiences suggest that such changes are short-lived, or worse, that something different is really deceptive and that engaging could lead to later disappointment.

Wilson draws on the notion of dissonance in an educative fashion as she considers her practice as a teacher educator. Importantly, she notes that “transforming a life takes time, and rarely goes smoothly”. In considering what it might mean to seriously develop pedagogies for the future, it might be wise to be reminded of how dissonance impacts on both students and teachers, and that time and space are important when encouraging change. There is always a need to be reminded that change is a process not an event.

CONCLUSION

In this text, Brandenburg and Wilson illustrate how they have purposefully assembled a cross-disciplinary group of academics with a commitment to researching practice. In so doing, they created an environment designed to support the team as they sought to capture and portray the challenge of pushing the boundaries in their understanding of, and approaches to, teaching and learning in higher education. Beyond the rhetoric of seeking to lead change through an articulation of pedagogies for the future is their clear commitment to act. Together, the authors that have collaborated to bring this project to fruition have shown that commitment is real for them. In so doing they have issued an invitation for others to do the same. Responding to that invitation is what change is all about, and it is through change that higher education can then genuinely claim to be challenging the status quo and turning rhetoric into reality.

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WHEN THEIR EXPERIENCE MEETS OURS

Learning About Teaching Through Reflection and Student Voice

INTRODUCTION

To fully understand the impact of learning and teaching within the current university context, we need to examine our assumptions about students as they embark on and complete their degrees. Are they primarily consumers, customers, clients or “student-shoppers” (Hil, 2012) who purchase a product (degree), who maintain a sense of entitlement about the ultimate procurement of the degree, and who expect academics to deliver the content and knowledge necessary for their chosen profession or outcome? Are they active, engaged co-learners who wrestle with concepts and ideas, who problem-pose and question the status-quo, who create learning communities as part of the university experience and who take on responsibility for their learning? Are they something, or someone, else?

The premise that underpins my practice as an academic teacher educator-researcher is based on the belief that there is a need to understand more about our students, whoever they might be. We need to determine our joint expectations regarding the university experience; we need to develop a meaningful ongoing dialogue through structured reflective practice and systematic feedback; we need to continually re-visit our assumptions about learning and teaching. More broadly, in addition to knowing our students and content well, we must be acutely aware of the ways in which political agendas impact upon and influence our academic work.

This chapter describes the ways in which I have endeavoured to understand my students – their assumptions, aspirations, values and knowledge – and necessarily, how I can facilitate their learning. I have been challenged to identify and explore my own teaching and the emphasis I continue to place on discourse and discussion with students. My pedagogical approach reflects a personal and professional orientation that focuses on structured discourse as a means of learning and I teach so that qualities such as critical thinking, reflection and deep deliberation about experience, concepts, practices and ideas can be fostered. This chapter is not intended to be a “how to” chapter that focuses on “tips and tricks”. Rather, I seek to identify pedagogical practices that have enabled me to establish dynamic learning communities that help us all as learners. It examines the reflective space where our experiences meet.

Key practices, such as Roundtable Reflective Inquiry (RRI, Brandenburg, 2004, 2008), together with the integration of multiple and adapted feedback tools and techniques (Freewrites, La Boskey, 1994; Tickets out of Class, Russell, 2007; and lecturer “spot evaluations”) have enhanced peer and lecturer dialogue through quarantining ongoing opportunities for discussion and reflection. While traditional university-wide end-of-semester student evaluation of teaching (SET) and student evaluation of courses (SEC) provide one, albeit limited, insight into teaching effectiveness, I highlight the ways in which more active and interactive student voice, when embraced as a means of pedagogical understanding and teaching improvement, contributes to both student and teacher educator learning.

Although the research discussed in this chapter – “when their experience meets ours” – predominantly relates to teacher education, this approach to practice has application to other disciplines, and professional and business workplaces/settings. Using structured practices (such as Roundtable Reflective Inquiry, and thereby listening to and responding to student/client feedback) has the capacity to inform and advance learning in multiple contexts and in powerful ways.

BACKGROUND – RESEARCHING TEACHING

Situating oneself in the researching teaching space can be considered academically “risky”, especially in an economic rationalist climate where research maintains prominence in the “elevated highlands”, teaching occupies the “swampy lowlands” (adapted from Schön, 1983) and researching teaching might (perhaps) be located somewhere in between. In her most recent article, *Composing a Research Life* (May, 2012), Marilyn Cochran-Smith, a highly regarded scholar and prolific researcher of and in teacher education, describes the tensions she experienced as she committed to researching practice within a university context thirty years ago. She was specifically advised to “get away from teacher education as quickly as [she] could” and even at this time, “education was located at the bottom of the disciplinary hierarchy in universities and teacher education was at the bottom of the bottom – practically subterranean” (p. 107).

Some may still argue that the status quo in terms of this perception about the value of researching teaching still exists. My first contention, however, is built on the knowledge that learning and teaching research has not only focused the “research gaze” on that which matters (i.e. how students learn in a profession or a discipline), but also contributed extensive and sophisticated pedagogical knowledge to learning about teaching in university contexts.

Focused research efforts have delivered new insights and new knowledge in teacher education that has had a marked impact on the quality of teaching and improved outcomes for teachers and learners (See for example Berry, 2007; Brandenburg & Gervasoni, 2012; Bullock, 2012; Dinkleman, 2003; La Boskey, 2012; Loughran, 2002, 2006; McDonough & Brandenburg, 2012; Samaras & Freese,

2006). Reflection in, on and about learning and teaching provides the underbelly for growth in understanding pedagogical practice – new knowledge can be accessed and interpreted and becomes a means through which one can elicit learning, influence and guide teaching and understand teaching outcomes more fully. Reflective practices provide tools to make implicit practice explicit.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS: REFLECTION IN TEACHER RESEARCH

Reflective practice is a term that invokes diverse meanings and multiple interpretations, including: from a stance where one is thinking about past experiences; to consciously adopting a practice that has meaning followed by an action, to a more generic interpretation that involves *sense-making* from learning and using this learning to inform future practice.

In the past two decades the role of reflective practice in teacher education has been extensively researched (Berry & Loughran, 2002; Boud, Keogh & Walker, 1985; Brookfield, 1995; Korthagen, Kessels, Lagerwerf & Wubbels, 2001; Loughran, 2002; Munby & Russell, 1994; Schön, 1983, 1987). The outcomes of empirical studies suggest that although the conceptual underpinnings of reflective practice do vary (Schön, 1983, 1987) it is a worthwhile objective to include in teacher education courses as it influences the processes, tools and approaches employed by teacher educators in enhancing learning and teaching. Defined and understood as such, reflective interventions have been seen as both challenging and successful in teaching and learning about teaching. However, it has only been in recent times that reflective research studies have focused on the teacher educator as “critical practitioner”, and examined the interconnections and interactions within the teacher preparation programs which influence and transform assumptions, beliefs and practices; thus impacting on teacher educator pedagogy and student learning (see for example, Kosnik, 2001; La Boskey, 1994; Loughran & Northfield, 1996; Segall, 2002).

Reflective practice has typically drawn on the theoretical orientations of Dewey (1933) and Schön (1983, 1987). My approach to reflective practice reflects a Deweyan perspective; one that represents reflective practice as a conscious, deliberate act of inquiry with processes driven by, and focused on, solving problems of practice leading to new knowledge and learning about practice.

Dewey

In describing the nature of reflection, Dewey (1933) noted that: “*reflective* thinking ... involves (1) a state of doubt, hesitation, perplexity, mental difficulty, in which thinking originates, and (2) an act of searching, hunting, inquiring, to find material that will resolve the doubt, settle and dispose of the perplexity” (p. 12). He referred to the importance of developing non-prejudicial attitudes: attitudes which should be

“cultivated” so that the “union” of inquiry and desire combine to create knowledge. Dewey’s three attitudes, which he described as creating a predisposition to reflect, were open-mindedness, whole-heartedness and responsibility.

Open-mindedness was an important attitude for Dewey as he believed that it “requires troublesome work to undertake the alteration of old beliefs” as “unconscious fears also drive us into purely defensive attitudes that operate like a coat of armor not only to shut out new conceptions but even to prevent us from making a new observation” (pp. 30–31). However, Dewey cautioned, not all experiences lead to new learning and not all reflection will lead to increased understanding. It is from this theoretical position, with open-mindedness as my orientation, that I have examined my practice as a teacher educator and used this as a platform through which to learn more about my students and our experiences as learners.

THE LEARNING AND TEACHING CONTEXT

The University of Ballarat (UB) is a regional university in Victoria, Australia, that gained its status as a university in relatively recent times. UB attracts the majority of its students from regional and rural environments, many of whom are the first-in-family to attend university. While their Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) enter scores may not be on a par with the more established and prestigious universities, students enter the Bachelor of Education programs with a passion for learning and a desire to succeed. So, who are our students?

Students in current market-driven universities that have economy as the “bottom-line” are frequently referred to as clients, customers and “student-shoppers”, some of whom treat their university experience as an “intellectual fast-food restaurant” (Hil, 2012, p. 46). For the relatively small number of full-fee-paying clients, at UB for example, there may be an accompanying sense of entitlement – the purchase of a product (a degree). Within this context and from this perspective, the responsibility rests largely with the university to provide the means through which the product is procured and the client is then workforce ready. Another way of understanding students is as active, engaged co-learners who wrestle with concepts and ideas; who problem-pose and question the status-quo; who create learning communities as part of the university experience and who ultimately graduate as critical reflective inquirers with a social, ethical conscience, ready and prepared to be agents of change in society. While it can be argued that no one approach to learning and teaching in teacher education will either satisfy or cater for the needs of the entire student cohort, the development of learning communities enables us to examine our assumptions and engage with experiences in structured, communal ways. Therefore, whether students see themselves as clients, customers, student shoppers or co-learners, my philosophy and practices as a teacher educator researcher focuses on providing focused opportunities for us to learn about pedagogy from a reflective inquiry stance.

SELF-STUDY METHODOLOGY

Researching my practice as an academic has become a disposition that is integral to my professional identity and influences the way I think, act and respond as a teacher educator. Wanting to understand more about the ways that students learn prompted me to develop and initiate practices that would allow this pedagogical understanding to happen. However, it was using self-study as both a methodology and a lens through which to examine my practice that provided the evidence I needed to see what I did not know, and to help me examine the sophisticated complexities about learning about, and from, teaching.

While self-study of teaching and teaching practices emerged from the reflective practice and action research paradigms, self-study demands rigorous methodological practice together with an imperative that new knowledge must be enacted in practice (Loughran, 2006). Something must change. Self-study has been defined by a clear set of characteristics which include the following: it is initiated by and focused on self; it is improvement-aimed; it is interactive at one or more stages throughout the process; it utilizes multiple, mainly qualitative methods of data collection, analysis and representation; and, it conceptualizes validity as validation, thus endeavouring to advance the field through the construction, testing, sharing and re-testing of exemplars of teaching practice (La Boskey, 2004, p. 175). Self-study researchers need to identify and respond to the “why” questions related to understanding and researching practice:

The purpose [of self-study] is to improve that practice, in this case teacher education, in order to maximize the benefits for the clients, in this instance preservice and inservice teachers and their current and future students. Thus, the aim for teacher educators involved in self-study is to better understand, facilitate, and articulate the teacher-learning process ... it is enormously complex, highly dependent on context and its multiple variations, and personally and socially mediated (p. 858)

I have used assumptions (Brookfield, 1995) as the lens through which I have been able to identify and challenge the assumptions I have held, both about me as an educator and my students as learners. I also require students to identify and examine their own assumptions at the beginning of each semester; we then revisit these assumptions at the conclusion of the semester to see if they have been challenged, supported and/or reinforced. This process can be quite confronting as our assumptions are largely “who we are” (Brookfield, 1995) and challenges to the self can instigate intense and sometimes uncomfortable emotions/responses.

It is during our learning and teaching sessions that our experiences do *meet* and we have the opportunity to examine understandings and beliefs that may otherwise remain implicit and unchallenged. Through systematically gathering data, using predominantly qualitative methods (such as transcripts and analysis; journal writing;

questionnaires; surveys and reflective writing) as strategies and tools, more is understood about the complexities of learning, which is then applied to teaching.

THE STIMULUS FOR STUDYING MY PRACTICE

Strangely enough, it was one student's written comment to me in May 2002: *practice what you preach*, that inspired me to seek a deeper understanding of my practice as a teacher educator. Having been a primary teacher for fifteen years but a relative newcomer to higher education teaching, I was understandably concerned by this feedback. I had chosen to teach teachers as I had supervised students in my classroom for many years and felt that I had something valuable, a special perspective, to contribute to their learning about teaching. I arrived at UB with a Masters degree (on young children's mathematical knowledge construction) together with highly regarded teaching credentials. My lifelong passion had been teaching. Why then, did I feel so affronted by one student's comment? In hindsight, my reaction relates to what Brookfield (1995) refers to as the "ten out of ten" syndrome, the (often) unachievable desire to connect with all students in positive ways. It also reflected my assumption, evident at this stage in my university teaching, that positive student feedback equated with success as a teacher educator. I quickly discovered that there was no *script* for teaching and learning about teaching in teacher education: teacher and student learning about teaching is founded on experience, knowledge, skills and attitudes. Through self-study, I established new ways of operating as a teacher educator that enabled me to refine my teaching so that students were more engaged in the learning process and I began to realize that what I did as a teacher mattered.

ROUNDTABLE REFLECTIVE INQUIRY

In a context where technology enables live, instant and unlimited interactions (as has been evidenced by the massive uptake in free online courses) there is an urgent need for universities to examine contemporary learning and teaching approaches so that pedagogical integrity is maintained. This means that at every level, academics are required to examine practices and approaches to learning and teaching that reflect best practice, promote expertise and enable student learning.

Traditional lecture-tutorial formats can alienate adult learners and reinforce passive approaches to learning. This didactic approach to learning often diminishes learner curiosity and engagement, which ultimately affects learning. While wanting to respect student beliefs and perceptions about learning about teaching, my underpinning belief as a teacher educator is that students learn best in socially-constructed learning environments (Vygotsky, 1978) where they can systematically reflect on their experiences in supportive environments. My teaching rests on the premise that relationships are paramount and peer interaction provides powerful potential for understanding pedagogy.

I developed Roundtable Reflective Inquiry (RRI, Brandenburg 2004, 2008) as a motivational, structured and discursive practice for students to learn about learning and

teaching and challenge assumptions in a supportive and trusting learning environment. The sessions either replace a proportion of traditional tutorial sessions or are included within a tutorial session. Key assumptions that underpin RRI require students and teacher educators to be reframed as co-learners. Student experience and voice are paramount: learning outcomes are negotiated whereby all participants work together to achieve learning outcomes, and new learning, knowledge and understanding are made explicit. RRI promotes student engagement and curiosity about learning and specifically focuses on enhancing the skills of inquiry and critical reflection.

The Structure of RRI Sessions

1. Students identify a critical incident, interaction or event experienced while teaching, and take two minutes to write about this (there should be a maximum of eight participants per roundtable)
2. Each person shares his/her critical incident, interaction or event with the group and verbal sharing is crucial. There is no elaboration, questions or discussion at this point
3. The group then prioritizes which incident, interaction or event will be discussed in detail, and this then becomes the focus of the ensuing discussion
4. The group then nominates one person to take brief notes of the discussion which become an important data source
5. The critical incident, event, or interaction is then elaborated and expanded and other members clarify the context. Questions such as “Why was this an issue for you?”; “What was your reaction?” and “ How did this make you feel?” enable deeper understanding
6. The group focus is to then explore multiple perspectives related to the issue, incident or event, and it is important to provide each member of the group with an opportunity to contribute to the discussion. Some questions that may elicit further exploration include, “Might the initial action be viewed in another way?”; “Could you have responded in another way?”; “What might be the advantages/ disadvantages of alternatives offered from the group?”
7. The final step relates to the trial stage. For example, if the situation occurred again, what approach might be taken?

The principles that underpin the RRI process include collaboration, trust, confidentiality and open-mindedness. Feedback from group members is a key element of practice, as is the establishment of a trusting and supportive environment. Confidentiality regarding the discussion is paramount. It is essential that each member articulates his/her critical issue and that each person in the group has the opportunity to contribute to the discussion. The discussion remains focused on the issue and members of the group offer alternative perspectives and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative. The notes of the discussion are provided at the conclusion of the reflection session, with suggestions for future action.

The Impact on Learning of Roundtable Reflective Inquiry: An Example

It is during the RRI sessions that our *experiences meet*. RRI engages students by encouraging them to identify and examine a critical incident, event or interaction in their teaching and systematically reflect on the experience with the assistance of their peers. They raise issues related to their experiences and their needs as learners. The following example describes a third-year Bachelor of Education student's frustration at being unable to connect with a small group of preparatory children in her mathematics class. She had carefully planned a lesson based on introducing the concept of "take-away":

Jess: [teaching a mathematics class about subtraction] I had six in my [preparatory] group and one or two of them knew what the take-away sign was ... I asked, "Can anyone tell me what subtraction or take away means?" and they said "its like when someone steals apples" ... I thought they would have a much bigger understanding of what subtraction was ...

While Jess was describing her dilemma to her peers, her voice quivered and she was visibly upset. While listening to her during this roundtable session, I began to examine my own assumptions about her experience. First, it had taken courage to tell her story and it was through listening to her that I became aware of the types of incidents that caused angst for novice teachers. She had planned her lesson with care and had spoken extensively with her mentor teacher; she had a small manageable group; she had created appropriate resources to assist with teaching the concept. And yet, this was not sufficient. During the ensuing roundtable discussion, her peers offered their own suggestions and referred to their own experiences when teaching the concept of subtraction with young children. Dana suggested:

On my last teaching round ... I had preps and I did subtraction and I used the book we made ... we used take-away ... We used apples and when they cut them, they were inventing their own little algorithms

Adam continued:

Ask [your teacher] what activities they have done and go back over it with them and get them [the children] to explain it to you ... see what their understandings are and then you if you have to re-go over the activity again it's a good place to start, because they'll be familiar with it.

Where appropriate, Jess's peers not only offered suggestions but they also discussed the advantages and disadvantages of their solutions and these became the catalysts for further learning. Generally there is a group consensus at the conclusion of the RRI sessions, suggesting that potentially better solutions have been attained and that more is now known, and therefore this knowledge can influence future action.

This example highlights the learning that occurs during a focused reflection session, for both student and teacher. I became more acutely aware of the incidents,

issues and interactions that created anxiety for students and I realized that novice teachers when placed in these teaching situations do not have the intuitive and extensive range of alternatives and strategies to call on. In many cases, when a student watches a classroom teacher teach a concept such as take-away or subtraction, they access multiple strategies which can be a seamless transition, a refined technique that ultimately develops with and through experience. It is through RRI sessions that this seamlessness can be identified and examined and therefore contribute to further and deeper learning.

The Roundtable environment enabled me to make sense of my learning in a supportive, trusting environment: We brought up issues that we all face in a safe and comfortable environment. It [RRI] gave me a different perspective ... it encouraged and inspired me when I was in the classroom. I now feel confident that I am ready to teach in a proactive, informative and engaging way.

Participating in RRI assists in the development of high-level communication skills and this has been evidenced by the way that students have articulated their learning. Students make judgments about what and when to contribute to discussions. They need to be aware of the ways that questioning others can impact on the ways in which other students respond, they learn about the role of silence and wait-time, and they challenge others' assumptions. They identify and justify and/or reframe their own assumptions about learning and teaching. They consistently delve deeply into issues and as one third year student reported, "RRI enabled me to start getting down to the underlying issues concerning students' learning and associated needs [and] learning priorities". They collaboratively challenge and interrogate (often) taken-for-granted assumptions (Brookfield, 1995) about learning and teaching. RRI is an integral practice in my teaching and is progressively being adopted by others, both within universities and in other professional contexts, as a means of learning more about our students, clients and/or customers. How, though, can teacher educators in this instance measure the impact and the growth in knowledge and understanding that might be attributed to an RRI approach to learning and teaching? The evidence I have gathered over the past decade – using an eclectic range of tools such as freewrites, tickets out of class and lecturer spot evaluations – suggests that multiple tools provide data about how and what is being learned, and also enable students to select and establish their own repertoire of strategies that will assist them in their professional lives.

FREEWITES, TICKETS OUT OF CLASS AND LECTURER SPOT EVALUATIONS

I have been extremely impressed with this unit. The greatest benefit is about learning and utilising reflection to grow as an educator and a learner. Knowing how to reflect and why helps me greatly to express my needs as well as the students so that I become the best teacher I possibly can be (Mike, 2008).

Freewrites

Integrating multiple reflective and feedback tools has enabled me to provide opportunities for structured reflection and focused assumption hunting and examination. It has also enabled us to learn more about our teaching and learning so that both can be refined and modified to best meet our needs. Freewrites (adapted from La Boskey, 1994) require students to write for between five and ten minutes about their experiences twice during the semester. Using the freewrite mid-semester provides an opportunity for refinement and reassessment and allows us all to ascertain whether we are meeting the goals linked to the learning and teaching objectives of the course. This is an open task, meaning that there are no guiding questions and the individual responses therefore identify and reflect key issues. The responses are collated and acted on, if required. Analysing the responses enables judgements to be made about learning and teaching impact. For example, students can clearly articulate their learning:

My experience throughout this unit of work was more than a refresher. I found it gave me the opportunity to challenge my personal theories on teaching and it is probably the only subject where I can explicitly say what I have learnt and how greatly this will affect my teaching.

Tickets Out of Class

Alternatively, I use “tickets out of class” (Russell, 2007), a less formal approach where students write about what they have learnt in a lecture and/or tutorial session, what they still need to know more about, and the impact of my teaching. I then collate and analyse the data and report this information to students in the following session.

Lecturer Spot Evaluation

It is important for students to know that I value their feedback on my teaching and their learning. Another method I use to gain feedback on my teaching and student learning is “lecturer spot evaluation”. Students use a guideline question response sheet to complete their feedback throughout a lecture session. I invite approximately 10 percent of the class to volunteer to complete this task. Following the lecture I read and analyse the evaluations and subsequently make changes when necessary. This information is presented to the cohort at the beginning of the next lecture session. Students have responded:

Robyn, I enjoy how you move around the lecture theatre and don't just stand behind the podium thingy. It feels more interactive and seems like you want to be here ... the individual questioning of us [students] to start larger discussions was good to gauge how others in the course are thinking and feeling; I have learnt how to take feedback pos[itively] or neg[atively] and work on it to become better.

An important aspect of my teaching is to understand how the students see me and how they experience learning through my approach to teaching and it is another way that our experiences meet. For example, modelling practices that engage learners to reflect is important and as one student states:

I think I've learned as much from the way that Robyn handled the group (relaxed but clear about what is acceptable while still keeping a sense of humour) as I have about things like reflection, structuring feedback ... she models teaching strategies/techniques through her lessons.

My ongoing evaluation and analysis of student feedback over the past decade indicates that there has been improvement in three key areas: 1) increased levels of engagement and curiosity about learning and teaching, reflected in comments such as the following: "The class was designed very well to meet our needs and its improved style really got us all involved and generated topics that WE wanted to learn"; 2) an increased ability to identify and challenge assumptions; and 3) a deeper understanding of the power of RRI for learners to develop critically reflective skills represented in statements such as "I can articulate what I have learnt and say I now have a much more confident understanding of maths ... I found it [the course] gave me the opportunity to challenge my personal theories on teaching."

While curiosity is a difficult disposition to assess, it has been evident in the way that students engaged in this process together with the comments they continually make about how their overall confidence has developed. There is substantial evidence to suggest that students have been encouraged to move away from a passive, receptive, "tool kit" mentality towards a more engaged, reflective approach to learning about teaching. They have built their capacity by being encouraged to consistently and critically analyse their own beliefs and assumptions.

CONCLUSION

How do we see our students? How do they see us? What are their assumptions and why does this matter in university teaching? How do we on the one hand cater for their needs, and at the same time reveal to them what they don't know – to lead them to discover new learning and understandings and grapple with "big ideas"? Raimond Gaita (2012) suggests that if we view students (and if they indeed view themselves) as customers, for example, "we do not create a suitable means to be able to hold their teachers to account ... we make many of their teachers servile because they become fearful" (p. 5).

This chapter has highlighted a need to implement and research pedagogical practices that engage students, regardless of how they are represented. Using strategies to promote active reflective practice moves some way towards helping students understand more about their assumptions about learning and teaching and the ways in which they continue to grapple with the issues facing them as they prepare to enter their profession. It is a place where our experiences meet.

Does it matter then, if our students are, or identify, as customers, clients, student-shoppers or co-learners? Perhaps. However, when we consider pedagogies for the future, we need to understand who we are as learners and teachers. *Pedagogies for the Future*, as the authors in this book attest, requires that we research and reflect on our practice, understand our students, and through developing communities of learners, continue to challenge the status-quo and push pedagogical boundaries. In this way innovative and creative pedagogy has the capacity to transform university learning and teaching.

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