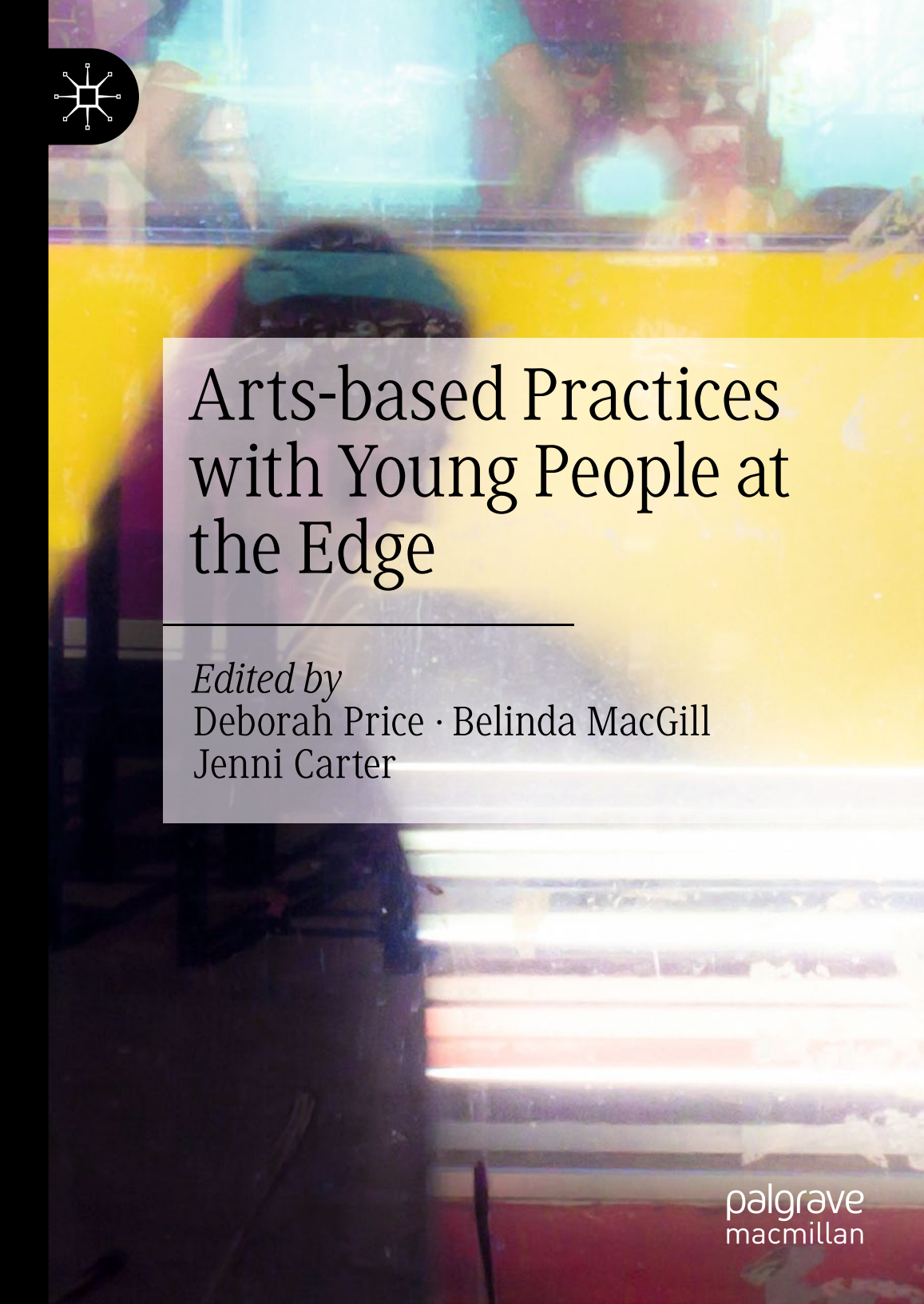

Arts-based Practices with Young People at the Edge

Edited by
Deborah Price · Belinda MacGill
Jenni Carter

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Preface

Arts-Based Practices with Young People at the Edge explores how arts-based programmes designed to reconnect young people with the worlds of learning and work provide brief, although sometimes profound, re-engagements and productive identity shifts. It examines community initiatives which aim to connect these young people with significant learning opportunities through engagement in various arts practices.

Young people today are encountering and navigating multiple social, cultural, relational, economic and educational forces that challenge traditional understandings and possibilities of being successful in school, and the life trajectories that should follow. The arts involve practices of imagining new and multiple ways of being in the world to provide personal and collective resources and repertoires to create stories that genuinely value young people's lifeworlds and experiences.

Contributors to this book have long histories of working and researching in out-of-school programmes for young people and youth who are living in high-poverty communities, are unemployed or underemployed, and may have not completed a formal qualification at school or beyond. This collection of research draws on a range of arts-based approaches and methodologies that were developed in collaboration with young people. It is not an exploration of the intrinsic and instrumental benefits of the arts, rather it advances the material and philosophical production of making in the arts. The transformational practices of making occur where

youth identity intersects at site-specific moments. The book points to the affordances of youth participation in co-designing sustainable creative learning opportunities to develop alternative learner identities.

Arts-Based Practices with Young People at the Edge highlights the divergent global practices of youth arts organisations and creative methodologies mobilised across creative projects. The shared focus of this book is assets-based approaches towards young people; in particular, young people who have been marginalised in society for multifarious reasons.

Youth arts organisations and youth arts projects explored in the chapters reveal the local and specific contexts of sites where young people, arts organisations and researchers co-design creative projects. At the centre of these chapters, you will find diverse examples of how creative young people involved in youth arts projects have shaped and directed the creative actions and outcomes of the projects. There are multiple examples of non-formal learning; youth arts projects where learning occurs not just for the sake of learning, but where art teaches us to sit in relation to the world (Biesta, 2017).

Creating art works offers opportunities for unearthing blocked emotions and resistance. It is the combination of working with resistant and unruly materials when making art that enacts or parallels the often-uncharted internal conflicts one carries unconsciously. The young participants' art experiences are varied but they all include making art—such as drawing, sculpture—or co-designing art works. Through the art-making process there is also exploration of ideas and emotions that emerge. These opportunities inform relational aesthetic practices (Bourriaud, 2002) that form the basis of unearthing new ways of seeing, new conversations and new ways of being in the world. In this way, art teaches us to re-read the world (Biesta, 2017).

The encounters with art represented across this book show us how art, in combination with Participatory Action Research projects, offers fruitful insights into the lives of young people at the edge, and explores ways in which they navigate the multi-barriered world in which they occupy. These chapters reveal how young people are navigating the world

politically, collectively and individually (Ferreira, 2016). Storying one's lived reality through art informs political action and renews an engagement with the world that is both agentive and transformative.

The researchers, artists, activists and youth organisations represented across this book also highlight new creative methodologies that build on agentive possibilities with young people. Historically, youth at the edge have been positioned as either invisible or hyper-visible. Marginalised youth are defined and positioned in policy as the 'problem', without considerations of structural inequality. Civic responsibility is deferred by this positioning and yet the sub-text of responsibility is contradictory where structural inequalities formed through multi-barriers are not ameliorated by the State. Those working with young people navigate these contradictions as activists to disrupt the misrepresentation and invisibility of young people at the edge. Whilst the State may defer responsibility, the examples in this publication highlight ways in which young people are navigating their lives out of these locked trajectories in collaboration with those who listen deeply as allies in their journey of re-presenting themselves to the world. Creative solutions to structural inequality outlined throughout these chapters are reconsidered anew in collaboration with young people.

The creative methodologies mobilised in these chapters draw out affective and creative assemblages as conceptual frameworks that shift the insider/outsider positioning. The chapters explore the discourses of disadvantage as well as acknowledging the lived reality of young people's feelings of being pushed to the edges of society. Importantly, opportunities for transformation, grounded in the existential act of co-creating artwork, are described in detail with examples from around the world.

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Thank you to all the contributing authors who all share a commitment to working *with* young people through arts-based practices.

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David Channing has recently retired as Lecturer in Screen Studies (Adelaide College of the Arts). For more than a decade, his teaching has tapped the power of video in the technological world of disadvantaged youth. His pedagogical approach has encouraged disengaged youth to re-engage with learning, giving them a chance to achieve, lift their self-esteem, and have a reason to be productive, collaborative and critical learners. His lengthy career in media includes working as a producer and director for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation for ten years and the Channel 7 Network News and Current Affairs programme for 17 years. He was awarded the United Nations Media Peace Prize in 1989.

Barbara Comber is a research professor in the Centre for Research in Educational and Social Inclusion, Education Futures at the University of South Australia. Her research interests include teachers' work, critical literacy, social justice and creative pedagogy. Two recent books reflect these interests and her long-term collaborations with front-line educators: *Literacy, place and pedagogies of possibility* (Comber, 2016) and *Literacy,*

leading and learning: beyond pedagogies of poverty (Hayes, Hattam, Comber, Kerkham, Thrupp & Thomson, 2017).

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Merinda Kelly is an artist, arts educator and researcher. Her current research interests include socially engaged art and performance, and experimental pedagogy in the public realm. Individually and collectively, she activates inclusive participatory projects with participants in public spaces, institutions and organisations. She is also a lecturer in the Arts and Education faculty at Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia.

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Christine McLean has been involved in the field of early childhood education in a variety of capacities for three decades. Her research areas include reflective dialogue, reflective practice and the co-construction of pedagogical documentation with adults/children/youth. Her work primarily focuses on how educators engage authentically and responsively with children and youth in a variety of settings and how this practice can be supported through a sociocultural lens.

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Bec Neill is an expert systems thinker, problem solver and designer of digital technology solutions in organisational settings. She holds a degree in Information Systems and a PhD in Communications, with extensive experience working as an ICT professional in private industry and public administration contexts. Bec now works across a diverse range of educational settings as an education researcher, pre-service and in-service teacher educator, and systems consultant, building organisational capacity to deliver culturally responsive and digitally inclusive education and care systems. Systems inquiry into child-family-community-technology

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Deborah Price is Research Degrees Coordinator, Senior Lecturer in Inclusive Education and Wellbeing, and Centre for Research in Educational and Social Inclusion (CRESI) Executive member at the University of South Australia: Education Futures. She is currently the President of the Australian Curriculum Studies Association (ACSA).

Sarah Reddington Reddington's research in the field of critical disability and gender studies focuses on how underrepresented young people are impacted by dominant, contemporary knowledges. Explicitly, her research is concerned with the relationship between institutionalised practices, policies and programmes and how they impact marginalised young people's subjectivities and everyday experiences. Sarah's work engages with poststructural thinking, affect theory, posthumanism, Deleuzoguattarian theory, queer theory, diffraction and new materialism to challenge the conditions of oppression with the large aim to locate more inclusive ways that attend to the complexity of individual experience.

Paul Unsworth is a lecturer and researcher based at the University of South Australia appointed at the Education Futures Unit. His teaching specialisations include Educational Leadership, Science and Mathematics Education, Digital Literacies and STEM education. He has an extensive background in Indigenous education, Executive Leadership Development, Policy Development, Leading Teacher's Professional Learning and Curriculum Design. Recent research and project works include leading the National Excellence and Equity in Mathematics Research Project and the Research Theme Investment Programme which explored the use of immersive technologies in culturally responsive learning design.

Abbreviations

ACARA	Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority
AET	Aboriginal Education Teacher
AEW	Aboriginal Education Worker
CBL	Creative Body-based Learning
CRP	Culturally Responsive Pedagogy/Pedagogies
DEAP	Deakin Engagement and Access Program
HEPPP	Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program
ICSEA	Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage
iVR	immersive Virtual Reality
SACE	South Australian Certificate of Education
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VR	Virtual Reality
YAC	Youth Advisory Council

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Part I

Positioning Arts-Based Practices at the Edge

1

Young People: Navigating the Edge of Society Through the Arts—Creating in the Border Zones

Belinda MacGill, Jenni Carter, and Deborah Price

Arts-Based Methodologies and Youth at the Edge

The arts have always offered ways to represent the human condition. This book is a political project about educational change that offers a kaleidoscope of different creative processes and practices that bring to light local and specific voices of young people who are navigating the edges of society. Arts-based practices are grounded in relationality, and each chapter offers a unique insight into the affective domain generated through creative processes. Examination of the creative practices and approaches presented in this book disrupt the taken-for-granted ways of interpreting and understandings young people's world. New insights have emerged from young people's creative practices, such as music, visual art, poetry, sculpture and performance in collaboration with the researchers. This

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book showcases creative methodologies that inform ways that young people as co-researchers and co-creators name their complex issues of concern and at the same time share emergent solutions. Arts-based methodologies privilege relationality through the frames of feminism, new materialism, and critical theory. Arguably, these frames facilitate the emergence of alternative voices and new knowledges that informs a key aim of the book.

Arts-based methodologies rely on imagination and aesthetics (Franks et al., 2014; Greene, 1995) to generate insights through the process of artistic production and reflective practices (Kraehe & Brown, 2011). Creative methodologies also involve embodied experiences that change both research and participant understandings of contexts and points of view (Efland, 2007; Wang, 2001). When research design includes imagination as part of the process for re-examining site-specific issues, such as disengaged youth, domestic violence or misrecognition (Fraser, 1997), multiple insights and solutions are generated (Miksza, 2013; Thomson & Sefton-Green, 2010). The value of such approaches is in their power to mobilise affect, utilise multiple intelligences, and offer various modes of representation and expression.

In contemporary society, there are a lot of visual distractions that fuel a sense of uncertainty about how one can comfortably fit in the world. The arts-based methodologies explored in collaboration with youth and young people throughout this book, highlight the use of creative practices as tools to deconstruct visual 'noise' and the mis-representation of young people. Many of these chapters disrupt deficit and homogenous positionings of young people in policy, advertising, and schooling. This book contains exemplars of counter stories by young people that highlight agency by disrupting the deficit narratives of being defined as marginalised.

In *Chap. 2* in *Part I*, Howard and Price present 'Imagining an Education System Responsive to Young People's Needs: Past, Present and Future Positioning of Youth and Young People'. The authors address the need to imagine a future world worth living in and consider how one chooses to live in that world from a youth perspective. Countering the negative experiences of youth who are navigating institutions that supress rather than liberate, this chapter highlights the potential of co-designing hopeful futures where young people lead the charge to mitigate neoliberalism

and its corollary of limited framings of how one lives in the world. Employing arts-based methodologies, the authors explore the notion of freedom and how such freedom needs to be contextualised from the standpoint of young people.

Part II: '*Enacting Arts-Based Methodologies with Young People at the Edge through Co-design*' commences with *Chap. 3:* 'Against Binaries: Images, Affects and Sites of Engagement'. In the chapter, Hickey-Moody and Horn deconstruct the notion of 'at risk' and the potential that this positioning may reinforce the very thing youth workers and organisations are trying to overturn. Deficit positioning, they argue, is produced by historical and social framings where care is reduced to administrivia and organisations are forced to become policed sites of control for young people. This chapter employs a range of useful interlinked framings to reconnect education to the lived realities of young peoples' emotions and themes that are contextually, religiously, and culturally located within communities. The authors further apply a culturally responsive pedagogy, drawing on collective and community knowledge that relocates learning into the space where young people have agency to represent their worlds in safe spaces, at times individually, and other times collectively. This is reflected through the *collaborative future cities* initiative at Otter Brook Primary School. The research highlights the layers of entanglements, the complexities of subjectivities and the border control produced within schooling through risk discourse. The creative methodologies employed thereby provide opportunities for students to ensure they were no longer mispresented as being on the 'edge'.

Chapter 4, 'Students Researching Inequality: Perplexities and Potentialities of Arts-Informed Research Methods for Students-as-Researchers', shares Eve Mayes' and Merinda Kelly's experiences of working with 'students-as-researchers', who co-design and engage in research as part of a Youth Advisory Council or YAC group. In the chapter they highlight three da(r)ta moments. Working in groups, the students-as-researchers identify issues that concern them, which they unpack using arts-based processes. Rather than applying a participatory action research model, Mayes and Kelly engage young people as apprentices in researching areas that the students feel needed addressing, as well as issues that they could attend to themselves to bring about the changes they required.

The school students generated da(r)ta represented through words, images and word hacks. Importantly, the authors raise young people's awareness about the connection between historical research practices, where knowledge is produced and represented in particular ways, as well as providing a vehicle for them to represent their issues and concerns from their perspective. The arts-informed practices are generative and highlight the key themes from the young people's perspective, including 'inequality' and 'discrimination', and how it is connected to 'bullying', the constructed notion of 'teamwork' that is assumed but not understood by adults, and 'climate inequality' that includes a lack of access to 'resources', as well as the impact of academic streaming processes within schooling.

A further example of enacting arts-based methodologies with young people through co-design is shared by Reddington and McLean in *Chap. 5:* 'Inner City Youth "building their own foundation": From Art Appreciation to Enterprise'. The authors share a ten-week art entrepreneurship programme set in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. The focus draws on the notion of opportunity for young people to engage in the economy through the production of creative works. Young people reflect on their engagement as *ARTpreneurs* in a non-profit community art programme. This community art programme is informed by a Freirean approach where young people are agents of the changes they want to see and are supported by a community wrap-around programme. Dialogic meaning making sits at the heart of the project that is used to focus attention on the young people, including their desires, capabilities, and pursuits to achieve their goals. This chapter significantly overturns de-humanising narratives that have operated against the young people who often feel on the edge and margins of a complex and violent world. Music and creative writing are the key creative practices that are used to connect young people to each other and to the world (Biesta, 2014).

In concluding Part II, *Chap. 6*, 'Media Arts in Anangu Education: A Culturally Responsive Approach for Developing Digital and Media Literacies', is presented by MacGill and Unsworth. The focus on New Media offers insight into the complexities of arts-informed research approaches using Immersive Technologies. The chapter shares a co-designed project exploring the potential of New Media in a remote Aboriginal community in Central Australia. The use of the arts-based

practice of Creative Body-based Learning (CBL)—combining affective, cognitive, and aesthetic domains—is coupled with dialogic meaning making produced in collaboration with young people 'storying' their lived realities in schools (Dawson & Kiger Lee, 2018; Garrett & MacGill, 2021). Virtual reality technologies are used as part of the designed learning environment where young people learn as they experiment with the technology to build stories. The project takes place on Anangu country with eleven Anangu students and one Piranpa (non-Anangu) student (ages between 11 and 15 years), their Piranpa teacher, one Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW), and one Piranpa Aboriginal Education Teacher (AET). The culturally responsive approach ensures that the work conducted will be of use to the community and builds on the skills and knowledge of the young people in relation to their community and 'Country'.

The final theme of the book, *Part III: Reflecting on Arts-Based Practices at the Edge*, begins with *Chap. 7*, 'Negotiating Capabilities: A New School Design for Transition to Work', that offers insights into the complex space of alternative education programmes. Howard outlines the growing malaise of young people as they disengage with schooling, and offers portraits of student's experiences with StartUp Co, an alternative educational setting that uses a pedagogy of care and an arts-based model that fosters students' engagement with the life they choose. Arguing that the 'capabilities' of marginalised young people have been defined by the State in limiting ways, Howard expands on the notion of 'capabilities' to include the freedom to choose the capabilities one desires to live in relation to the world. Howard's study examines the curricular and pedagogical challenges faced by alternative educational sites and offers insights into students' own stories of how they conceive of a 'better life' that is grounded in sustainable relationships as they pursue work and further education. This ethnographic research at StartUp Co focuses on storytelling by the young people, thereby amplifying voices that are usually disenfranchised.

In complementing Howard's reflections in *Chap. 8*, '"It's Not My Story": Revitalising Young People's Learning Lives', Channing, Kerkham, and Comber focus on the possibilities of imagination to build the life-world one wants rather than being directed by the expectations placed upon young people. Youthworx SA (South Australia) was a pilot study

where young people were involved in a filmmaking course. The chapter cleverly negotiates the complexity of schooling in terms of its contradictions and contingent effects for young people by framing it within a broader contextual critique of education (Ball & Collet-Sabé, 2021, p. 3). Through this framing the authors contextualise the lived realities of the young people who draw out possibilities of rethinking education through a filmmaking lens. Through filmmaking the young people engaged in the creative process as collaborators and co-creators of their shared stories. The ethics of care and mode of engagement that underpins the approach of David (the teacher) was met by the young people through critical analysis of films. The dialogic meaning making was open and fluid, allowing for reciprocity, student voices, their opinions and laughter by everyone involved in the learning journey. Through the collaborative filmmaking journey, the young people became friends as they negotiated the pre-production, production, and post-production stages that lead to a sustaining community. The ten-week course addressed the academic standards and work skills that comply with industry requirements and supports a community of learners who are not all willing to enter the Creative Industries Media sector, but instead use their experiences of collaboration, co-design, and digital literacies to pursue other areas of interest. This chapter highlights the 'vitality' of pedagogical encounters and the wellbeing of learners and their teachers through filmmaking.

Further reflections on arts-based practices at the edge are presented by Gribble, Miltenoff, Hattam, and Maher in *Chap. 9:* 'An Arts-Led Recovery in "Disadvantaged" Schools!' This chapter shares whole-of-school action research case studies exemplifying the transformational work of two music and performing arts teachers working in so-called disadvantaged schools to turn around student learning outcomes (Kamler & Comber, 2005). The authors evidence the affordances of the arts curriculum in re-engaging students in education and propose the potential for connecting identity work with the official curriculum of school. This is advocated as exemplars of ethical and 'local curations of learning' (Atkinson, 2011, p. 151).

Neill, in *Chap. 10*, 'Pre-enchanting Young People in Learning and Employment: Building Safe Relations for Diverse Students', draws on material and discursive practices to outline the potential of building an

extended ethics of care for young people within diverse schooling contexts. In her study, a diverse cohort of young people work on a digital storytelling project. Using a systems thinking framework, Neill cleverly develops a conceptual map of students' perceptions of secondary schooling that expresses what students feel they need to know in order to navigate schooling. The young people speak multiple languages and have experienced various traumas or grief through migration journeys. A focus of this chapter is the relationship building and co-design projects that build a community of learners. 'Enchanting' is an apt title for this chapter as Neill provides insights into community-connectedness built through collective arts-based approaches to engage and support young people into secondary schooling.

Arts-Based Approaches in Research

In grappling with the question of representation, the qualitative researchers have deliberately worked at opening new ways of thinking and writing about research, the notion of being on the margins or the edge and facilitating the emergence of alternative voices and new knowledges. However, the underlying logic common to most research practices is observation of phenomenon. This approach requires levels of detachment from the researcher. In contrast, arts-based research includes research as a creative practice that is informed by the artistic sensibility of the researcher. Importantly, central to a researchers' artistic sensibility is the dilemma of how to represent the complexity of issues of concern.

Arts-based approaches rely on co-design and co-creation with participants to ensure that there is not misrecognition and misrepresentation about participants and their lived realities. This reflexive research approach enables multiple ontologies to emerge that are site-specific (Pring, 2000) as evidenced by these emergent approaches to research design found in this book. The different projects are linked by a common thread of co-design and co-creation though creative methodologies that are enabling for the participants and researchers alike.

Arts-based methodologies draw out critical and creative processes through the various arts-informed practices. The co-designed art

making process 'forces us to think' how something is not an object of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter* (Deleuze, 2004, p. 176). Critically, an encounter demands listening with bodies, feeling with emotions, and engaging with critical and reflective insights. Such encounters are created through the aesthetic and affective moments where participants 'lean in' and work towards a collective assembled knowledge informed by one's own funds of knowledge. Rather than a recognition of individual worldviews, encounters allow collective ideas to emerge that take researchers and participants to new places of understanding.

Creative methodologies that work through social justice frameworks shift institutionalised patterns that govern and determine what is purported to be of cultural value and instead includes a framework to generate dialogical relations and 'parity of participation' (Fraser, 2003, p. 29). Creative methodologies create space for participants to use their imagination to generate multiple solutions (Miksza, 2013; Thomson & Sefton-Green, 2010) for issues of concern to their lives. Arts practices also require participants and researchers to take risks and think laterally as part of the creative process (Ewing, 2010; Simons & Bateman, 2000). As such, they can create affective states that powerfully shape participants' subjectivities on the research journey. Aesthetic experiences are transformative as they lead to an essential openness, to different positionings, and different ways of being in the world.

The creative methodologies presented in these chapters position social justice and parity of participation as central to the research design. Fraser's (2003) parity of participation model maintains parity of recognition whereby differences are acknowledged but with equal status and recognition in the research project. As Fraser states,

> [T]o be misrecognized … is not to suffer distorted identity or impaired subjectivity as a result of being depreciated by others. It is rather to be constituted by institutionalized patterns of cultural value in ways that prevent one from participating as a peer in social life. (Fraser, 2003, p. 29)

Fraser argues it is important to recognise the 'two-dimensionality' of 'subordinated groups' both 'economic structures' (class) and the 'status order of society' (1997, p. 19). Race, class, and gender discrimination impact on participants interdependently of each other, that is

'subordinated groups suffer both maldistribution and misrecognition in forms where neither of these injustices is an indirect effect of the other' (Fraser, 1997, p. 19). Many of the participants in these research projects have suffered from subordination in these dimensions in complex and multiple ways.

The work explained in this book aligns with Biesta's (1994) notion of learning in the arts where learning is not considered to be a 'one-way process in which culture is transferred from one (already acculturated) organism to another (not yet acculturated) organism, but as a co-constructive process' (Biesta, 1994, pp. 311–312). There are both intrinsic and instrumental benefits of the arts process and this applies to using arts within the research design that affords alternative ways of re-contextualising these complex sites of inquiry.

Researchers and participants co-create meaning through dialogic processes that are made explicit when examining or deconstructing the artwork, play, or performance. Higher-order thinking and processes of metacognition are attained through critical reflections that encourage all involved to closely observe, analyse, and reflect (Cunnington et al., 2014). In the sharing of these reflections, this book reveals how arts informed practices not only develops and fuels the imagination, but also cultivates new ways of seeing the world (Greene, 1995) and a critical consciousness that makes change possible (Freire, 1996).

Arts methodologies also centralise principles of social justice and democracy (Biesta, 2010). They provide fertile ground for the exploration of new ways to work together and collaborate in diverse educational settings. In considering the role of the arts in the relationship between education and democracy, Rancière (2004) talks of the arts as a kind of disruptive pedagogy that encourages alternative forms of knowledge production and communication. They disrupt what counts as knowledge and who is valued as a knowledge producer (Lambert, 2012). His work resonates with the philosophies of Dewey (1938), Freire (1996), Giroux (1985) and Biesta (2014), who all share faith in a pre-emptive view of equality as well as the capacities of young people to produce knowledge and intervene in their own realities. In working with these generative ideas, we can see how the arts can produce 'aesthetic moments' that contribute to democracy by offering up new ways of thinking, being, and doing (Biesta, 2014; McDonnell, 2017).

The resources and conceptual distinctions identified above are rooted in intellectual traditions ranging from critical theory, feminist, and affect theory. They mark the powerful intensities and unique potential of embodied and arts approaches to encourage critical awareness and self-transformation. Arts methodologies forge new ground in research practice that includes offering alternate pathways for inquiry. Arts-based research has generally been qualitative (Barone & Eisner, 2012) and, when combined with researcher and participants as co-creators and producers of knowledge and understanding, we see old problems in new light with alternative solutions. As Eisner (1994) explains, 'If … the kinds of meaning that individuals secure are related to the kinds of concepts they form and if different forms of representation tend to stimulate the formulation of different concepts, what does unequal emphasis on forms of representation mean for what people will come to know?' (p. 37). When there is agency in choosing the representation of the issue and problem as well as how to solve it, we can choose how we conceive the world in which we occupy (Eisner, 1994). Arts-based methodologies ensure that participants' standpoints are central to the participatory and co-produced process.

This body of work addresses the power/knowledge nexus from a critical discourse position through arts-based methodologies. Instead of the State defining the problem, such as domestic violence, disengaged youth, poverty and racisms, the participants and researchers have co-constructed ways to represent the problem from the standpoint of the participant within a framework of equality of participation. The subtext of responsibility is investigated within a social justice framework where structural inequality is examined rather than ignored. Such examination brings to light ways in which young people have been misrecognised and marginalised.

Further, it shifts the debate from the State's representation of 'the problem'—such as disengaged youth—and repositions the debate within discourses of transformation and agency in the context of the participants and researchers. As Greene states,

> [C]onscious participation in a work, a going out of energy, an ability to notice what is there to be noticed in the play, the poem, the quartet.

> 'Knowing about' even in the most formal academic manner, is entirely different from creating an unreal world imaginatively and entering it perceptually, affectively, and cognitively. To introduce people to such engagement is to strike a delicate balance between helping learners to pay heed—to attend to shapes, patterns, sounds, rhythms, figures of speech, contours, lines, and so on—and freeing them to perceive works as meaningful. Indeed, the inability to control what is discovered as meaningful makes many traditional educators uneasy and strikes them as being at odds with conceptions of a norm, even with notions of appropriate 'cultural literacy'. (Greene, 1995, p. 379)

Conclusion

Socially engaged arts research is a practice of social transformation. The various projects presented in *Arts-Based Practices with Young People at the Edge* map a range of disciplinary approaches within the arts, such as filmmaking, visual arts, drama, and craft play. Interestingly, the theoretical underpinnings of co-creation were drawn from the field of economics but have always been a key tenet within the arts (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2000). Participatory arts in the 1990s emerged from community arts movement of the 1960s and 1970s (Jeffers & Moriarty, 2017) and continue today in the form of public pedagogy. Each time a socially engaged researcher brings participants together through co-creation, they create a 'community of practice' (Lave, 1991; Wenger, 1999) as part of the transformation process. They use the arts as a process to generate a 'common ground' (Brabant, 2016) that connects members into a community, and these socially engaged researchers employ creative methodologies as a commitment towards social justice.

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2

Imagining an Education System Responsive to Young People's Needs: Past, Present and Future Positioning of Youth and Young People

Nigel Howard and Deborah Price

Introduction

As citizens within local communities, young peoples' natural creative and inquiring capabilities and rich histories are central in actively contributing to current local and global societal initiatives and issues as well as envisioning and leading the design of future enterprises, environments and communities. Education thereby plays an essential role in fostering and further expanding young peoples' creativities and futures thinking. Yet throughout the formal educational years, many young people feel the educational system is not responding to their needs, interests, capabilities, perspectives and visions, and increasingly they are pushed to the edges of formal education, thus feeling less visible, valued, engaged and empowered. We therefore address the need for imaging a future worth living in and how one chooses to live in that world from a youth

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perspective. Countering the negative vision currently experienced by youth about institutions that supress rather than liberate, this chapter highlights the potential of co-designing hopeful futures where young people lead the charge to mitigate neoliberalism and its corollary of limited framings of how one lives in the world. Employing arts-based methodologies, we explore the notion of freedom and how such freedoms need to be contextualised from the standpoint of young people, particularly those who are invisible within education.

Invisible Learners

Imagine for a moment that the devastation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic on our schooling sector in Australia was much worse than it was. Imagine a pandemic that was so devastating that it removed 50,000 students from the school enrolments across Australia. Imagine that in the chaos of the pandemic we were unable to account for these students; they had simply disappeared, that no-one knew exactly how they had been infected, where they had been infected, and where they currently were. How would we react if 50,000 learners were made invisible?

Alarmingly, prior to COVID-19, our schools were in the midst of such a pandemic of school detachment. As Waterson and O'Connell (2019) estimated, 50,000 young people across Australia were detached from schooling; that is, they were not enrolled and not accounted for in the system. As reported,

> They are not absent from school: they simply aren't in one. Young people of all ages have been able to detach themselves from formal education and we don't know who they are, where they are, how this has happened and why they remain largely hidden. (Waterson & O'Connell, 2019, p. 3)

Writing in 2014, Te Riele noted that 70,000 young people were enrolled in school but engaged in a range of learning choice programmes that were on the edge of schooling. Further to this, on any given day, unexplained absenteeism, suspension and exclusion removed thousands of young people from school, and for some young people, this initiated the journey from disengagement to detachment.

In 2021, we worried about students missing out on face-to-face learning because of COVID-19. However, when students eventually returned to face-to-face learning across Australia that year, thousands of children and young people continued to miss school. As identified, this is because some were not in school, while others were enrolled but only lightly attached. These students were unaccounted for in the measures used by the State and Federal governments to report statistics, such as attendance and the number of students who complete 12 years of schooling. It is expected that, as a consequence of the coronavirus pandemic, the large numbers of students already missing from primary and secondary schools, and those who drop out before the end of Year 12, will continue to grow because of the disruption to schooling. That is, detachment from schooling was sizeable before COVID-19, but now there is the potential for this to become much worse. We may never know the extent of this issue because the indicators used to measure how children and young people are faring in our education system don't tell us the full story about those who are not there. Reduced to indicators and data, young people on the edge of schooling are made invisible.

Absence from school, low retention and low levels of senior school achievement are complex problems that have defied simple solutions. The depth and complexity of the issues they present have a 'wickedness' associated with policy issues which are 'difficult to define', 'highly resistant to solution', 'not stable' and 'socially complex'. And purported policy solutions 'often lead to unforeseen consequences' (Briggs, 2007, p. 4). Historically, for many young people, education has been out of their reach as schools have always been normative, thus exclusionary (Slee, 2014). Slee (2014) argues: 'Internationally, exclusion is an established tradition in the modern invention of schooling. Schools were never intended for all comers … sorting of human capital was largely accepted as natural, ordained and necessary for the economy and national security' (p. 10). That is, 'learners assigned to traditional categories of diversity aligned to disability, culture, religion, gender, socioeconomic status and so forth, have often been receivers of mainstream curriculum that is mono-cultural thus often not aligning with their lifeworlds or needs' (Price & Green, 2019, p. 36). Thus, one of the many 'wicked problems' in society is the educational exclusion of youth from the very educational

systems that purport to serve them. Programmes that claim to provide alternative pathways for young people who are disconnected from schooling may have the adverse unintended effect of continuing the estrangement from formal education and the cultural and social goods that this brings (Bills et al., 2019).

The Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia is the basis for States and Territories to report on Key Performance measures on schooling. It includes reports on school retention, achievement of Year 12 or the equivalent, and attendance of students from Year 1 to Year 10 (ACARA, 2020). Indicators of attendance with percentages in the 80s and 90s tell a politically palatable story about education systems and their priorities. Unfortunately, the data that should shine a light on how children and young people are faring in schooling in Australia do not reveal their true experience of schooling. By highlighting the percentage of students engaged and attending, the data used to measure school attendance, retention and achievement makes invisible those students who are disengaged or detached from the system. We argue that without including the lived experience of schooling, the statistical measures that inform us about student attendance, retention and achievement, are devoid of context. Placed against the stories and lived experiences of children and young people, we could use the indicators of attendance, retention and achievement to understand the true health of the system and how it interacts with the lives of children and young people. Currently, school participation indicators hide the lived reality of school detachment for many children and young people, including those experiencing poverty or disability, those living in rural and remote locations, and those who have already fallen or been pushed out of school.

Disaggregating the data on attendance, retention and achievement reflects a pattern of social inequalities; Aboriginal students, students in poverty, students in rural and remote areas, and those with disabilities are overrepresented in the cohorts of young people on the edge of schooling (Lamb et al., 2020). The children and young people made invisible by selective use of the data must be reclaimed through telling their stories and using those stories to reimagine schooling as a participatory democracy that includes a diverse group who can gain from, and contribute to,

the betterment of the school. How arts-based practices can play a role in this reimagining is an overarching tenet of this book.

Current statistical indicators render the students' experiences of schooling invisible because they are devoid of the stories, context and issues faced by children and young people. The indicators hide and obfuscate the lived reality of young people because they:

- exclude significant numbers of children and young people of school age who are not accounted for in the system because they are not enrolled;
- use averages for school attendance that hide the number of students who are chronic non-attenders and the significant number of students who miss more than one week of schooling per term;
- overinflate the percentage of students who are retained up to Year 12 by using measures called 'apparent retention rates'[1] and not counting students who 'drop out' during the year;
- are opaque when trying to determine the number of students completing Year 12 by hedging around with caveats on what completion is; and
- fail to account for children and young people in non-school based programs and alternative education settings. (Bills & Howard, 2021)

If the young people on the edge of schooling are made invisible as learners, this sidesteps the challenge of how disadvantage in school and society works to exclude young people that do not fit or achieve the preplanned outcomes that standardised and performative educational measurement demands.

To understand how education works to ensure that *all* young people can choose a life of value to themselves and their community, we must make the young person, their lives and their community visible. We need to bring them out from behind the smokescreen of indicators.

[1] The apparent retention rate is an estimate of the progression of students. It is arrived at by estimating the number of students enrolled in Year 12.

Schools Are Caught in a Bind

For students who are still attached within the system, it is unlikely that the richness and diversity of their lives and aspirations are fully reflected in the curriculum. That is, the emphasis on schools and students working towards achievement in a narrow and predefined set of learning outcomes based on a set evidence-based teaching practice defines, not education, but what Gert Biesta (2015) calls 'learnification'.

Globally and within Australia, the main aims of educational policy are to develop high-performing and competitive world-class systems, while professing to put young people and the pursuit of excellence and equity at the centre of Australia's educational goals reported in the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration* (Australian Education Council, 2019). Young people not served by current structures are made casualties of the pursuit of the high-performing system (Bonnor et al., 2021). High-performing educational systems prioritise the need for standardised measures that can be easily accessed and manipulated, with the emphasis being on the achievement of predefined learning outcomes measured and expressed numerically or along a continuum. In the Australian context, learning outcomes are prescribed by Australia's first national curriculum, which was introduced in 2011. Since then, States and Territories have implemented and responded to the Australian Curriculum in divergent ways, although all jurisdictions emphasise the important role of effective teaching in improving academic achievement. Reid (2018) notes the increased political influence, with the Australian Federal government becoming 'a major participant in curriculum decision making' (p. 3), and education becoming a significant national export and economic commodity. Similarly, across the globe, test-based improvement has increasingly become the measure of educational systems, with the publishing of test results encouraging national and global competition and improvement agendas. Examples of such global testing systems include the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) *Programme for International Students Assessment* (PISA), and the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement's (IEA) *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study* (TIMSS). Through these

tests and their published results, teachers, schools and systems are supposedly held 'accountable'. Through this accountability discourse, individual achievement in learning is purported to increase, then ultimately, the system that supports this will be regarded as 'high performing'.

Amidst this performativity and accountability emphasis, Biesta makes the case that the language around 'learning' does not allow us to explore all the dimensions of education. Biesta defines the three crucial areas that make a good education: *Qualification* or the teaching of knowledge and skills; *Socialisation* as a way of being in the world as a member of a community; and *Subjectification* as a way of understanding and becoming oneself (Biesta, 2015).

When we talk about teaching and learning in schools we are mainly concentrating on Qualification—the teaching of knowledge and skills, usually in a 'subject area' or 'discipline', usually age-graded, and sometimes separated by ability (Tyack & Tobin, 1994). When we do this, we are also engaging with students and the world in ways that don't always lead to students meeting the predetermined outcomes of the courses/subjects. Price and Slee (2018, 2021) describe how this leads to bifurcation between diverse learners and a lowering of curriculum expectations for learners deemed at the edge of mainstream expectations. As Memon et al. (2021) further suggest, the 'narrow focus on measuring subjects deemed "core" (e.g. math, science, and language) places significant implications on pedagogical and curriculum innovation, educator efficacy, and student well-being, at the expense of educational priorities such as cultural understanding' (p. 180). We would further argue that this narrowing of curriculum has reduced the emphasis and affordances of disciplines such as the arts and creative arts-based methodologies. In the early documentation for the Australian Curriculum, the arts were considered to be

> fundamental to the learning of all young Australians … [and making a] distinct and unique contributions to each young person's ability to perceive, imagine, create, think, feel, symbolise, communicate, understand and become confident and creative individuals … shap[ing] our thought and activity … contribution to the broader community … [and] assists in developing identity, confidence, social participation and inclusion. (ACARA, 2010, p. 3)

However, as Ewing (2018) explains, the value and importance acknowledged within the early policy rhetoric has 'never been translated into real action' (p. 100), with the subsequent selective prioritisation of certain core disciplines. Keddie (2017) further argues that the performative demands generated from a narrow vision of education has created a 'degrading of curriculum and pedagogy' with the 'social, creative, aesthetic, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects of students' development' (p. 383) pushed to the edges of learning.

Schools have always recognised that education is more than learning knowledge and skills and that it is part of belonging to a community. However, we contend that nurturing a sense of belonging requires fundamental shifts in pedagogy including being culturally responsive. This includes

> a further theoretical shift … beyond the reifying of culture in cultural awareness approaches … avoiding foreclosed assumptions for a curriculum-centric insertion of additional intercultural content, to allow deeper considerations on pedagogical opportunities that draw on diverse, rich and complex cultural traditions. (Memon et al., 2021, p. 183)

Culturally Responsive Pedagogies (CRP) include 'those pedagogies that actively value, and mobilise as resources, the cultural repertoires and intelligences that students bring to the learning relationship' (Morrison et al., 2019, p. v). We argue that creative arts-based practices are a central dimension of young people's lived experiences and cultural traditions and sense of belonging within communities.

Our education system in Australia recognises that children and young people are in the act of becoming an adult in the world, what Biesta (2015) refers to as Subjectification. Globally, education systems express this transition to adulthood by emphasising the need for schools to instil 'Twenty First Century Skills', 'Competencies' and 'Capabilities'. These have developed from the first iteration of the 'Mayer Key Competencies' (Mayer, 1992) to the elaboration of Goal 2 of the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration* (2019) whereby 'All young Australians become: confident and creative individuals; successful lifelong learners; active and informed members of the community' (Education Council, 2019, p. 4). Along

with subject content, the Australian Curriculum identifies seven General Capabilities to be embedded across the curriculum: literacy, numeracy, ICT, critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability, ethical understanding and intercultural understanding (ACARA, 2016). As Gilbert (2018) describes, there has been debate regarding the justification for the choice of these seven General Capabilities, 'and whether others are more worthy of inclusion' (p. 139). Furthermore, the General Capabilities may take second place and be pushed to the edge when educators are under pressure to cover the subject curriculum and achieve performativity targets, thus attenuating their impact.

Biesta's (2015) domains of education—Qualification, Subjectification and Socialisation—are interrelated and, for young people, Socialisation and Subjectification are the domains that need continual and careful negotiation. That is, young people need to be able to bring together the learning and understandings that they bring from their homes and communities with their experiences in school (Esteban-Guitart, 2016). Young people disengaged or detached from school talk about what they are doing in the classroom as being irrelevant to their lives or their aspirations, and they find that school belonging clashes with their views of the world and of themselves. They do not want to be the person that the school wants them to become. MacGill et al. (2018) suggest that we need to shed light on the lived realities of disenfranchised young people in the 'here-and-now' rather than focussing on the people they will become in the future (Livingstone & Sefton-Green, 2016, p. 213). As Price (2015) describes, commonly 'students are linked by disadvantage and challenged by idealisations of what students should be … [and are] continually required to fit into mainstream learning … if it is deemed too difficult, they can be segregated or excluded from participation' (p. 19). Young people lightly attached or actively engaged in school find that they need to make parts of themselves, their community and their ideas invisible within the school to continue to fit in.

The danger that we have currently in our education policy and institutions is that, although we include more diverse populations in our schools and seek to prepare them for an uncertain world, we don't make decisions alongside or with young people. In Australia, the national education goals outlined in the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration*

declare that 'Our best efforts will translate into opportunities for every young Australian. We will ensure that we place young Australians at the centre of our education system as they navigate their learning and set out on their own journey … to live fulfilling, productive and responsible lives' (Education Council, 2019, pp. 3–4). Yet young people are still not fully included in discussions about what they should learn, how they are part of the world or even the capabilities they need to be active members of the community. These foundational parameters are currently decided *for* them. John Smyth (2016) calls for a critical ethnography of youth to understand the lives and context of 'young people in times of precarity' (p. 133). This requires us to understand the type of future that young people—both in or out of school—will be part of, and it requires us to support young people who are seeking to create a very different future (Smyth, 2016).

The first step in developing a critical ethnography of youth is to make the lives of young people visible in the discussions of curriculum and policy that affects them. Making their lives visible and their voices heard means that we must find ways of bringing young people to the fore in discussions of education and the role of education in creating a world worth living in. In imagining a way forward for young people, we must reimagine schools with democratic intent that include all young people in developing 'the capabilities and the freedom to choose a life that they have reason to value' (Sen, 1999, pp. 14–15). That is, advocating for a capability's philosophy promoting what students *can do* and *be* (Nussbaum, 2003; Sen, 1985).

In contemporary policies, the term 'capabilities' has been appropriated in education to mean individual sets of skills that young people must demonstrate before they can actively participate in the changing world of work. For Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2009), the meaning is deeper and more liberatory, with Sen (1999) developing the capabilities approach to economic development where every individual had the ability to develop and exercise the skills and knowledge that would allow them to live a life that mattered to them and to have influence over the way they are governed. The relationship of education to a capabilities approach was taken up by a Nussbaum (2009) with the aim to create a more democratic society that can engage with the world:

> [T]he goal of producing decent world citizens who can understand the global problems to which this and other theories of justice respond and who have the practical competence and the motivational incentives to do something about those problems. How, then, would we produce such citizens? (Nussbaum, 2009, p. 3)

For both Sen and Nussbaum, the capabilities approach is a way of ensuring that all people have the freedom to choose a life that matters to them. It is important that everyone can participate in the economy and have the skills and knowledge to provide for themselves and their family. It is important that this freedom can be extended to all without exclusion. This requires a freedom of thought that seeks to include and learn from others, an ability to set and pose problems and work together for a common good, and the capabilities to imagine and create new futures. Such an approach counters deficit notions through recognising diversity as a strength in adding richness (Price & Slee, 2018, 2021; Price et al., 2020) both individually and collectively within society.

Nussbaum (2009) believes that the arts play an important part in education: 'This artistic instruction can and should be linked to the "citizen of the world" instruction, since works of art are frequently an invaluable way of beginning to understand the achievements and sufferings of a culture different from one's own' (p. 13).

> Education will promote the enrichment of the student's own senses, imagination, thought, and practical reason, for example, and it will also promote a vision of humanity according to which all human beings are entitled to that kind of development on a basis of equality. (Nussbaum, 2009, pp. 8–9)

If we are to involve children and young people in understanding and remaking the world, arts-based practice will give voice to their imaginings. The arts offer a way of making visible how others experience the world and invite us into a dialogue with those experiences. Arts-based practices allow young people to represent their idea, lives and aspirations in the school, in the community and on the global stage through social media. Young people can become visible and tangible in a world that sought to make them invisible.

Reimagining Pedagogies

We conclude this chapter by proposing how arts-based methodologies offer opportunities for youth to provide insight into responding to the questions: What is the very different future that needs to be created? That is, how can educational systems support young people in making changes in their own lives and working with others to create 'a very different future'? Secondly, what are these institutions that would enable young people to 'speak back' and 'exercise the power to bring about change'? (Smyth, 2016, p. 140).

It is easy to see arts-based practices for students on the edge of schooling instrumentalist or 'merely' expressive (Biesta, 2017). Where students have disengaged from education, it is tempting to position the arts as an incentive to engage, by making an easy connection with their 'lifeworlds'. Allowing young people to express themselves is an important part of arts-based practice, but it is not enough. Going beyond this in an education system that sees engagement in education purely as preparation for work, it is easy to position education in the arts in vocational terms, no matter how precarious the vocation. If arts programmes are 'done to' young people in order to right something that is wrong for them, we are in danger of continuing their exclusion and invisibility. For young people entering programmes under deficit labels, their experience of art education can become an instrumentalised and 'targeted' approach predominantly concerned with behaviour modification, rather than a universal programme for cultural and intellectual development. Further to this, engaging young people in all art forms provides the skills, understandings and knowledges that form the foundation blocks of creativity.

We must approach arts-based practices as a part of our critical ethnography of youth and see it not just as a way of motivating young people, allowing them to express themselves, and as a vocational preparation, but as part of the dialogue we have with young people about their lives and their worlds. We need to connect schools with educational sites in the

community so that young people's voices, images and imaginations have a direct impact on their community. Through arts-based methodologies, young people can tell their stories, represent their lives and aspirations, and can enter into a dialogue with their communities about their lives and imagined futures.

Conclusions

If we encounter the arts-based practices of young people as an act of social justice, as an engagement with them in becoming a part of the world, then we can enter into that dialogue:

> [T]here needs to be a process of "speaking back" to an unengaging curriculum and uninspiring pedagogy—which is to say, students being prepared to take a stand against an unjust and unfair curriculum that effectively excludes them from connecting to it. (Smyth, 2016, p. 135)

Through engaging with young people as co-inquirers in arts-based practices, Stehlik et al. (2020) report, 'Giving young people opportunities to have a say and represent their interests is seen as key to their well-being and becoming productive and engaged citizens' (p. 1).

Arts-based methodologies allow young people on the edge to share in a dialogue, and as Kemmis et al. (2014) advocate, 'Live well in a world worth living in' (p. 27). The implication for policy makers is the necessity to enter into that dialogue with an open mind and engage with the imagination and needs of our young people. Arts-based methodologies allow our students to enter into dialogue with the world. In engaging with the arts of our young people as part of a critical ethnography of youth we can enquire of their arts-based methodologies: 'What is this asking of me?' 'What is this trying to say to me?' or 'What is this trying to teach me?' (Biesta, 2017, p. 10).

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Part II

Enacting Arts-Based Methodologies with Young People at the Edge through Co-design

3

Against Binaries: Images, Affects and Sites of Engagement

Anna Hickey-Moody and Christine Horn

Introduction

In this chapter we draw on arts-based ethnographic data in order to think about the material-discursive assemblages that produce ideas and experiences of being on the edge of school systems. This terrain is complex; economic disadvantage, racism and trauma intersect in material and discursive assemblages to which institutions can struggle to respond. Students and teachers are positioned in complex ways amidst these material and discursive formations and can often struggle to resist problematic constructions of young subjectivity in the face of a lack of viable alternatives. Our fieldwork site in Hulme, a city council area of Manchester in the UK, is multicultural and diverse, with a young population made up of different ethnic, cultural and language groups. According to the local council website, Hulme has high levels of ethnic diversity, as the area is

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home to many first- and second-generation migrants from China, Somalia, India, the West Indies and Africa.[1] This diversity was also reflected in the cohort of students who took part in the fieldwork. Anna Hickey-Moody's Interfaith Childhoods project is funded by the Australian Research Council (FT1601293) and RMIT University to research stories of belonging and religion in communities in Australia and in the UK. Since 2016, research participants have shared stories of surviving war, rebuilding life after undocumented migration and living as part of a diaspora. Throughout the project, we have come to see the many different ways people find the faith to keep going, even though life can be difficult. Parents' stories show that in working through trauma and adjusting to change, new migrants and asylum seekers often reconcile competing worldviews through their religion.

Material Assemblages of Risk

The school that we discuss in this chapter was a difficult research site and the reasons for this were material, cultural and interpersonal. The difficulties with the site began during the school recruitment process. In working to develop a partnership with the school, Anna made three different appointments with staff members, and on two occasions, having arrived and waited for the meeting, she was told that perhaps the best idea was to meet someone else, not the community engagement officer, not the principal. Thus, the first experiences with the school were those of the researcher being positioned on the 'edge' of the school community, and being at risk of not succeeding. Eventually, she had a successful meeting with a year teacher who was also an art teacher, but it came about after an extended wait and insistence on being seen. Anna's fieldnotes recall:

> *[T]he shameful moment when, after waiting in a school staffroom for two hours with no Wi-Fi and no offer of water, or a cup of tea, for a meeting with a school community liaison that kept being pushed back, I said 'I am a Professor. People usually care about me'. This statement about my own importance came*

[1] https://manchester.gov.uk/

as rather a shock. I felt ashamed that I articulated my relative privilege so brashly, yet I was also intensely irritated by the fact that presenting as a friendly woman signifies to many that I would not have a lot of responsibility, there are not multiple demands on my time, and the assumption followed that I could wait in a staffroom for two hours.

The school had a difficult atmosphere. It was built in an old war aircraft bunker, and the walls were made of lead to stop radio signals being tracked by bombing planes. A side effect of this repurposing of the building was that there was no open WiFi or telephone network in or near the school. When calling a translator or looking up a resource online, it was necessary to walk a few blocks away from the school to communicate with the outside world. For Anna, this felt symbolic of the closed nature of the school community. It felt like the school environment itself was contributing to the discourses through which its students were positioned on the margins, or the edge, of its community. This contributed to our sense that spaces have their own agency and form part of the material assemblages involved in education, and that learning environments can come to co-determine what and how children learn, which we argue in this chapter. This was confirmed during our experiences working at the school. The students were nearly entirely Black and the vast majority of the teachers and school leadership team were white. This imbalance was expressed in racial tensions that caused disciplinary difficulties which became apparent as soon as fieldwork started:

Otter Brook Primary School: First day of fieldwork, 2018

A Black boy was carried through our classroom by two white teachers, to a corner at the back of the room where a green PVC curtain was drawn around him. I was working with Huong, Emily and Lisa setting up the room, getting ready for the workshop. The boy's screams pierced the airways and it was very unsettling to hear him so unhappy. He screamed 'Let me go, let me go', 'I'm going to miss my lunch', 'Let me go' repeatedly at the top of his voice. The boy did, indeed, miss his lunch and by the time our class filed in we, the research team, were all quite a-jangle, having been bathed in the desperate wails of the boy for the past 30 mins. I felt very concerned about him being restrained for so long and I couldn't imagine what he had done that was so naughty it led to him being physically held down.

This incident recounts a material and discursive assemblage of risk in which the student was constructed as being a risk to others and himself and physically removed from the classroom. Trying to recompose ourselves after this alarming start, the research team discovered that the teaching staff was much more invested in discipline and control than other research sites in which we worked. Strategies of discipline and control were, indeed, the ways that risk assemblages were enforced at this school. Anna's desire to rearrange the classroom so that students could share resources and collaborate caused genuine anxiety for the teacher and the teacher's aide, both of whom were adamant that the *entire* green rug had to be left clear for roll call. Anna asked if, perhaps, the students could sit on half the rug, as they would surely fit on half the rug, and the teaching team replied that no, this simply wasn't possible because the students all sat in an *order* and changing the spacing would *ruin the order*. This level of corporeal organisation was unexpected. The class teacher preferred to leave the classroom rather than sit with the rearranged desks designed to facilitate collaboration. The teacher's aide rewarded silence and stillness above all else and had a pink wand that she used to tap students on the nose when they had been good.

The following excerpt from Anna's fieldnotes explains the learning environment and explores how the feeling of failure is produced in the teacher-student interactions:

> *We need to bring tables close together so that students can share materials—we do this with a view to providing the richest range of materials possible. We also have to make sure that the three students without ethical consent are not captured on camera. The art teacher is delighted to hand over to us for the afternoon and assures us that her T.A. [teacher's aide] will be 'all we need'. The T.A. is deeply distressed by the fact we have rearranged the space. Where will the students do their registration?, she asks. Can they not sit on the free half of the green mat, I ask? No, they need the whole mat. She is adamant. We liberate the whole green mat and the students come in for registration. The screaming pupil is let go. Our workshop begins. We are told we have to seat the children. They are not to choose their own seat. I am to choose their seats for them.*
>
> *I am encouraging the children to express themselves through colour. 'Use more colours' the teacher's aide says. That is not really what I am suggesting. Rainbows appear on pages. What colours express what feelings? I ask. 'Everyone*

knows black is angry' the teacher's aide asserts. I feel like she doesn't understand me. Instructing the children suggests they are incompetent, or at risk of being incompetent or wrong. Halfway through the workshop I pause the video recording for snack break and resume when students have come back in to start their self-portraits.

'You're not green. Don't draw yourself in green' the teacher's assistant scolds a child who is drawing themselves with the colour green. I remind the teacher the children can be any colour they want in drawing, and that they are showing their feelings and tastes through colour choice. The teacher looks at me sternly. … At the end of the day, at home, I discover the video camera has recorded only the snack break. Despairing, I text my mother to complain. 'Snack breaks are very important', she replies.

Here we see both the researcher and the children being positioned as being at risk of failing, or, in the case of the video camera, being materially compelled to fail. This is an example of the material assemblage of the school; the screaming howls of the boy who is being detained caused affective arrest in the research team; Anna forgot to hit 'record' at the right time; the teacher consistently treated the children as if they needed explicit instruction, implying they were incompetent or at risk of failing. It was a stressful environment to be in. The previous excerpt from Anna's fieldnotes also appears in a journal article on failure (Hickey-Moody, 2019), and is useful in this context because it gives some insight into how the material and discursive assemblage of the school seemed to make 'edges' for students and, indeed, produce failure. As a researcher, Anna was remade as difficult and as experiencing failure, and the students were constantly positioned as 'doing the wrong thing', being on the edge of competence or at risk of failing. As we have shown, the school environment interpellated and entangled children in complex material and discursive assemblages that were difficult for them to reframe. At the same time, teachers were often also made vulnerable in the process, limiting their ability to form nurturing and satisfying relationships with their students. The material-discursive assemblage of schooling thus fixed both students and teachers in antagonistic roles.

We argue that risk discourses often facilitate deficit framings, and point to the importance of reconceptualising the classroom environment

and the teacher-student relationship by calling into question, as well as materially interrupting, the material and discursive assemblages on which risk discourses are constructed. We suggest that the 'risk discourse' can contribute to these entrenched structures, and propose an engagement with arts-based methods as a way of foregrounding culturally responsive pedagogies to deconstruct this deficit-focused approach.

Material and Discursive School Assemblages

In this chapter we draw on Deleuze and Guattari to argue that the school creates material and discursive assemblages through which children, young people and their parents are positioned in relation to risk discourses. At the same time, school sites and systems enmesh teachers in complex entanglements that are larger than any one person's agency. For Deleuze and Guattari, our world is made up of material and discursive assemblages. This is a physical as well as conceptual argument. Deleuze and Guattari move from discussing 'machines' to 'assemblages' in expressing the connectedness of the material world and ideas. In Deleuze and Guattari's early work (*Anti-Oedipus*, 1983) they talk about machines:

> [M]achines driving other machines, machines being driven by other machines, with all the necessary couplings and connections. An organ-machine is plugged into an energy-source-machine: the one produces a flow that the other interrupts. The breast is a machine that produces milk, and the mouth machine coupled to it. (1983, p. 1)

This concept of the connectedness of matter to meaning, this functional ontology, is brought into focus through their work with the idea of the machine to start with and again with the concept of the assemblage in their later work (*A Thousand Plateaus*, 1987; *What Is Philosophy*,

1996).[2] Both assemblage and machine are concepts that focus on context and the connections that context creates. The concept of the assemblage expresses something larger than the machine, as assemblages are composed of lots of smaller machines. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari explain that assemblages are both conceptual and material; they are composed of connections in thought and in the material world. To use their words, there are 'machinic assemblages' (physical things) and 'assemblages of enunciation' (ideas). The two always intersect and overlap in complicated ways, as material cultures change thought and vice versa. In this chapter we explore machinic, or material assemblages (the physicality of the school space, the ways children's bodies are positioned by the teachers) and assemblages of enunciation, or the discursive assemblages through which children are constructed. This includes being told what to do, being reprimanded and being rewarded for silence.

On Making Edges

'At risk' discourses are often assembled in relation to trauma and marginalisation. Rather than helping young people deal with complexity and trauma, this may translate into antagonisms in the school environment or classroom and complicate the relationships between students and teachers. Rather than reinforcing moral judgements, classrooms might instead function as socially and culturally inclusive environments. One way that edges are created is through the creation of 'risk discourse' (Lupton, 1993), which can play out across a range of issues often related to behaviours that are thought of as socially undesirable, or that can result in negative outcomes such as low educational achievements (Brown, 2010; O'Connor et al., 2009), teenage pregnancy (Macvarish, 2010), substance abuse (Schehr, 2005) and more. The term has found such

[2] Deleuze and Guattari (1987) discuss the differences between machine and assemblage as they conceive them through stating, 'That is in fact the distinction we would like to propose between machine and assemblage: a machine is like a set of cutting edges that insert themselves into the assemblage undergoing deterritorialization, and draw variations and mutations of it. For there are no mechanical effects; effects are always machinic, in other words, depend on a machine that is plugged into an assemblage' (p. 333).

purchase in the public debate and in the media that it is often not even necessary to spell out any specific kind of risk; instead, simply stating that someone is 'at risk' is evocative of a whole range of negative implications (Te Riele, 2006).

The debate around behaviours that situate young people at risk has been framed around either 'humanistic' or 'economic intention' (Kelly, 2001; Hickey-Moody, 2013). In other words, managing human risk can be a result of caring for people at risk (humanistic) or can be a result of wanting to make more functional workers (economic). While the humanistic intention foregrounds potential harm to individuals and is concerned with providing care and support, the economic intention relates to the economic impact on communities and society more widely (see Kelly, 2001). However, situating some young people as being at risk is problematic in a range of ways. It can reinforce existing vulnerabilities and further marginalise young people (Te Riele, 2006), making it even more difficult for them to live up to their own aspirations. Also, not all behaviours that are deemed risky are necessarily detrimental, but can become so once they have been evaluated negatively, through social marginalisation or simply because support structures fall away. In this way, the 'at risk' category, and the 'risky' behaviours that some young people engage with for one reason or another, may be a way of reinforcing social stereotypes to the detriment of some groups and to the advantage of other groups. Even so, it is often unclear if it is the behaviours themselves, and the kinds of moral judgement they engender, that are at the centre of the issue, or whether the risk discourse may serve as a way of social positioning or signalling (Schehr, 2005), and whether this particular way of framing of young people's behaviours is useful in fostering social inclusion. Indeed, such discourses may result in a deepening of social division and increased marginalisation of already marginalised groups (Lupton, 1993; Te Riele, 2006).

As Blitz et al. have argued, non-white students and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds tend to perform below the academic standards of their peers, but also to receive harsher punishments at school, and are often perceived as being more disruptive (Blitz et al., 2016). At the same time, many students, in particular those from low socioeconomic backgrounds, are much more likely to have witnessed or

experienced some form of violence (Blitz et al., 2016). This means that those students who are negatively perceived in their school environment are also more likely to be facing adverse experiences in their daily lives.

The data we examine in this chapter focuses on the lived experiences of children and their parents who are enmeshed in complex learning experiences that often include children being positioned within risk discourses, and in some instances the children are being taught to see themselves as problematic. Indeed, the data presented previously also illustrates the school environment constructing the researcher as problematic and the students as incompetent. As Villanueva (2013) has pointed out, one way to disrupt these negative discourses is to problematise or question the normative discourse that foregrounds academic performance and, instead, to focus on individual voices and to make room for students' lived experiences. Villanueva's work not only is based on a decolonising methodology that is particularly suited to addressing racial inequities but also resonates with regard to students with migration backgrounds and those with experiences of trauma. Implementing a culturally responsive pedagogy, as Blitz et al. have suggested, coupled with a strength-based approach that focuses on abilities instead of shortcomings, is one way of mitigating 'at risk' discourses and instead working towards making classrooms more inclusive environments (Blitz et al., 2016). A focus on relationships, collaboration and mutual respect can help to deconstruct subconscious assumptions based on race, ethnicity or socioeconomic background (Berryman et al., 2018). As Berryman et al. have pointed out:

> Respect and courage are needed when entering into an ako[3] relationship with someone who we perceive as other. It involves listening beyond the words and responding to the person in front of us rather than responding to our assumptions of who they might be. (Berryman et al., 2018, p. 6)

A culturally responsive pedagogy, representing a strength-based approach that emphasises cultural diversity and individual experience as an asset rather than a barrier, is another example of how teachers might contribute to the deconstruction of edges and also provide a mechanism

[3] The term 'ako' translates from Māori as 'to learn, study, instruct, teach, advise'.

for enabling individual relationships to develop. As Abel and Wahab (2017) have pointed out, positioning young people as 'at risk' may stand in the way of building trusting relationships with social workers or other adults charged with providing support or links to services. This means that the risk discourse can be detrimental to students and teachers working together to achieve positive outcomes, for example raising academic achievements, minimising absenteeism and improving engagement with the education system. At the same time as the literature on culturally responsive pedagogies and affiliated theoretical frameworks has proliferated (Morrison et al., 2019), and while the term has often been taken up as part of the curriculum, it has lost some of its depth and focus and led to superficial celebration of culture and diversity (Evans et al., 2020). In the Australian context, some commentators point out that culturally responsive pedagogies are paid lip service but that:

> while ostensibly promoting cultural inclusion, Australian educational policy approaches are in reality directed toward assimilation, standardisation and a narrowing focus on the measurement of prescribed Eurocentric learning outcomes. (Morrison et al., 2019, p. v)

It is thus important to embed culturally responsive pedagogies in the curriculum in a way that is meaningful for students and that positions them as competent holders of knowledge. In this context, arts-based methods can facilitate culturally responsive pedagogies as a material assemblage that repositions student's bodies in space. Arts-based methods are based on visual communication rather than on the use of words as a primary means of communication, and they also require a collaborative environment and often constitute an enjoyable activity without necessarily giving students the feeling of being marked or graded on their work. This kind of creative and body-based learning can help students regain a sense of themselves as competent and engaged (Rigney et al., 2020). In addition, arts-based methods focus on lived, embodied experiences (Lenette, 2019). This can help to break open the rigid order of some classroom environments, thus enabling new relationships to form.

Parents' Stories and Discursive Assemblages of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

As Abel and Wahab (2017) have noted, the 'at risk' discourse can be detrimental not only to the young people who are seen to fall into this category but also to the adults who engage with them in a professional capacity. This may include not only teachers but also other school staff, social and health workers and others in the social services sector. Teachers, in particular, often work with large student cohorts who have diverging capabilities and learning styles. As such, teachers have to cover copious amounts of material in the curriculum and also accomplish testing and marking. Arguing in favour of a more culturally responsive pedagogy may thus easily be misunderstood as placing an additional burden of responsibility on teachers. There is no easy answer to this, other than arguing for a move towards increased awareness of the impacts of learning assemblages and for more attention to be paid to social and emotional learning. This should be accompanied by a move away from a scores- or grades-based assessment of academic success. The basic assumption here is that teachers care for the wellbeing of their students and that they want to see them fulfil their academic potential, but also foster social and cultural inclusion in their classroom. Thus, while culturally responsive pedagogy is anti-racist and emancipatory and aimed at furthering social justice, it can also be a method for teachers to engage better with multicultural students or those from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, to create more nurturing classroom environments and as a result to enable better academic outcomes as well (Harwood et al., 2016). We need to reshape the material and discursive assemblages in which both students and teachers are enmeshed.

Arts-based methods are one way of renegotiating the material assemblages involved in educational experiences. Another way in which the Interfaith Childhoods project attempted to reshape discursive assemblages around the risk discourse in the school was to engage with parents' worldviews and take up these positions in developing culturally responsive approaches to children. Many superdiverse communities consist of migrants who are reconciling complex diasporic families and histories.

The parent focus group for Otter Brook Primary School included parents who were born in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Kurdistan, Iraq, Eritrea, Somalia, Holland, England and Nigeria. Languages spoken included Urdu, Punjabi, Bangla, Kurdish, Tigrinya, Somali, Dutch, English, Hausa and Swahili. Most parents were Sunni Muslim, with one family being Shia Muslim, one family Roman Catholic (of Irish and American parents) and one family Orthodox Christian (from Eritrea). In the focus group discussion, parents explained their divergent faith worlds and ontologies. Emma, born in England of American and Irish heritage, explains:

> *I had like a bit of a near death experience when [I had Libby] and then I just decided to believe in myself, every day. Now, I don't have a religion. … But I wouldn't say I was atheist because that kind of means that you're not into anything. So I just kind of wake up and just tell the kids to believe in themselves and believe in the day and do the best you can, without any kind of actual body, I suppose. But you know what they say? When we all die, the last thing you say is 'Oh, God', whether you believe in it or not. So that unites us all.*

A similar grounding in religion is experienced by Rahim, another parent with very different background in the same discussion:

> *Religion directs you. Islam tells you what to eat, what not to eat, what to drink, what not to drink, what to wear, what not to wear. How to cut your hair, how not to cut your hair. How to interact with people and how not to. How to live with your wife and how not to. These are instructions. And it tells you what to do in life. Buying and selling, working, teaching, any kind of job you want to do. It guides you through, how to, how to [eat] or where to eat. Now, without those things, without that religion, I feel [people in] the world would just be living like an animal can live.*
>
> *Religion, from a philosophical view … this religion is over 1465 years old. Now, somebody cannot sit down and just formulate these things. It was written down [over] 200 years. It is saying 'This will happen, this will happen, do this, do that'. Now we look at them manifesting today, and we know this is why God said [these things].*
>
> *Where I come from, we can't start a meeting without a prayer. If we meet here, somebody will open with a prayer. It might be a Muslim or a Christian. When we are closing, there are closing prayers.*

In quite different ways, the excerpts above present parents' worldviews as grounded in faith of various kinds. Taking this perspective into thinking about the children, they can also be understood as coming from a place of faith and, in some instances, as coming from a context in which decisions are made because of faith rather than free will. We do all that we can to mobilise parents' perspectives in order to develop culturally responsive pedagogies. For example, we explore the children's perspectives on faith and belonging. We do this through individual and collaborative art making, and this process materially repositions the children in the school space and offers the material and discursive opportunities to express their perspectives (Figs. 3.1 and 3.2).

Children's Experiences

As we have made clear, the students in Otter Brook Primary School were nearly entirely Black children, while most of the teachers were white. In examining the children's artwork as a way of materially repositioning the children in the space, we also have to acknowledge the racially problematic nature of the divide between the teaching team and the students. Some of the Interfaith Childhoods research team are not white; however, this was only a temporary intervention in the politics of the school. Highlighting the socio-cultural difference between students and teachers further points to the importance of not only emphasising individual experiences of race and inclusion, or indeed exclusion, but also critically examining the kinds of stereotypes that are often held implicitly about students' abilities and the way that these stereotypes can turn into realities in the class environment (James, 2012). Such racial stereotypes also count among the discursive assemblages that often position students as below par rather than acknowledging their inherent expertise and experiential knowledge (Lenette, 2019). The Interfaith Childhoods project aimed to shift this dynamic by using arts-based methods as a way of unravelling the existing material assemblages of the classroom at Otter Brook Primary.

During the fieldwork, children were encouraged to collaborate to produce images of 'future cities', incorporating all the elements they felt were

Fig. 3.1 Interfaith Childhoods workshop at Otter Brook Primary School, 2018

Fig. 3.2 Interfaith Childhoods workshop at Otter Brook Primary School, 2018

important or might be important for the future; everything 'that really mattered'. Over the course of the project, children came up with imaginative depictions of flying recycling factories, cities with rivers for roads, houses shaped like fruit, flying superheroes and many other ideas. Their images often included green spaces such as forests or parks, mountain ranges and lakes, as well as everyday buildings like schools, shops, hotels and airports (Hickey-Moody et al., 2021).

The collaborative future cities from Otter Brook Primary School were different from those produced in other schools in that they were almost unrecognisable as 'cities' or 'built environments'. There were lots of coloured smudges and blobs, scribbles and squiggles, patches of indeterminate colour with string glued on top and random jagged scrawls. It seemed like the children in Otter Brook had been unable to come together to agree on 'what really mattered' in their lives, or were unwilling to collaborate in order to render their vision legible on the page. The workshop

process always included a planning phase where all children were encouraged to discuss their proposed future city with their group, facilitated by an adult. In other schools, students had planned the contents of their picture and then distributed roles, each working on their section of the image. While in other schools there were regular disagreements about each participant's choices of colour, medium or style, the Otter Brook children *painted into each other's sections*, and different media were applied across the picture without consideration for the drawing or painting that was already there. These kids were screaming out to be heard. They didn't want to make a collaborative story; they wanted to have an individual voice.

There are many ways of interpreting children's artwork without necessarily uncovering all their inherent meanings (Hickey-Moody et al., 2021). Interpretation can take different approaches; for instance, an image may be analysed according to literal, abstract or content strategies (Burkitt et al., 2009). In this instance, looking at colours, shapes and arrangements of the future cities created by the students in Otter Brook Primary suggests a sense of pressure inherent in the sharp edges and the lack of discernible structure among the chaotic line work, as if the children had to express their inner sense of conflict and confusion which had spilled over onto the page (see Figs. 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5). Perhaps the stress and control surrounding the children had blurred into their thoughts and was being expressed in the whirring mess on the page. While some parts of the artwork suggest an attempt at realising an idea or concept—for example the caterpillar-like creature on the bottom-left corner of Fig. 3.3 or the spire in brown felt-tip in the bottom-right corner of Fig. 3.4—these did not tie in with the overall image but stood separate and had sometimes been painted over by other children who were careless of the efforts and ideas of the other participants.

While the images are suggestive of the children's stress and anxiety resulting from their learning experiences, they also gesture towards the complexities of living a shared life and civic participation, and demonstrate human entanglement with the more-than-human in a raw and even confronting way (Figs. 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5). Elsewhere, we have written about how the always-already posthuman view of the world that children have draws significantly on their inherent entanglement with their

Fig. 3.3 Future city, Otter Brook Primary School, 2018

environment (Hickey-Moody, 2020, 2021). As the children play, make, refuse, fight, resist and learn, they are not separate from the materials with which they learn; instead they are caught up with them and co-produce their worldviews in collaboration with materials. As is evidenced in the differences in the artwork examined here, learning environments diffract through children's work and influence their ways of being, becoming and making in place.

The disorganised and confrontational images created in Otter Brook speak of disruption and pressure, where children were unable to realise their own ideas but also unable to collaborate in a way that would enable them to carry through a shared concept or project plan. The images could be interpreted as the children failing to put together a visually appealing artwork, but even young children have a sophisticated understanding of intentionality in artwork (Vivaldi & Allen, 2021). This suggests that even seemingly random scribbles are a means of communication and that such

Fig. 3.4 Future city, Otter Brook Primary School, 2018

means can be used to evoke conflict, anger and stress. Through the images, these emotions become evident in ways that would have been difficult to verbalise for the children, in particular since they might not have been aware of any alternative way of engaging in their classroom environment. The environment of the classroom, as we have suggested, positioned the children as needing to be controlled, as being at risk of failure and in need of instruction.

While the group pictures do not, at first glance, seem to express more than a lack of cooperation, the individual artwork the children produced during an earlier workshop at the school is indicative of their creativity and their ability to express themselves in a more coherent and less confrontational way. Figure 3.6 shows an artwork produced to the theme of 'emotions', by a child at Otter Brook Primary School. A large face drawn in yellow crayon and framed by black hair is shown with yellow eyes with long, black lashes, and a wide-open red diamond-shaped mouth. The most

Fig. 3.5 Future city, Otter Brook Primary School, 2018

striking thing about the picture is the eyebrows made from red pipe cleaner and angled upwards towards the right, to give the image its look of surprise. The image is funny and imaginative, and shows one of the less commonly expressed emotions. Children asked to visualise emotions often choose sadness or happiness, which are easy to depict through an upturned mouth or crying eyes. Surprise, which may be understood as an emotion or as a mental or psychological state, can have any valence: it can be a neutral, a positive or negative experience, and thus it is more difficult to express through visual means. The picture here is not only suggestive of the

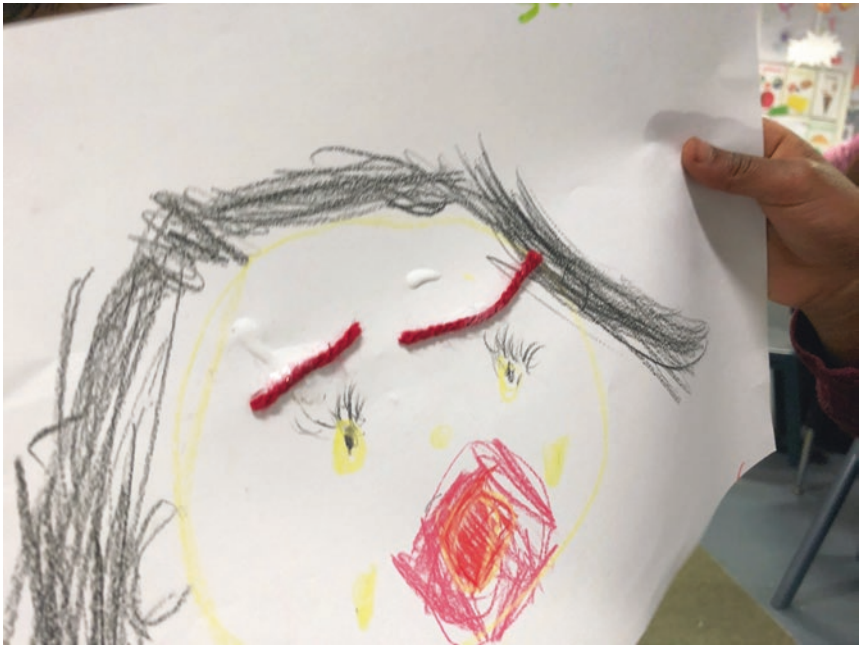

Fig. 3.6 'Surprise', an emotion picture drawn by one of the children in Otter Brook Primary School

talent and capability of its creator but, comparing it to the group pictures, is also evocative of the feeling of surprise the student had experienced when being engaged one-on-one and encouraged to contribute on their own terms. The art produced by the children, including group and individual images, thus illustrates the power of this method for unearthing problematic emotions and experiences that are difficult to verbalise.

Material Assemblages of Culturally Responsive Pedagogies

Our research with Interfaith Childhoods has shown that arts-based methods can be an important way of examining difficult emotions and themes and developing context-specific culturally responsive pedagogies that are

attuned to parents' and children's perspectives. The topics that have emerged in children's work during our research include migration and displacement, trauma and climate anxieties, but have also foregrounded the things that are meaningful in children's lives and that provide connection with their communities, such as the meaning of friendship, their families, sports, food and culture. Often children create eclectic assemblages of things and people, places and feelings that are filled with meaning, and which do not always come to the surface during day-to-day interactions in the classroom, but which are important because they can reveal children's strengths as well as their vulnerabilities. This can provide adults around them, in particular, the teachers and other school staff, a key to understanding difficult or antagonistic behaviours and the children's triggers and vulnerabilities. In some instances, it can explain why some children struggle with academic pressure or with classroom discipline. With regard to the material and discursive assemblages through which 'edges' are created, creative and arts-based methodologies can help reshape the assemblages within the school setting to emphasise processes and relationships over outcomes. However, in order for this to work, collaboration and experimentation need to be foregrounded over academic achievement. Arts-based methods also draw on children's lived experiences, further positioning them as experts of their own narratives. Moving towards a culturally responsive pedagogy holds the promise of shifting the context in which students and teachers interact, thereby augmenting the kind of connections that can be created.

The shifts that we call for require more than just embedding culturally responsive strategies in the curriculum or providing teachers with training to respond to students who have experienced trauma or who come from diverse or marginalised ethnic or cultural backgrounds, even though these are important first steps. It requires a rethinking of the power structures inherent in educational spaces, in risk discourses and in the systems that mark students as either achieving or failing to achieve academic standards. The focus needs to shift towards students' strengths and abilities, also foregrounding the social and emotional learning that takes place in classrooms. The children's paintings from Otter Brook show how the social relationships between students did not allow them to work together to compose a future filled with 'things that matter' but only make

scribbles and marks cancelling out each other's efforts and ideas. On an emotional level, the paintings evidence aggression, a lack of focus and an inability to work together. In all likelihood, these kinds of emotions and social relationships were evident as well during other classes, disrupting the children's efforts at learning and limiting their teacher's ability to engage students with class material or bring them to work together on tasks or projects.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have tried to explore the material and discursive conditions through which failure is produced and within which children are positioned as being 'on the edge' or 'at risk' of failing. These material and discursive assemblages of risk and failure are physical, systemic, institutional and pedagogical. They are not one person's fault and cannot be easily repaired. In trying to interrupt these assemblages we attempted to create material and discursive assemblages of culturally responsive pedagogy, through bringing parents' perspectives into the classroom, through repositioning children in space and engaging them in ways that clearly value their voice and their social and emotional worlds. There are many ways culturally responsive pedagogies can be developed and our examples are just suggestions. However, having the capacity to engage with students on their own terms is the most enduringly important component of being a culturally responsive teacher, along with being brave enough to interrupt existing discursive formations when required.

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4

Students Researching Inequality: Perplexities and Potentialities of Arts-Informed Research Methods for Students-as-Researchers

Eve Mayes and Merinda Kelly

Introduction

In the past 30 years, research with young people has broadened dramatically in scope, from research *on* young people to research inquiries *with* and *by* young people (Kellett, 2010). Young people may be positioned as 'data sources' for researchers, 'active respondents' to adults' research questions, 'co-researchers' with adults and 'researchers' (Bragg & Fielding, 2005). As 'active researchers' (Kellett, 2010), young people are positioned as theorists of their own lives and school communities. In these modes of research, adults support young people through enabling them the time to pursue their research, offering training in research methods and ethical principles; this mode of research is argued to work with and extend young people's skills and knowledge (Berriman et al., 2018).

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Notwithstanding the possibilities of student-led research for generating new knowledge from students' embodied experiences, previous accounts of students-as-researchers work have identified a number of methodological and ethical challenges (e.g. see Bradbury-Jones & Taylor, 2015; Daelman et al., 2020). When adults seek to 'empower' young people to be heard by adults in the public sphere through student-led research (e.g. to influence policy), verbal and linguistic research methods and modes of dissemination can be privileged in order for students' research to be legible to adults as 'research'—for example, the use of surveys and semi-structured qualitative interviews, written final reports and verbal research presentations (e.g. Kellett et al., 2004). It may not only be educators who gravitate towards conventional methods in order to enable students to be 'heard' by adults; these conventional methods may also be most familiar to students. Students may have previously created, used and analysed surveys for school assignments, and participated in surveys as part of institutional 'student voice' processes, and so may be drawn to use these in their own research as 'default' methods. However, when students conduct their own research with such default, 'school-like' methods, students-as-researchers work may be most accessible and achievable to students whose school is already serving well and who already 'do' school well (Mayes et al., 2019). Such modes of students-as-researchers work may, inadvertently, perpetuate problematic hierarchies between young people, and suppress 'dark funds of knowledge' that cannot be easily articulated verbally (Zipin, 2009). Student-led research that relies on verbal and written language and conventional qualitative methods may thus reinforce school-like hierarchies where the confident, articulate, 'good' student becomes the 'ideal' student researcher (Mayes et al., 2019). Inadvertently, such practices may reinforce processes of subjectification that are already at work in schools—that is, the production of atomised, individual subjects through language.

Using the arts in research with children and young people, and by children and young people, has been argued to jolt and shift established ways of knowing and seeing the world and existing habits of thought and ways of researching (e.g. Hickey-Moody et al., 2019; Leavy, 2017). Arts-informed research, across age categories (with children and young people, as well as adults), works with the arts as a 'means to increase attention to

complexity, feeling, and new ways of seeing' (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2018, p. 1), creating unexpected insights and responses to everyday experiences and emerging research problematics (Page, 2018), and giving 'form to speculative possibilities' and 'speculative new futures' (Hickey-Moody et al., 2019, p. 201). Enacting research with the arts has been argued to unsettle, materialise and validate knowledge creation beyond familiar and numerical, verbal and linguistic modes of knowing and communicating (Leavy, 2017). Specifically, this chapter thinks with creative arts-informed methodologies associated with feminist activist materialisms across age categorisations (Ringrose et al., 2018; Strom et al., 2019). The use of the arts in these methodologies is not about doing something 'different' with children and young people as 'others' (which would reinforce deficit conceptions) (Daelman et al., 2020; Punch, 2002). In Renold and Ringrose's (2019) terms, in feminist activist materialist arts-informed practices, bodies who participate in these encounters are 'productively working with becoming more-than the problem' (para. 48). This mode of research is also not about 'deploying pre-conceived arts-based methods for "data" that is waiting to be captured' (Renold & Ivinson, 2019, p. 3). Instead, enfolding materiality and affectivity into research seeks to destabilise taken-for-granted binary categorisations (e.g. student/adult, male/female, researcher/participant, human/non-human, words/ things), exceed previous deficit conceptions of individuals, schools and communities, and 'experiment with what else art might enable for the not-yet of experience' (Renold & Ivinson, 2019, p. 3). Research practices are radically reoriented from patterns of data 'collection'—which assume extractive colonialist logics that do not necessarily serve communities or work with situated knowledges and embodied relations—towards the *production* of material forms of data; research becomes *creation* (Manning, 2016; Springgay & Rotas, 2015). The knowledge produced in such research encounters thinks 'the social with the material' (Page, 2018, p. 82), in embodied, affectively charged, material, relational and multivalent forms. These 'situated knowledges' (Haraway, 2016) are entangled with their conditions of production—including the affective, spatial and material configurations of spoken accounts and collective material products of research. *Affect* includes but exceeds embodied feelings: it includes the felt transition between states

across and in-between human and non-human bodies (*affectus*), as well as the residual impacts left on those affected (*affectio*) (Deleuze, 1988, p. 49).

Renold (2018) has coined the term *da(r)ta* for the 'data' collaboratively generated in arts-informed research encounters, which may then be moved from the environments where they were created, carrying 'feelings of [the] crafted experience into new places and spaces' (Renold & Ringrose, 2019, para. 6). As an example of such use of da(r)ta, in Renold and Ringrose's (2019) gender activism research, young people wrote on small pieces of paper messages 'explicitly created through and for political change' relating to gender (with messages aimed at the research funder and the general public) and stuck these messages in decorated glass jars (para. 35). These jars were later re-assembled (with battery-powered tea-lights) at a public dissemination event—to 'affect those who ostensibly hold decision-making powers and to connect them to the ever-widening gulf of young people's experiences' (Renold & Ringrose, 2019, para. 35). Other recent examples of the creation of da(r)ta which actively intervene into lived inequalities and perplexities include the use of veils (Zarabadi & Ringrose, 2018), paint and collage (Hickey-Moody et al., 2019), Sharpie pens and rulers (Renold, 2018), and movement (Ivinson & Renold, 2020). While these activities may resemble, at times, work in visual arts classrooms, these research projects were extra-curricular, mobilising the arts with young people for political purposes. This chapter is in dialogue with these previous discussions of how material da(r)ta carry 'powerful affects' (Renold, 2018, p. 46) that can intervene 'into the live political ecology of education' (Renold & Ringrose, 2019, para. 5).

The Youth Advisory Council

In this chapter, we discuss the work of a students-as-researchers group which aimed to use creative and arts-informed methodologies inspired by feminist activist materialisms. The Deakin Engagement and Access Program (DEAP) Youth Advisory Council (YAC), established in 2016, is a group of approximately students from primary and secondary schools in the Geelong region of Victoria, Australia. DEAP is funded through the Australian Federal government's Higher Education Participation and

Partnerships Program (HEPPP). Schools were invited to be part of the YAC on the basis of already being part of DEAP; DEAP works with schools with an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value under 1000. According to the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), ICSEA is set at an average of 1000. Students at schools with an ICSEA value below 1000 are considered to be relatively disadvantaged; students at schools with an ICSEA value above 1000 are considered to be relatively advantaged (ACARA, 2015). Here, we do not specify the ICSEA values for the participating schools, in order to avoid identifying them. In 2019, 22 students from four primary schools (two public primary and two Catholic systemic primary) and two public secondary schools in Geelong met, at monthly meetings throughout the year, with a support staff member from their schools, two academic partners (the authors), two Partnerships Officers and a tertiary student mentor from Deakin University. The professional role of the staff member supporting the YAC students varied between schools—this staff member could be a teacher, a welfare staff member and/or a senior executive teacher. Five out of six of these schools were located in the suburbs most dramatically impacted by the vicissitudes of de-industrialisation in recent years, and where new migrant communities and support services are based. These suburbs are frequently represented in deficit terms—for example, as characterised by 'despair and disadvantage' (Geelong Advertiser Opinion, 9 April 2019, para. 7). The role of the YAC is to explore issues that affect education for young people—in particular, young people attending schools whose communities are minoritised. We use the term 'minoritised' after Māori scholar Russell Bishop (2011); according to Bishop, those 'minoritised' are 'not necessarily in the numerical minority' but 'treated as if one's position and perspective are of less worth' (p. 110). Within minoritised and residualised school communities, young people can be subjected to 'reform' interventions that strip back creative and critical pedagogies in favour of (so-called) back-to-basics forms of teaching, as attempts to 'close' equity 'gaps'. Young people's embodied sense of their current capacities, and their vision of their potential future, may be stifled by such representations and 'reform' interventions. The YAC sought to provide a forum, during school time but outside and across school environments, where

young people could craft and create other modes of knowing in and about their lives, schools and communities, engaging with shared matters of 'fervent concern' (Mayes & Holdsworth, 2020), in 'problematic-based' (Zipin, 2017) modes of inquiry.

During the year, groups of students formulated a research inquiry into a matter of shared concern and were supported to devise, conduct, analyse and disseminate their research work in their school contexts. Over the course of 2019, the YAC met seven times; each meeting ran for two hours, and meeting locations rotated between schools. Working in-between schools, the university and community, the YAC sought to reposition students-as-researchers and to challenge the tendency of students-as-researchers work to rely on verbal and linguistic research methods. To disrupt prior perceptions of research paradigms, we (the authors) introduced the participating students to arts-informed modes of inquiry as agile, expansive ways through which to research a problem and inform data generation/creation in response to their emerging questions and issues of concern (see below for details). We invited them to consider adapting arts-informed and/or hybrid approaches in their own research generation.

Yet, working in this way has not been without its ambivalences and perplexities. This chapter explores some of the ambivalences and perplexities of attempting to move beyond a focus on conventional linguistic methods and the individual subject through encouraging students to use arts-informed methods in their own research. During the year, some of the perplexities of participatory work with students at schools were disclosed—including issues surrounding the default reliance on verbal and linguistic methods (surveys and interviews) in student-led research, and the default privileging of summative student research 'presentations', even when attempting to work differently. Amidst these perplexities, moments of luminous insight and new relationalities also emerged unexpectedly.

In what follows, we contextualise the work of the YAC and give a brief account of its processes in 2019. We then draw out three da(r)ta moments that are suggestive of some of these ambivalences and possibilities. Our discussion includes photographs of artefacts from different stages of this project during the year, as well as transcribed spoken accounts from

students and support adults. These transcripts come from formal focus groups and interviews with students and support adults towards the end of the YAC. The intention of these formal focus groups and interviews was to evaluate the YAC's work to inform the future work of DEAP. After the 2019 YAC presentation, Eve Mayes conducted two formal focus groups with six students who were part of the YAC (ranging in age from 11 to 13 years old), and interviews with six key teachers/school support staff, two DEAP staff and the tertiary student mentor. This research project received ethics approval from Deakin University's Human Research Ethics Committee (2019-091), the VicDET (2019-004025) and Catholic Education Melbourne (0870). Participation in these final focus groups and interviews required the completion of a separate consent form (including a parental/guardian consent form for students). A total number of 15 people participated in these focus groups and interviews. Focus groups were approximately 30–45 minutes in length; these focus groups were held on the same day as the final YAC presentation at Deakin University's Waterfront campus. Interviews with adults were approximately 10–20 minutes in length and were conducted either on the same day as the student focus groups or via phone at another negotiated time. Topics explored included the benefits of students conducting their own research inquiries, highlights from the year, enabling supports for students conducting their own research inquiries, challenges of students conducting their own research inquiries and recommendations for future student researchers. Synthesised accounts of students' research work, generated in these summative focus groups and interviews, were compiled into an unpublished research report for the evaluation purposes of DEAP (Mayes, 2020). In writing this chapter, we worked with transcripts from these focus groups and interviews, as well as with photographs of de-identified da(r)ta (Renold, 2018) created throughout the year of the YAC. Students and teachers might not have experienced these da(r)ta in the way in which we narrate them here; our discussion of these da(r)ta and what was happening is speculative rather than definitive. While we explore some of the 'artful modalities of expression' (Renold & Ivinson, 2019, p. 2) that emerged in this students-as-researchers project, we also consider some of the ambivalences of working with arts-informed methods in student-led research that seeks to make a difference in and with the

world. In what follows, we give a retrospective account of what happened at each meeting in 2019, to contextualise three da(r)ta moments. All names are pseudonyms.

Meeting 1: Identifying Issues of Shared Concern

The first meeting was intended to build initial rapport and trust between the school groups, Deakin staff, student mentor and academics, and to prompt students to consider their research interests. Through a range of embodied activities during the initial session (including beach balls and cards), students came to account for what was 'shared' and 'unique' amongst themselves, and to begin to consider the question: 'What are some of the issues that affect education for young people?' Early insights about issues affecting education for young people emerged in the flow of conversation and notes jotted down. Collective summaries of each group's key ideas, concepts, phrases and statements of issues affecting young people in their schools were recorded and collated to form a fertile springboard for the next session. These 63 written words and phrases included 'judgement', 'racism', 'school and social politics', 'feeling unwelcome', 'homophobia and transphobia', 'less opportunities' and 'lack of creativity'.

Meeting 2: Negotiating an Issue of Shared Concern

The aim of the second meeting was to unsettle students' pre-conceptions about research and to refine and negotiate an area of shared concern across the school groups. In groups, students considered one of three photographs: one of a scientist in a laboratory (in white lab coat, surrounded by test tubes), one of the anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski sitting with four men on the Trobriand Islands, and one of a participatory action research focus group from the Canadian Native Youth Sexual Health Network (in this publicly available photo, a group of students sit in a circle on the floor of a gymnasium, arranging a series of cards on the floor). In groups, students considered a range of questions (see Table 4.1), which aimed to attune them to different research paradigms: research that might aim to *predict* (positivist), to *understand* (interpretivist) and to

Table 4.1 Meeting 2: Questions about photographs of 'research'

Questions	Photo 1 (*positivist*)	Photo 2 (*interpretivist*)	Photo 3 (*critical/emancipatory/ participatory*)
What questions do you have about this visual?			
Is this research (in your opinion)?			
Who is 'doing' the research here? Who is excluded?			
What is the purpose of this research work?	To predict	To understand	To change

change (critical, emancipatory and participatory) (adapted from Lather, 2006). Sharing insights across the groups, students discussed research that 'observes' and 'takes' sacred objects from people (as some of the Pacific Islander and Māori students interpreted the photograph of Malinowski), and research where the researchers take action on issues of shared concern through their research—discussing how this third photo initially did not appear to them to constitute 'research'.

Later in this meeting, each group was provided with a mixed bag of printed words, ideas and phrases, as well as a series of coloured felt circles. These had been sourced from Meeting 1's summarised list of 63 issues identified by the students. In school-based groups, students clustered these words into categories (and created a name for these categories), used felt circles to group words (see Fig. 4.1 for an example), and then identified the issue of greatest significance for their school community that they considered important for further research (see Fig. 4.2 for an example). Students listened carefully to the different opinions and points of view of each member of their team as they discussed, reconfigured, revised and/or deleted ideas in an effort to arrive at a potential research concept, problem or question.

These refined ideas and possibilities were shared and discussed across the groups, with three overarching categories that mattered across the groups emerging: 'discrimination', 'inequality' and 'fairness'. However, we sensed that these words were perhaps differently articulated by differently positioned individuals. For some of the younger students, 'inequality' and 'discrimination' were articulated in terms of 'bullying' or

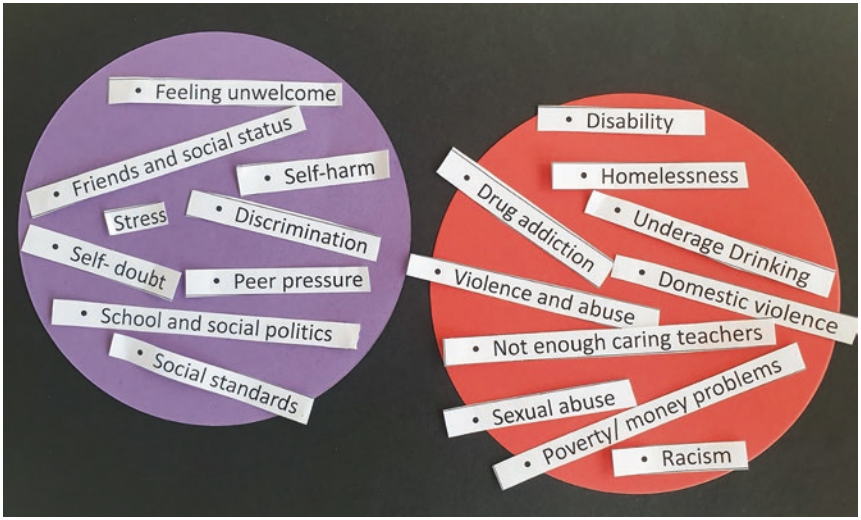

Fig. 4.1 Meeting 2: Categorising issues of concern

challenges with 'teamwork'. Other students articulated these themes in terms of 'climate inequality', unequal access to 'resources' and the inequitable effects of segregating one class as an academic stream from the rest of the cohort. 'Discrimination', 'inequality' and 'fairness', while collaboratively agreed upon as shared concerns, meant different things to different people. After considerable discussion in small groups and as a larger group, the students agreed on the overarching theme of 'inequality' as the focus of the 2019 YAC research—even as the specific questions and forms that this focus might take varied across the schools.

Meeting 3: Experiencing Research Methods

In Meeting 3, we sought to offer the YAC members experiences of a range of creative research methods to interrogate the concept of 'inequality', experience alternative arts-informed research methods and stimulate further ideas for designing their own hybrid arts-informed methods for their own research (which included, as we discuss below, the creation of beeswax wraps). Students moved through a series of research 'provocation'

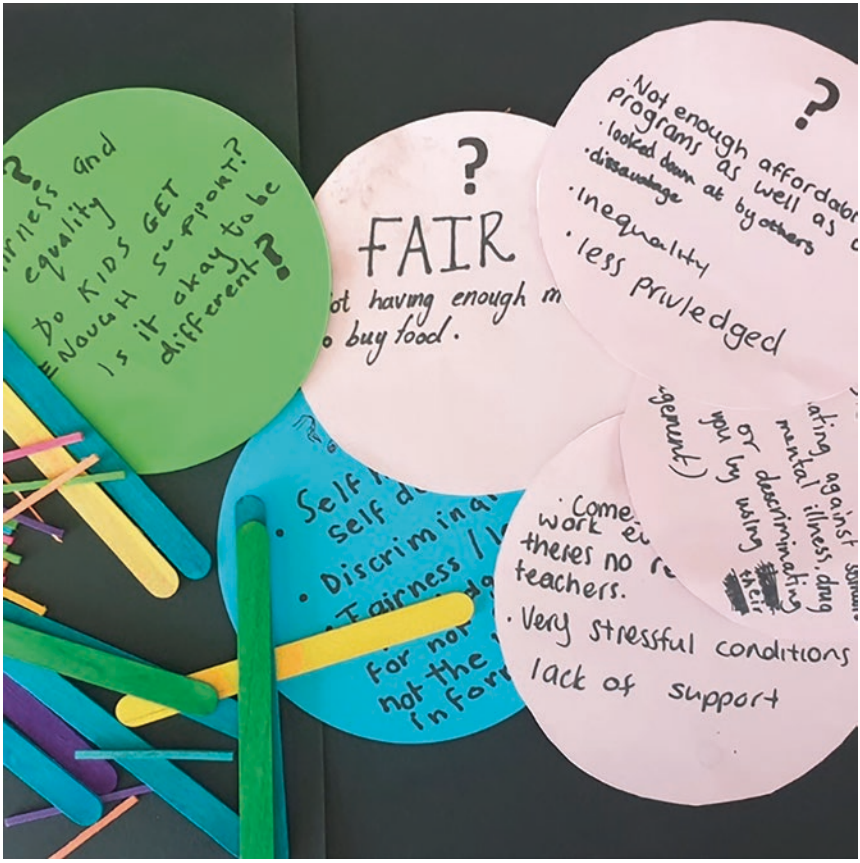

Fig. 4.2 Meeting 2: Beginning to formulate research questions

stations with detailed instructions for facilitators. We briefly introduce them here; one (Word hack) will be elaborated below. Research provocations included:

Reading inequality through images: Choosing from a selection of laminated images (e.g. see Fig. 4.3) as prompts to create and tell a narrative 'behind' the image (including a discussion of representation and semiotics);

Things overheard in the classroom: Making finger puppets (from newspaper and sticky tape) to become characters in a narrative creation of something overheard in the classroom;

Fig. 4.3 Meeting 3: Reading inequality through images

Playing with objects: Arranging a collection of multiple, non-representational objects which range in colour, shape, form and scale (coloured blocks) to tell a story about inequality;

Word hack: Arranging (with scissors and glue) single words hacked (from poetry, newspapers, definitions, as well as from the issues students raised in Meeting 2) into a sentence/slogan/story exploring ideas of inequality, discrimination and fairness, adding their own words (with text) where desired. The word hack provocation is explored further below, as a first da(r)ta moment.

At the end of each provocation, students wrote their thoughts and feelings about each of these methods onto sticky notes, grouping these on large sheets of paper.

Meeting 4: Planning for Research

At Meeting 4, students were given structured time in their school groups to plan their own research inquiry—considering the question or issue that they wished to explore, and how they would explore it. Each group was given a list of research planning prompt questions (see Table 4.2). They discussed each prompt for an allocated time, considering the specifics and practicalities of their proposed methods, and documenting their responses. They then glued their emerging description of their research methods onto coloured paper to form an agreed research plan (see Fig. 4.4 for an example). The academic partners (the authors) discussed ethical principles of respect, beneficence and justice, and specific issues relating

Table 4.2 Meeting 4: Student research planning prompts

What's the ISSUE/QUESTION we want to explore? What STORIES do we want to hear?
WHO do we want to do our research activity/activities with? (e.g. students, teachers) BE SPECIFIC! (e.g. particular classes/year groups, etc.)
WHAT are we going to do (research activities)? (e.g. puppets/role play, photos/visuals, blocks, word sentences, drawing a picture, art on a wall at school, a comment box, etc.) • **What will the activity/ activities LOOK like?** • **What RESOURCES will we need?** • **HOW LONG will it take?** • **How will we keep a RECORD of what people say/ make/ do? (e.g. taking photos, getting people to write things down …)**
WHEN will we do these activities? (Date? During a particular period? Lunchtime? etc.)
WHERE will we do these activities? (e.g. library, playground, someone's office/classroom, etc.)
WHY are we doing this? WHAT do we hope to find out/do as a result of this research?
What are the ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS we need to keep in mind? (e.g. CONFIDENTIALITY, NOT USING OTHER PEOPLE'S NAMES, POWER RELATIONS, keeping data SECURE)

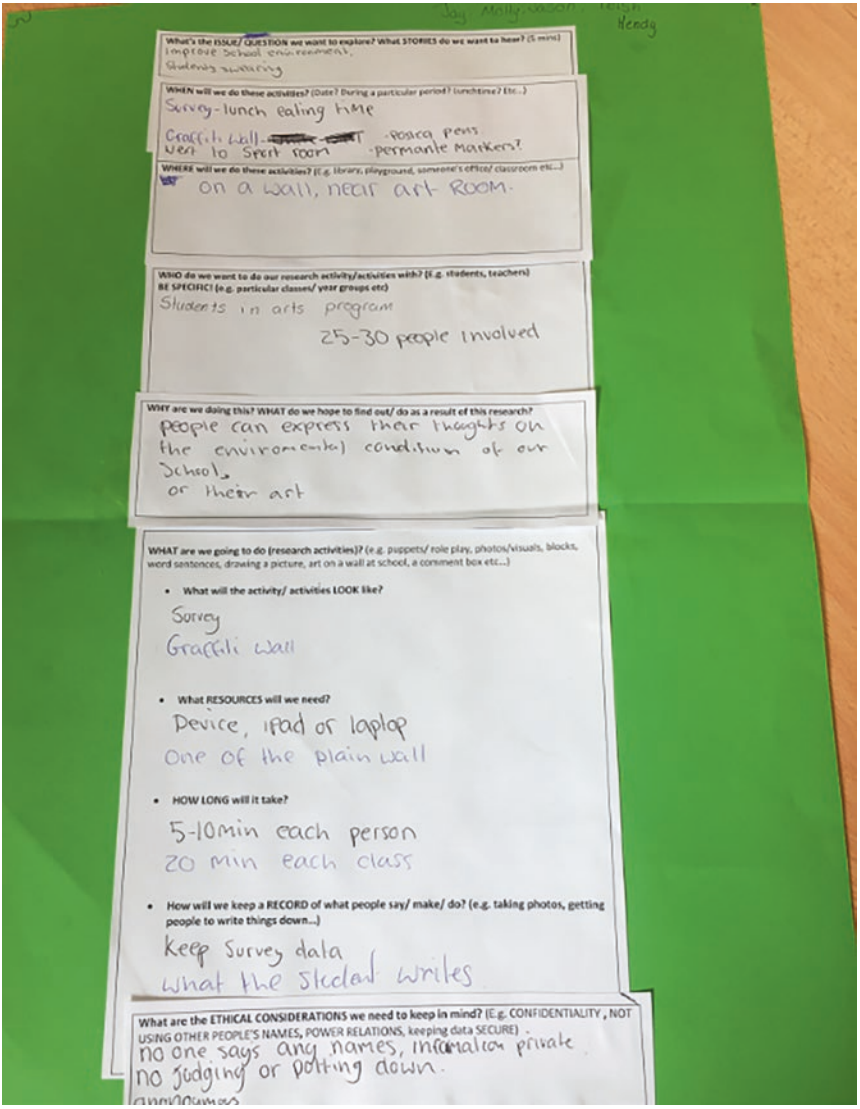

Fig. 4.4 One of the school group's research plans

to confidentiality, informed consent and data management, before students considered the ethical dimensions of their proposed research methods.

In many ways, this was the most school-like of the meetings—there were high literacy demands for students in writing down concrete plans, time pressures to make decisions about their research, adult exhortations for students to complete their data generation before the following meeting and a checklist at the end of the meeting. Later, we discuss some of the perplexities associated with these school-like demands.

Meeting 5: Analysing Data

Meeting 5 was planned to be devoted to the analysis of data, but the challenge was that the majority of school groups had only partially completed their research, and one school group had withdrawn from the YAC (see below). After debriefing and discussing the challenges facing different school groups (with some of the school groups still deciding on their research focus and methods, and others already having undertaken their research), plans were made for one of the academics or professional staff members to visit individual schools to support the students *in situ*. The meeting itself then turned to exploration of interesting ways in which research can be presented, working with the skills of individuals in the group, including the use of props, art, role play and video. Students also considered who they would like to invite to the final presentation. This shift of the meeting's focus from analysis to presentation may have reinforced a sense of the importance of the final presentation—with ambivalences explored further below. Between this meeting and the sixth meeting, one of the academic or professional staff members met with and worked with each of the school groups to support them in analysing their data.

Meeting 6: Planning the Research Presentation

At Meeting 6, students arrived with their research data/da(r)ta and a draft presentation. After a time where groups debriefed and shared their research experiences with each other, students ran through their presentations, as a

dress rehearsal for the formal presentation the following week. Students provided affirmative feedback to each other via written slips and verbal feedback after all the presentations. At this stage, there seemed to be an air of anticipation and excitement about the presentation. The collective YAC group also planned what activities should follow the group presentations, as ways to speak further with audience members.

Presenting Their Research

The final research presentation was conducted in a lecture theatre at Deakin University. The morning included a formal acknowledgement of Country, a brief address from Deakin University's Chief Operating Officer and a councillor from the City of Greater Geelong, the school groups' research presentations, breakout small groups of audience members with the school groups and a morning tea. The five presentations considered a range of topics, including micro-aggressions (public secondary school), bullying (Catholic primary), discrimination (public primary), inequitable access to sporting opportunities (Catholic primary) and 'inequality of the environment' (public primary school). One of the public secondary schools withdrew from the YAC before the final presentation, and their research (on students' perceptions of the school's academic streaming system) was not presented. Our second da(r)ta moment, discussed below, explores further some of the ambivalences associated with the imperative to present their research, while the third da(r)ta moment signals other potentialities simultaneously at work.

Three Da(r)ta Moments

Word Hack

Our first da(r)ta moment evokes some of the potentialities of arts-informed methods to prompt new ways of thinking about research methods among the students. We focus on one of the provocations from Meeting 3: *Word hacks.* This provocation was adapted from the 'Dada'

cut-up technique featured in the Manifesto of Tristan Tzara, co-creator of the avant-garde Dada Movement (c.1916–1924) (see Tzara, 1971/2007). Initially emerging in parts of Europe and New York, Dadaists felt compelled to respond to, critique and subvert the irrational logics and conditions of modernity which had risen up in and through the horrors and aftermath of World War I. Resisting the conventions and foundations of rational thought and the artistic style in and of their times, they experimented with a range of anti-art methods, tools, techniques and tactics to jolt and stir habitual ways of knowing.

Appropriating elements from Tzara's cut-up techniques, small bags of cut-up laminated strips were prepared for each group. These were shaken up by the students and randomly cast onto the surface of a table or floor. The words and phrases on the strips included those previously raised by the students in Meeting 2, as well as additional words hacked from poetry, rap and other texts alluding to inequality. Scissors, glue, markers (with the option to add their own additional words), Blutak and paper were also provided. As the strips lay scattered on various surfaces, dislocated from their initial contexts, students playfully undid, re-assembled, re-ordered and re-imagined these strips to make something new and unexpected. Students mined, combined and re-worked the strips, including the spaces in between words. Each variation was photographed and revisited as the students set out to reimagine alternative configurations of words and things (see Fig. 4.5). For example, some chose to leave the sequences of words and phrases randomly placed through chance. Others preferred to experiment with embodied processes of placing/replacing, manipulating, layering up, adding to with felt pen or extracting from the re/configurations. Others set out to curate sentences with phrases reminiscent of activist slogans. The tone of each statement varied—from declarations of difficulty (*Inequality between students causes anxiety and stress*), to statements of desire (*I want to hope and trust at school)*, to propositions for anticipated futures (*Someday difference will inspire change*).

These creative experiments with and beyond words were not intended to 'elicit' students' 'personal voices' and experiences (which can reinscribe deficit narratives). These hacked words were deliberately de-contextualised from their original contexts; they were not students' 'own' words (but rather, were hacked and borrowed) and were not (necessarily) their own

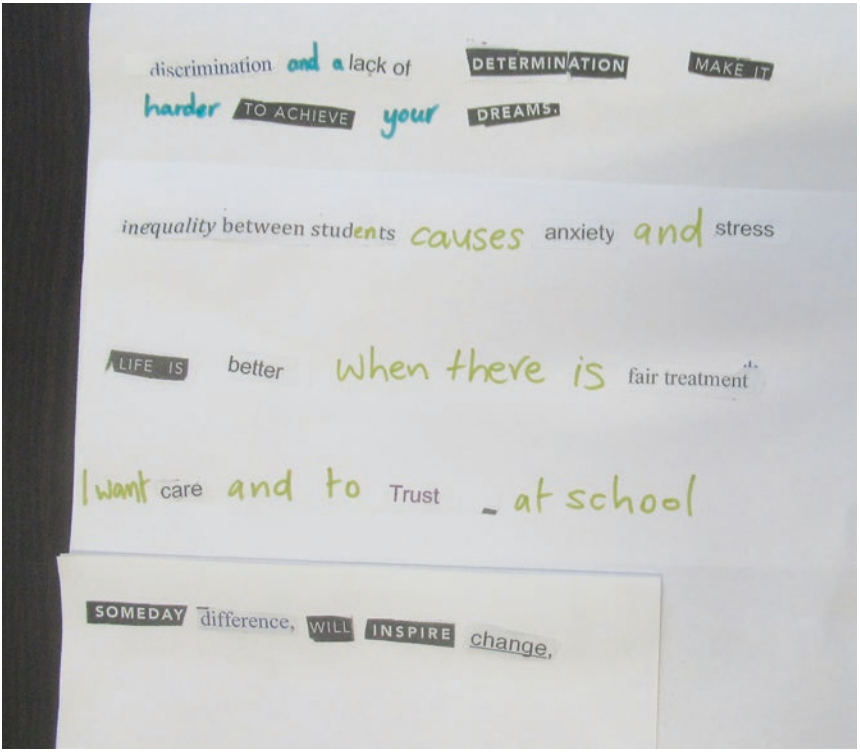

Fig. 4.5 Examples of word hack configurations

experiences—even if they may have gestured towards something collectively felt in the act of their re/configuring (cf. Mayes, 2016). The words were suggestive, but not sufficient; non-specific, but perhaps indicative of felt experiences. Groups shared their sentence with each other and they murmured in appreciation at each sentence's creativity and invention. We could argue, like Renold (2018), that these methods enabled what was 'felt corporeally' but 'too painful to talk about' to be expressed (p. 45), but it may well have also been the case that students were just playing with hacked words that did not necessarily resonate with their experiences. In contrast, the second set of da(r)ta emerged with the imperative for students to speak their research before others—for their words narrating their research experiences to be matched with their faces.

Absences

An unresolved tension throughout the process of the YAC was the institutional desire for a final presentation where students would share their research. While the final presentation was intended to 'empower' students and to enable their research to reach a wider audience (including local organisations, school principals, parents, city councillors and university staff) to 'make an impact', and while many students described feeling 'proud' and 'happy' to be part of this final presentation in the summative research focus group, there were ambivalences and unintended consequences of this presentation event. The second moment that we discuss is the absence of two of the students from one of the primary schools on the day of the final presentation, and the withdrawal and absence of one of the secondary school groups (four students) from the last meeting of the YAC and the final presentation. We draw attention to these material, embodied absences rather than just who and what was present (and what was presented) deliberately in order to explore these ambivalences. While such absences are typically not attended to in summative accounts of arts-informed and students-as-researcher work, we engage these absences for their productive potentiality, as da(r)ta.

The two primary school students who were absent on the day of the presentation had been seemingly engaged at all previous meetings—one of these students had folded a series of paper-manipulation games ('chatterboxes') for audience engagement during the presentation; the other student had been closely involved in creating visual representations of their school group's initial survey results. Their support teacher speculated about why they did not attend on the final day: according to this teacher, the first of the students

> *has got a bit of anxiety; and he's not too keen about getting up and talking in front of people. And I think that's probably why he didn't come today [for the YAC presentations], despite the fact that he did well last week in the practice run.* (Teacher, public primary school)

According to the same teacher, the second absent student had called in 'sick' that morning without further explanation. The secondary school

group who withdrew from the YAC had similarly seemed highly engaged in earlier YAC meetings, with fervent identification of the issue of inequitable material opportunities for the academic-streamed classes in comparison to other 'mixed-ability' classes at their school (e.g. access to lockers only for the academic-streamed classes). These students had already designed and enacted a series of video interviews with students across year levels. Their support adult spoke about how the workload became re-distributed as the YAC moved towards the final presentation, leading to interpersonal tensions:

> *[The] last meeting we attended – one of the … students got really upset in the meeting because everything was getting put on her, and being able to push the others to actually get engaged and do the right thing … If we were going to continue, she would be the one who would have to present; and she would be the one because the others just were not – and to get two of them to that last meeting that we attended – they fought me all the way to the car. But not for any particular reason; not because they hated the group, by any means; they just weren't engaging at the time.* (Support adult, public secondary school)

While we have included the spoken speculations of their teachers explaining their absences and acknowledge that we did not have the opportunity to ask these students themselves about their absences, here we seek to sit in these absences and listen to their material force (cf. Mazzei, 2007). If we were to gloss over these absences, we might 'reduce, confine, or obliterate perplexity in the name of successful participation'; to not acknowledge the perplexity and unknowability of these absences 'washes out the ability of different collectives to judge the world [and the experience of students-as-researchers work] differently' (Kelty, 2019, p. 25). We resist interpreting why each of these students did not 'show up' on the presentation day—each may have different reasons and lived circumstances; the reader might have their own ideas or speculations. Kelty (2019) posits some possible reasons for non-participation: a person may be 'giving voice by not speaking up' or enacting 'refusal, giving voice by not answering'; it may be a case of 'simple apathy', or 'malingering' (p. 33), or actual material and embodied circumstances that have nothing to do with previous enjoyment of participation. Perhaps these students

felt the imperative to participate as invasive and exposing and refused to be subjected to the gaze of others (Tuck & Yang, 2014). Perhaps these students experienced the YAC, particularly the drive towards a research 'product', as school-like and subjectificating, compelling students to 'giv[e] an account of [themselves]' (Butler, 2005), despite the YAC's efforts to exceed school-like methods. Notwithstanding their embodied reasons and circumstances, these absences as da(r)ta disclose the power relations at work in narrating the 'experience' of participation after the event; there is always already 'soft part of the social fossil' of what is experienced across bodies in space and time that has 'decayed or disappeared' (Kelty, 2019, p. 9)—and that may not even be consciously articulable.

Beeswax

The final da(r)ta that we share is a series of beeswax wraps created by a student (Mary) and her mother, gifted as 'lucky seat' prizes during the final presentation. These beeswax wraps were part of the research processes and products of one of the public primary schools. One of the students from this school (Joseph) described, in a focus group, how they decided on their topic:

> *We decided to do 'inequality of the environment'; because one of [the YAC members, Tracey] was recently in, like, an art play/installation kind of thing about the environment and it was kind of fresh in our minds.* (Joseph, student focus group, public primary school)

This group of students initially did brief interviews with students in the corridor, asking 'How can we help save the environment?' and 'What needs to change?' They wrote students' answers on a clipboard, and then typed up their verbal responses to become visual Wordle depictions in the shape of a turtle (see Fig. 4.6) and a flower.

Seeking to act on these student responses, the YAC members designed and enacted multiple research activities and actions, with arts-informed methods working as both process and product of their research, drawing on their respective interests and skills:

Fig. 4.6 Wordle created by one of the public primary school YAC groups to represent student responses to the question: 'How can we help save the environment?'

> *[Tom] is more of the organised one and note-taker; making sure things get done. And [Joseph] is a more public speaker. And then [Tracey] kind of just backed everyone else up … Someone had mentioned 'beeswax wrap', and [Mary] was, like, 'Oh, can I try and make some?' … [Mary] had a laptop there and she was Googling it [beeswax wrap] and she's, like, 'That's so cool. I want to make it' … They came up with four ideas altogether and each one of them did the idea.* (Support teacher, public primary school)

The research actions taken by the students included the initial interviews and Wordles; designing and painting a mural with other students (drawing on the skills and interests of students beyond the YAC); advocating and then organising to have Earth Hour at their school; and creating, teaching and sharing with other students how to make beeswax wraps as an alternative to packaging. The support teacher described how the students had to work out the costs and sources for the arts materials (for the wraps: fabric, an iron, baking paper, beeswax). Mary then worked on the wraps, at first in the support teacher's office, with the teacher and Mary making one together, having printed out the instructions (see Fig. 4.7):

Fig. 4.7 Beeswax wrap creation (a slide from the school group's final PowerPoint presentation)

> *The beeswax wrap was a huge hit [laughs] … People [at school] were, like, 'Whoa' because they watched [Mary], like, through all the stages; like, grading the wax. Her teachers all made the effort to come in and see what she was doing.* (Support teacher, public primary school)

Mary then took the instruction sheet and materials home and, according to the teacher, 'Her and her mum made some at home in their own time' (Support teacher, public primary school). These wraps generated a mobility to the YAC students' research—their re/creative energy spanned school and home, enfolding Mary's mother into the research creation process as a co-constructor.

These wraps were shared at a school assembly, with instructions, and a few gifted to students as lucky seat prizes. Later, during the final YAC presentation, a further two beeswax wraps were gifted to unsuspecting audience members. In the midst of their presentation, describing their research actions, Mary invited the audience to look under their seat for a paper gold star stuck there. The YAC members then gave these two 'lucky seat' audience members a beeswax wrap made by Mary. There was a buzz in the room in these moments of giving and receiving and afterwards. These wraps seemed to carry and create potent affects (cf. Renold, 2018);

created with bees, human hands (student, teacher, parent), baking paper, fabric, iron; travelling beyond the school to the home and then to the formal university 'presentation', and finally to the recipients' homes.

We (the authors) are reminded of artist Tim Purves' (2014) discussion of 'unexpected' gifts where the giver subverts established expectations, expecting nothing in return (p. 49). We do not think that Mary or the other students were necessarily deliberately intending to subvert the final presentation's mode of students 'performing' for adults—a mode possibly evaded by the absent students. Rather than giving an account of herself to an audience, Mary gave material products that she created with others—wraps that conceal and that preserve food. The wraps drew attention away from Mary's lived experiences and opinions (that could be too revealing and subjectivating to share in this public forum); instead, the audience's attention was focused on the aesthetic attractiveness and practical utility of what she had created. We are reminded of the children's phrase: *Mind your own beeswax.* The wraps created distance from the personal and the individual, but connections formed between individuals through the performed collective gifting (via the lucky seat prize) at the final presentation (cf. Renold & Ringrose, 2019). The space between the student researchers and the adults who received these wraps as gifts shrunk as the wraps passed between hands; there was an 'extra-personal, transindividual vitality' (Renold & Ringrose, 2019, para. 36) in their transfer through hands; they blurred the lines of with whom and where 'participation' occurs. They evaded the subjectivating gaze (that, perhaps, the students in the second set of da(r)ta sought to escape), but also created new connections that crossed spatial and embodied boundaries.

Perplexities and Potentialities of Arts-Informed Students-as-Researchers Work

In this chapter, we have given an account of some of the challenges and possibilities of working with arts-informed methods in students-as-researchers work. Inspired by feminist activist materialisms, we have attempted to think 'the social with the material' (Page, 2018, p. 82) in

making sense of the default reliance on verbal and linguistic methods even in research generated by students. Our aim, as we worked with the student researchers and a range of materials, was to interrupt the perpetuation of conventional modes of inquiry so often associated with researching *on* young people. Yet, even when explicitly seeking to work *with* students, arts, affect and matter, it proved difficult to shift established linguistic, verbal and summative forms of thinking about and enacting research. These challenges co-extend with contemporary challenges for schools—for example, the prioritising of linguistic and verbal modes of knowing, escalating performative demands on teachers and students, and the imperative to showcase the products and outcomes of curricular and extra-curricular work.

Notwithstanding these challenges, there were moments of potential amidst, in and through these perplexities—where there was a transition between states (*affectus*) that could be sensed. In this chapter, we have marked these moments of transition as they sedimented around two particular moments where da(r)ta was produced, and one moment where it was absent—clusters of words hacked and stuck onto paper, beeswax wraps crafted and gifted, and absences of human bodies and their unspoken words. In these particular clusters of da(r)ta, feelings sediment, gesturing to other possibilities, even as much escapes and exceeds the creative artefacts and later discursive accounts. We argue for the ethical imperative of attending to the material residue of students-as-researchers work—for honouring the research work that students create, as well as for attending to what cannot be articulated. We have sought to provoke reflection—for student researchers and adult supporters seeking to enact students-as-researchers work—on the compulsion for students to 'giv[e] an account of [themselves]' (Butler, 2005), and particularly the compulsion for students to give accounts of the experience of becoming researchers. Working with the productive possibilities of the beeswax wraps, we have gestured towards the possibilities for rethinking research to escape the subjectivating gaze and to disrupt deficit accounts. Researchers who seek to support students to co-compose their own research might slow down and seek to listen to what these da(r)ta might tell us about the possible futures of arts-informed students-as-researchers work.

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5

Inner-City Youth 'Building Their Own Foundation': From Art Appreciation to Enterprise

Sarah Reddington and Christine McLean

Introduction

In recognition of entrepreneurship as a potential mechanism to enhance youth viability and active membership in their communities, this chapter explores the experiences of underserved youth who participated in an arts-based entrepreneurship programme located in a low-economic region of Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.[1] The central focus of our research in exploring the young people's experiences with an art-based entrepreneurship programme was to understand better their unique perspectives having experienced a lifetime of having little power over the ways they live, learn and explore their art. Explicitly, we investigated the experiences of fifteen underserved youths with a ten-week art-based entrepreneurship programme, called ARTpreneur. ARTpreneur, run by the Halifax

[1] 'Underserved' is defined as facing systemic barriers that result in decreased access to services and supports.

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non-profit organisation Youth Art Connection, provides experiential arts education to empower young people facing economic and social barriers as a means to build skills, confidence, and knowledge related to their creative art practice (Youth Art Connection, 2020). The ARTpreneur programme describes itself as a programme that meets young people 'where they're at' to help them grow arts-based businesses and social impact projects (Youth Art Connection, 2020). In this study, the youth who attended YouthArt in the Fall 2017 were invited to critically reflect on their time and participate directly in the analysis of their own arts-based experiences. The most direct outcome from this research was to determine 'what comes next' in relation to extending arts-based entrepreneurial youth experiences and evaluating the effectiveness of these programmes in relation to enhancing their active membership within their communities. In this way, the youth will have a reason to believe that their involvement will make a difference (Delgado, 2004). As McGrath (2001) suggests, it is important to understand better 'the nature and meaning of young people's experiences at critical junctures in their lives' and the 'impact on young people's capacity to draw on "resources"' (p. 482). We argue across this chapter that contemporary underserved youth must be understood within the context of the material and social conditions that produce barriers and limit their capacities to contribute meaningfully to their communities as viable art entrepreneurs. What must be challenged are the oppressive conditions that reduce their capacities to contribute to their local community as young artists. In this chapter, we aim to highlight the young people's immense desires to have an authentic existence within their local arts industry and illuminate the struggles they encounter that make the process at moments feel insurmountable.

This type of inquiry supports learning about how arts-based community programmes can help underserved youth who face several barriers when it comes to starting companies and how to gain access to skill training to succeed in our increasingly competitive global economy. For instance, outmigration is a significant factor that limits their viability to stay and succeed in their local communities and it is further compounded by their minimal access to resources, especially when having to face adverse economic conditions often precipitated by the removal of local

services and the collapse of employment opportunities within their local communities (Barry, 2011; Corbett, 2006; Crockett & Silbereisen, 2000; Halseth & Ryser, 2006; Marshall, 2001; Ryser et al., 2013). Youth similarly experience diminished access to post-secondary education in rural sectors and young people who do choose to migrate to larger city centres face poverty, stress (Couldry, 2010; Mitura & Bollman, 2003), work dissatisfaction (Looker & Naylor, 2009; McGrath, 2001), and social marginalisation (McGrath, 2001; Trell et al., 2012; Valentine et al., 2008). Having attended large government bureaucratic public school systems where academic and extra-curricular programming are governed by cultures of consumption and gross commodity imagery, youth receive the message that to be successful they must locate power, become commodified and climb the corporate ladder to achieve fulfilment (Giroux, 2011). As a result, the identities of young people are assigned value based on their capacities to attend post-secondary education or training and earn six figures (Giroux, 1996). By placing the marginalisation of late capitalism at the centre of this problem, we argue that critical pedagogy has the potential to address the economic, cultural, social, and political barriers that place limits on the participation of youth in their respective communities and in larger global economies. It is also imperative that institutions, local businesses, non-profit organisations, government, and private sectors come together and support youth by offering them access to creative skill training and mentorship to succeed.

In this chapter, we utilise Paulo Freire's (1970) work in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* as his theories suggest the relevance of not just participating in the arts, but the need to pose questions, to engage in dialogue and active praxis. That is, Freirean theory is built on a relational dialectical approach with a praxical view of applying knowledge as a means of becoming and liberation. Here, we believe Freirean theory is valuable as it can help us understand better the transformative nature of the young people's experiences with ARTpreneur and open up a space to illuminate the collaborative community actions of youth. Part of our work is to create a renewed way of thinking about underserved inner-city youth through the lens of Paulo Freire's (1970) work in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. By applying aspects of Freire's critical pedagogy, we suggest that we can support and advance youth enterprise and, in the process, locate new ways to value

youth identity and experience. We, therefore, use Freire's work across this chapter as a catalyst to highlight how oppression disempowers the youth in significant ways. For Freire, the oppressed conditions within societies that restrict individuals from their active participation in the world require attention. Importantly, we must interrogate the cultural, economic, social and political conditions of late capitalism that situate young people as docile societal participants. According to Freire, to be an engaged citizen is to be an active subject capable of transforming the world, yet communities and schools frequently silence youth voices and ignore their creative capacities to generate change.

From the onset of this research, we prioritise youth voices as they have been historically subjected to disparaging discourses, such as 'youth at risk', and adolescents as 'a problem to be solved', that become entrenched in child and youth policy documents (Giroux, 1996). This is largely accomplished by listening to the young people's unique perspectives. To do this, we follow Freire's (1970) concepts, namely we invite youth to enter into dialogue and critical self-reflection as a means to destabilise oppressive social conditions and become active agents in their own lives. It should be noted upfront that we recognise that critical pedagogy in isolation cannot transform marginalised social conditions for young people, but it does have the capacity to ignite them in developing a critical consciousness for systematic change (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1996, 2011; hooks, 2009; McLaren, 2015). In this capacity, we suggest that by inviting underserved youth into dialogue we start the process of opening their minds to locating more liberating arts-based community opportunities. Increasingly, we find Freire's (1970) notion of entering into dialogue and problem-posing, and his commitment to liberating the body from oppression, a particularly useful theoretical framework to analyse the young people's actualisations in relation to agency, art and art enterprise.

Theoretical Framework

Much of the original theory behind Freire's (1970) work in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is used in this chapter as a form of analysis to problematise the objectification of young people. We assert that Freire's critical

pedagogy, with its central theme of entering into dialogue, can provide the basis for a renewed critical stance for the ARTpreneur participants. According to Freire and Macedo (1995):

> [D]ialogue is a way of knowing and should never be viewed as a mere tactic to involve students in a particular task. We have to make this point very clear. I engage in dialogue not necessarily because I like the other person. I engage in dialogue because I recognize the social and not merely the individualistic character of the process of knowing. In this sense, dialogue presents itself as an indispensable component of the process of both learning and knowing. (p. 379)

Here, by applying Freire's theory of dialogue, we support an empowering form of inquiry that encourages youth to problematise issues surrounding power and invites them to critically self-reflect on their art and art enterprise. Allowing the oppressed to enter into dialogue and develop critical self-consciousness on their positions in the world is an essential juncture for Freire as he indicates that individuals must be able to acquire knowledge from their lived experiences and use this to create change. 'Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other' (Freire, 1970, p. 53). This conscious act of problem-posing is not a static entity, but rather an emergent process filled with the capacity for transformation. 'The role of the problem-posing educator is to create; together with the students, the conditions under which knowledge at the level of the *doxa* is superseded by true knowledge, at the level of the *logos*' (Freire, 1970, p. 84). This contrasts with what Freire calls the 'banking concept of education' whereby young people have historically sat as docile subjects while professionals bestow knowledge upon them.

To counter the banking model, Freire favours young people to become co-constructors of knowledge and active investigators of their own lives. A critical component of Freire's dialogical and problem-posing theory is to attend to the cyclical nature between action, reflection and dialogue that leads to what he calls *praxis*. Thus, 'problem-posing education bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality,

thereby responding to the vocation of persons as beings who are authentic only when engaged in inquiry and creative transformation' (Freire, 1970, p. 81). Across our conversations with young people, we encourage them to engage in liberating praxis, to become critical investigators and not static participants. Here, the process of gathering in focus groups and discussing their experiences of participating in the ten-week ARTpreneur programme becomes a potential site for transformation through dialogue and praxis.

Methodology

In this study, we investigate the experiences of fifteen underserved youths with a ten-week art-based entrepreneurship programme, called ARTpreneur. To do this, we conducted focus groups with ten youth, ages 16–25, who registered in the Fall 2017 ARTpreneur programme held in North Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. During the focus groups, participants were invited to talk about their relationship to community and the connections they felt when participating in the programme. We intentionally chose the inner-city sector of North Halifax to conduct this research as youth residing in this area experience one of the highest rates of poverty in our province at more than 30% (Statistics Canada, 2016). As well, a recent community-driven data programme reports that only 1.8% of Halifax residents are employed in the cultural and art industries, down 11.1% since 2010, and down 39.8% since 2000 (Community Foundation of Nova Scotia, 2012). In addition, youth aged 15–26 years in this low-income urban sector who were recently interviewed by the Government of Nova Scotia—Communities, Culture and Heritage Department—indicated they lacked feelings of engagement in their community in relation to identity and belonging, youth engagement, arts and culture and access to employment, with an overall C+ rating (Community Foundation of Nova Scotia, 2012). Given these statistics, there is a need to increase the number of creative opportunities for youth in low-economic sectors and to strengthen economic opportunities for young people (Frymer, 2005; Stockdale, 2006).

The ARTpreneur programme serves this purpose by providing underserved youth in low-economic neighbourhoods with the entrepreneurial skills to turn their art passion into a business (Youth Art Connection, 2020). In essence, participants in the programme transform from learners to creators and curators of their art. Specifically, the ten-week ARTpreneur programme involves weekly self-reflective practice that is driven by participant dialogue and narrative accounts of their experiences. In addition, local art mentors from Nova Scotian communities come to the ARTpreneur sessions each week to share their stories creating a unique space for the underserved youth to learn about the art industry. This follows Freire's (1970) notion of dialogue, critical reflection, and praxis. By reflecting with mentors, the participants are able to share their passion for art and learn about ways to enhance their art product within their local sector.

The themes covered in ARTpreneur include learning modules on participants' connections to community, their art craft, and ways to develop skills to turn their art form into enterprise. In addition, the ARTpreneur programme provides a space for underserved youth to receive mentorship. The youth across this chapter identify the significant struggles they experience in their communities, namely they identify early on that they have experienced mental health issues, unemployment, abuse, homelessness, and/or time in prison. In recognition of the youths' significant barriers, we attempted to create a welcoming space where they could share their perspectives openly through dialogue and try to make sense of the structural barriers they encounter within their communities. At the same time, we wanted to give these young people a chance to critically reflect on their art-based practice, to problem-pose and co-create spaces of legitimacy where their art, opinions, knowledge(s), and experience were validated and recognised as authentic and valuable.

Our research involved audiotaped conversations and three semi-structured focus groups with fifteen ARTpreneur participants. The semi-structured focus groups occurred at the onset of ARTpreneur (Week 1), in the middle (Week 5) and at the end of the programme (Week 10). It should be noted that some young people were more vocal about their experiences than others during the focus groups. In following a philosophy of supporting youth agency and voice, we respected any silences and

focused on creating a space where youth had full autonomy. In this chapter, we share the experiences of seven of the fifteen participants. Our rationale for focusing on seven participants follows Freire's notion of entering into deep dialogue and critical self-reflection. The seven participants that we follow in this chapter were between the ages of 19 and 24 years at the time and shared a love for music and writing.

Prior to delving into their art-based practice, the young people explained to us their current position in relation to community. Three participants identified as working part-time in their local community while attending college or university, three participants were unemployed, and one participant was a full-time university student. The participants attending college stated that they found it difficult to balance work and school, and as a result, there was little time left for music. Two participants indicated they were experiencing housing insecurity and spent time couch surfing at friends' apartments. One participant's homelessness came about after incarceration in Federal prison, and as a result, she was unable to secure employment. Another participant explained she was a single parent, unemployed and had significant mental health issues. She echoed the previous participant's struggles to find work, manage her mental health issues, and care for her baby. These marginalised conditions resulted her giving her baby to her grandparents for full-time care with visitation. Table 5.1 summarises the participant demographics as well as the barriers the participants experience when trying to turn their art into enterprise within their local community. Pseudonyms are used to safeguard their identities.

One emerging theme in relation to barriers was the limited access to music venues to play and share their art craft. In fact, six participants stated they attempted to play at local music venues, such as Open Mic nights at bars, but found access to these venues a significant struggle. In particular, the participants noted the music scene in Halifax was difficult to 'break into' and often reserved for more established, older artists.

In advance of sharing the data, it is important to state that the Director of Youth Art Connection invites underserved youth who attend the ARTpreneur programme to be constructors of their own knowledge and language, rather than being passive recipients of curriculum content. This philosophy, driven by the Youth Art Connection (2020), is rooted in

Table 5.1 Participants

Participant	Employment/status	Age (yrs)	Self-identified barriers
Ali	College (part-time) Job in retail	22	Student loans Access to music venues to play Mental health issues
Jacob	University (full time)	22	Student loans Mental health issues Access to music venues to play
Mac	University (part-time) Job as a DJ	23	Student loans Access music venues to play
Maddie	College (part-time) Job in restaurant industry (waiter)	22	Student loans Mental health issues Access to music venues to play
Macy	Unemployed	23	Access to music venues to play Financial insecurity
Anna	Unemployed	24	Young single parent Housing insecurity Mental health issues Financial insecurity
Tess	Unemployed	19	Criminal record Financial insecurity Homelessness Unable to afford an education

Freire's pedagogy and generates a nurturing ethos of community engagement. Further, ARTpreneur encourages its participants to think beyond the limitations of their socio-economic community and see the possibilities of transforming their art into enterprise. The first excerpt of data addresses the youth's experiences with vulnerability and being subject to mental health issues, objectification, and feelings of inadequacy.

Powerlessness and Social Division

Tess: *I struggled so much being in care and the foster system. I have really bad anxiety and panic attacks. I am finally on medication and it's better. I am now just trying to get bursaries because I need more education, but I can't afford it. That's part of my whole thing when*

I got out of prison, I jumped right into university, but I didn't know what the hell I was doing and so I left. I just need like the grammar type stuff … I have a criminal record. I can't really work at any place I want to. I gotta get a job. And as far as job, I'm screwed regardless until 2025. I can't do anything besides waitressing. Hopefully, in my next job they don't run my name cause last time I got a job, they ran paperwork and then fired me!

Anna: *I found out I was six months pregnant while in the hospital with a kidney infection that caused me to code [respiratory arrest], so I almost lost my life and then the father of the child left so I dealt with all that. I am trying to compartmentalise flashbacks and stuff and the symptoms of the PTSD. I suffer from complex PTSD from multiple abusive experiences growing up and in my past. Just a lot of shit and I found music is something I've always found solace in. I always kind of joke around that English isn't even my first language even if it is, music is my first language.*

Jacob: *From the age of eighteen to twenty-one I went through severe depression and anxiety. I had ADHD and executive functioning disorder so actually regulating emotions is extremely difficult. I've always had this feeling of being different, but also felt my emotions were much stronger than everyone else's. I have elements of guilt and redemption and longing for spiritual principles of non-dwelling and like human consciousness and reconnecting with nature. My music when I listen to it, it heals me.*

Ali: *I have a lot of really traumatic experiences and struggles with a lot of things. Music has helped me come out of really dark holes that I've been in. Music has really helped me recover a part of myself and kind of heal from bad experiences.*

Anna: *Yeah, I'm faking that I'm a confident person. I can be a confident person. I just have things that stop me from being that. I've written affirmations to myself, and I have a little speech that I wrote to myself it's just like do you remember all the shit you went through, and what it took you to get out of that. I tell myself I am resourceful, I am dedicated, I'm passionate, and anytime I think of a word like that I write it on my mirror. So, every morning when I look in the mirror, I read that and I read it out loud and I'm like, yeah, you fucking rock!*

Freire's (1970) understanding of marginalisation as objectification and dehumanisation emerges in this data as these young people identify significant struggles, namely abuse, incarceration, foster care, childhood trauma, and mental health issues. These feelings of powerlessness and social division are prominent in their initial stories, as evident when Tess speaks of the challenges after being incarcerated and seeing the inequities that exist for her when trying to find employment, 'I have a criminal record, I can't really work at any place I want to'. Others address barriers in relation to childhood trauma and abuse that has created mental health issues and impacted their confidence as young people. Freire (1970) speaks to the relevance of consciously reflecting on the 'here and now' as a point of initial departure: 'Only by starting from this situation—which determines their perception of it—can they begin to move. To do this authentically they must perceive their state not as fated and unalterable, but merely as limiting-and therefore challenging' (Freire, 1970, p. 73). Here, the collective discontent makes us acutely aware of the disparaging social conditions that leave these young people feeling vulnerable and powerless, as seen when Anna states, 'I'm faking that I'm a confident person' or Ali who states that she has had 'really traumatic experiences and struggles'. However, Freire (1970) also believed that power structures could be challenged by offering critical counter-narratives against the dominant pedagogy.

We get glimpses of this in the above set of data. Explicitly, we witness Anna desiring change and wanting to legitimise her future trajectory by using a daily affirmation, 'I tell myself I am resourceful, I am dedicated, I'm passionate'. Freire also reminds us that one's history is never predetermined and that there is always a possibility for people to collectively change the world. We witness Jacob drawing on this notion when he eloquently identifies that he longs for 'spiritual principles of non-dwelling and human consciousness and reconnecting with nature'. Tess equally expresses a desire to change her life path by pursuing an education and we also see Ali signal that she uses music to help her 'come out of really dark holes'. In this capacity, from the onset of our conversations, these young people disrupt the dominant discourse of youth powerlessness, isolation, and vulnerability. In fact, we see them taking a critical contemporary understanding of their status in the world and, in the process, begin to

challenge their oppressed histories. In this next excerpt of data, we continue to follow the participants' dialogue as they begin to gain increased critical consciousness.

Building Dialogue

Jacob: *I think as an artist you really need time and if you work full time and you go to school, you're exhausted. Most of us are just trying to make those basic needs met, like rent and food.*

Tess: *I have nobody else besides the program. I don't even have a peaceful place right now at home to write or whatever. This place has made me feel a lot more uplifting about myself. Everybody sharing their insecurities and everything. I have met lots of people and they're so open and confident it seems, but I've been noticing since being here that they're really not confident and they do have anxiety like everyone else.*

Jacob: *Yeah, and I think that having more programs like this that provide the skills and connections can be really useful. I know that even from just being in the open mic scene and talking to people that when youth launch music at venues they're usually pretty small crowds. There's no network and I don't know if the audiences are loyal to artists anymore. If you're an artist it's almost impossible, it's really challenging and maybe part of it comes from just like the nature of art. It can be really hard to get the repetition right as a young artist into an audience.*

Anna: *I find in the North End there are a lot of musicians, but we have a long trek to get anywhere to play our music. It's full of musicians because it's a relatively affordable place to live, and considerably centralised while keeping us away from all the alcohol to some extent. But, at the same time it's hard at our age because the music community is a little elitist.*

Freire's work has enormous value in highlighting the deep roots of oppression that youth can experience in their communities as he reminds

us to look at core social conditions that have the potential to place limitations on young people's capacities to thrive. Moreover, Giroux (2011) reminds us that '[t]oo many youth are now rendered invisible and disposable in a world' (p. 93); thus, this 'culture of disposability' (p. 91) is a harsh and dehumanising reality. This is evidenced when Anna identifies her struggles with the local music industry, 'it's hard at our age because the music community is a little elitist'. Jacob further acknowledges his marginalised social conditions when stating, '[m]ost of us are just trying to make those basic needs met, like rent and food'. Tess also signals, 'I don't even have a peaceful place right now at home to write'. Here, by entering into dialogue with one another, the youth begin to confront power structures and locate new ways to understand their current positions in the world. Through the art of dialogue and critical self-reflection, these youths are learning to question dominant ideologies and social practices related to authority, class, power, and equity. hooks (2009) calls this 'coming to voice' where young people, through collective participation, use confessional narratives to constructively disrupt institutional powers that have limited their capacities to act (p. 139). This is a critical juncture as, historically, youth do not feel free or comfortable 'coming to voice' and challenging the social order (hooks, 2009). As Freire (1970) eloquently states, '[p]eople teach each other, mediated by the world' (pp. 79–80) as evident when the youth dive into further dialogue and discuss with each other the values that drive their art forms.

Maddie: *I use my music as therapy. The whole idea of my EP is basically revealing my true feelings about people and being honest about how they've affected my life. It helps because I find when I'm not doing anything my brain just dwells on all the things that are making me sad and there's a lot of changes that have happened in my life recently that are really intense, so this helps to distract myself.*

Tess: *Well, my book is about going to prison. And you know, it's Federal prison. Federal prison. So, I just want to get this frickin' book written. I've been writing this, really writing it since I was nineteen but dilly dallying since I was fourteen when I was back in the homes [foster care] and stuff … I would love to take my book*

and go a route of advocacy, but I have a criminal record and I won't be able to get that cleared until 2025 cause of the new laws so that prevents me to do a lot of things. I look sweet and innocent, but it's a pretty big deal and it's been a mistake I made when I was eighteen and I'm twenty-four now and it's ruining my life.

Ali: *I try to write songs that are pretty cathartic. A lot of times I'll just be walking down the street and I'll just think of a lyric, and I think of a line that could become something and I immediately write it down. And sometimes I'll start playing with it in my head. I'll actually have multiple songs and bits of multiple songs and I'll just smush it all together and make it work.*

Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy emphasises active praxis and draws on lived experiences to empower change. 'Authentic thinking, thinking that is concerned about *reality,* does not take place in ivory tower isolation, but only in communication' (Freire, 1970, p. 58, emphasis in original). Here, we witness these youths' agentic potential when discussing various avenues for their art. For example, Maddie articulates how she uses her 'music as therapy' as a site of potential transformation. Tess equally signals self-determination when she says, 'I would love to take my book and go a route of advocacy, but I have a criminal record and I won't be able to get that cleared until 2025 cause of the new laws so that prevents me to do a lot of things … it's been a mistake I made when I was eighteen and … it's ruining my life'. Despite Tess's significant struggles, she demonstrates a desire to transform and take a route of advocacy with her writing. McLaren (2015) identifies how critical pedagogy does not lull in the 'realization of endpoints nor does it wallow in cautious lethargy' (p. 320). On the contrary, it is designed to engage in a culture of questioning and 'gesture in the direction of hope' (p. 320). This speaks to the role of critical pedagogy when working with underserved youth as it can serve as a vital mechanism to imagine new life trajectories and destabilise oppressive dominant ideologies. As educators, we must re-orient our traditional pedagogical approaches and allow young people to be active decision makers of their own lives. 'The leaders must believe in the potentialities of the people, whom they cannot treat as mere objects of their own action; they must believe that the people are capable of participating

in the pursuit of liberation' (Freire, 1970, p. 169). The next excerpt of data demonstrates what can emerge when we give youth opportunity to stake a claim in the world:

Jacob: *Like they got us [ARTpreneur mentors] to connect and go over again our core values. I've been building this dream in my head of who I want to be, working on myself and now stepping into this place with real people, it feels almost like a realisation. I think, before ARTpreneurs, I was developing skills within myself, my habits, my artistic talents, my ability to approach and to build up confidence and get over a lot of anxieties and neurosis that I was dealing with. Now it's nice to meet other artists who are also sort of in the same field, and I've kind of made some friends through it. I'm looking to continue to grow my skills, like talking to people and meeting other artists is something I want to continue to do.*

Macy: *We're definitely always experimenting and expressing our ways. Finding ways to relate to each other. But our life experiences drive us, you gotta stay strong and true to yourself and the journey. Loving yourself always, but also taking into account everybody's going through some shit, for sure.*

Tess: *Yeah, stay true to yourself, be yourself.*

Maddie: *Being here is helping me think more clearly about my path and direction instead of having these highs of success and these lows like I'm never going to make it. I've been feeling a lot more optimistic about my project. I've been feeling more driven and motivated.*

Macy: *I agree. Meeting all these young talented people who are inspired, just like keeps ya pushin'—it's fire … It's definitely opened our minds and our hearts for sure to different avenues that we probably would not have thought of if not showing up here to be honest. It has helped me to think about how I can profit and get people to listen to it [our music] and kind of push it more.*

The young entrepreneurs begin to exhibit confidence in their crafts and more purposefully acknowledge their own talents as valuable

resources. This is evidenced when Jacob explains, 'I've been building this dream in my head of who I want to be, working on myself and now stepping into this place with real people, it feels almost like a realisation'. In the process, they also find beacons of enterprise and new supportive relationships. 'Meeting all these young talented people who are inspired, just like keeps ya pushin'—it's fire' (Macy). We also get emerging glimpses of liberating praxis as seen when Maddie shares, 'I've been feeling a lot more optimistic about my project. I've been feeling more driven and motivated'. Freire (1970) explains that '[l]iberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it' (p. 79). In this context, we see the immense value in community art-based organisations, like ARTpreneur, as a purposeful outlet for underserved youth to gain life perspectives and see the value in their art practices.

Mac: *Ultimately, this seems like a direction to go in if you wanna make music that you can put out digitally and it doesn't sound like crap. Because nobody wants to listen to stuff that sounds like crap. I've had my fun writing songs and playing them for friends at campfires or whatever but now it's like, okay, I want to get this to sound good in your car, sound good on your phone, sound good everywhere. So, I'm getting really technical with it.*

Macy: *Yeah, exactly what he's saying, we wanna, you know, promote good feels, you know? Good vibes because music is therapeutic you know? And everybody wants a releasing point, something to sit down and basically meditate to, so that's what we are kind of working on. Our vibe of, you know, express the outers. So yeah, each day is a new day for us for the music scene, but you know always working towards mastering each thing that we put into our hands pretty much. We can build our own foundation and we can do the things that you said that you want done and support those who are probably feeling the same.*

Anna: *Just being an artist is not the only way to make money off of it, you're a talented singer, you could get into jingle writing, go around to businesses, and write a couple fun little ditties and go around to*

businesses and be like 'hey, do you want to make a commercial?'. It is so much easier to sell than the personal stuff.

Jacob: *My EP has fourteen songs and I hope to have it finished in time. But I also have my YouTube channel I've been kind of keeping in the dark, and just reading and taking notes and stuff like that. I really believe I'm building my brand. I want it to be a channel about artists and habits and sort of awareness and consciousness. And me as a person, you know this is my story, this is what I've come to develop, and these are what I have done to get here. So, kind of like making a blissful experience is what I'm trying to do within myself.*

Anna: *I also believe that a sense of community is incredibly important. Arts are important for the community and without community you don't have following for an artist. You have to have an audience, you have to have support, you have to have people who are willing to get your stuff out there even if it's two or three people, it's still a community. I think having an existence of art encourages the community to bring that together. You're all looking at the same thing [art] but interpreting it differently and so that brings a sense of belonging. I feel like community creates art and art creates community.*

This data demonstrates what is possible when youth are given an opportunity to affirm their own realities and places in the world. From this, these youths embark on a journey of optimism as seen when Macy explains, 'we can build our own foundation', or when Jacob notes that he is building his 'brand'. Their confidence and curiosity emerge once more when Anna signals we can also 'make money off' our art craft through writing 'fun little ditties' and selling them to businesses. Mac similarly denotes that 'this seems like a direction to go in if you wanna make music that you can put out digitally and it doesn't sound like crap'. Thus, their experiences with ARTpreneur profoundly awaken a renewed way of being in the world and a space to hone their passions for the arts. At the same time, these young people begin to understand better their connections to community. As Anna eloquently says, 'I feel like community creates art and art creates community'. For Freire, pedagogy has to be meaningful, and we see this emerge for Anna and the other youths when

identifying the symbiotic relationship between art and community. 'Liberating education consists in acts of cognition, not transferrals of information' (Freire, 1970, p. 79). In this way, we see critical pedagogy igniting a space for potential social change and a vital opportunity to engage policy makers, cultural planners, educators, non-profit art organisations and government to problematise new ways to create opportunity for underserved youth.

Conclusion

This research demonstrates the power of art-based youth entrepreneur programmes to enhance young people's capacities to construct knowledge and feel empowered via art production and enterprise. Moreover, we see the immense value in bringing youth together and entering into critical dialogue as it serves to revitalise their positions within communities and expand the autonomy of the individual. As mentioned from the onset, it is imperative that youth become critical agentic citizens rather than consuming subjects. In this capacity, a form of empowering pedagogy presupposes a notion of a more just future where underserved youth can come to terms with their power as critical subjects and shift to question their own place in community. In short, this project points to the need for educators, youth organisations, child and youth practitioners, cultural city planners, government, and industry to invest in our youth. As McLaren (2015) states, '[i]t is in the boulevards of broken dreams and streets of despair and desperation where critical pedagogy can make a difference … we-the-educators-can play an important role in this struggle' (p. 56). We equally recognise that creating spaces for critical reflection will not change the poor social and material conditions that young people face and that situates them in oppressive spaces (Shor & Freire, 1987). For youth living in poverty, experiencing mental health issues, abuse, and neglect, we can only improve their lives by attending to the conditions in which they live (Giroux, 1996; McLaren, 2015). Explicitly, youth need to be invited to the consultation process and have an opportunity to critically analyse their communities' cultural and economic positions.

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6

Media Arts in Anangu Education: A Culturally Responsive Approach for Developing Digital and Media Literacies

Belinda MacGill and Paul Unsworth

Introduction

This chapter discusses a project that used arts-informed methodologies with students who learnt two immersive virtual reality (iVR) technologies. Media arts conventions and practices were used in conjunction with aesthetic and affective frameworks that relied on students' skills and imagination to build iVR tours of their school (Franks et al., 2014; Greene, 1995). Students, teachers, researchers, and the Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW) worked together as a community of learners to co-design an iVR artefact that was culturally, linguistically, and socially contextualised.

The study took place in a remote Anangu school community located in Central Australia, and the primary languages of Anangu are

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Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara. These students and their teachers had limited or no experience of using iVR. A significant number of students were reported by school staff to be mostly disengaged from schooling. In order to overturn common perceptions regarding student engagement and learning outcomes through a deficit lens, we highlight how using iVR as a part of a designed learning environment in combination with arts-informed practices increased student engagement.

The research project was designed and developed in collaboration with students, teachers, and AEWs. We explored how students and teaching staff responded to iVR as a learning technology in combination with 'art[s]-teaching strategies' that utilised the aesthetic qualities available for this New Media project (Freire & McCarthy, 2014, p. 28). This chapter reports on two scenarios that demonstrate how an applied use of iVR in learning design invites students, teachers, and support staff to participate in shared performance and storytelling within open, interactive, and culturally safe spaces for teaching and learning (Corder & U-Mackey, 2018; Fernando & Bennett, 2019; Lloyd & Duggie Pwerl, 2020; Martin, 2006; Smith, 1999).

The learning design approach included Creative Body-based Learning (CBL) that involved 'dialogic meaning making' in Pitjantjatjara and English, 'co-construction' with AEWs, teachers, researchers and students, and 'role-play' using a virtual reality (VR) game, which all contributed to the affective engagement of all participants (Dawson & Kiger Lee, 2018; Garrett & MacGill, 2021). This research project extended CBL to include 'the wide range of sensory experiences … mediated by virtual technologies' (Chung, 2010, p. 63) to inform a cyberaesthetic. 'The digital aesthetics of networked communications, interactivity, and virtual reality are some of the defining qualities of new media' (Freire & McCarthy, 2014, p. 28).

Arguably, arts-based methodologies which include New Media encourage students to co-create and co-design in ways that inform a pluralist world view that is anchored in the local and specific contexts of their worlds (Kraehe & Brown, 2011). Language and local knowledge played a key role in building a culturally responsive approach whilst developing skills in iVR as a New Media. Mary, the AEW, translated between Pitjantjatjara and English, engaged with the technology, and supported the learning throughout the pre-production, production, and

post-production phases. Throughout the learning journey, adaptations were made in the production phase whilst generating the iVR scenarios as well in the reflective processes that was built through dialogue during the post-production editing phase. This enabled the diverse voices to be represented into a coherent narrative within the iVR tours.

Background

Since colonisation, First Nations peoples across Australia have endured violence, significant change, disruption, and denial of recognition of 80,000-year-old education systems (Chandler & Reid, 2019; Rigney, 2020). These multifarious First Nations education systems are rich in assets, strong in kinship, deep in knowledge, and informed by Country (Lowe et al., 2021). At their core, these are education systems that were, and continue to be, contextually and culturally responsive, producing confident and capable learners (Morrison et al., 2019; Rigney, 2020). First Nations peoples have long endured the legacy of colonial systems of schooling (Chandler & Reid, 2019; Rowse, 2010) that have generally ignored local funds of knowledge in favour of western knowledge systems (MacGill, 2008).

First Nations students who attend remote schools experience an education that is predominantly modelled around the mainstream Australian Curriculum (Osborne & Guenther, 2013; Unsworth, 2013; Oliver & Exell, 2020) that privileges Eurocentric knowledge systems, beliefs, and values (Morrison et al., 2019; Rizvi & Lingard, 2011). In the current education policy settings, Governments and/or School Boards place significant expectations and accountabilities on improvement in English literacy and numeracy standards (Unsworth, 2013). However, despite years of investment, results from national literacy and numeracy tests (NAPLAN), on aggregate, reveal no real statistical improvement over the last decade across remote Aboriginal schools (Unsworth et al., 2018).

When schooling focuses exclusively on improving national literacy and numeracy test results educational researchers report that teaching and learning approaches that solely focus on teaching to the test have produced adverse impacts on Aboriginal student learning and

engagement (Guenther et al., 2014; Macqueen et al., 2019; Oliver & Exell, 2020; Unsworth, 2013). Moreover, researchers also report that test-focused schooling creates conditions for lower student engagement, increased anxiety, lower morale and greater disconnection in schooling and that these consequences are experienced by teachers, Aboriginal students, AEWs, and the school community (Guenther et al., 2014; Macqueen et al., 2019; Oliver & Exell, 2020; Unsworth, 2013).

Research Design

The research design was informed by Indigenous research methodologies (Berryman et al., 2013; Lowe et al., 2021; Morrison et al., 2019; O'Brien & Rigney, 2006; Osborne & Guenther, 2013; Walter & Moreton-Robinson, 2010). This approach was layered with culturally responsive pedagogies (CRPs) and CBL and involves what Donna Haraway (2016) calls working theories into layers by making 'additions' rather than 'subtractions'. The purpose of this research was to give back to the *wider* school community, respond to the needs of the school community, and consider ways the research could be used by and for the community in a sustainable way. Key needs included culturally relevant and meaningful learning experiences, student engagement, and developing skills for future employment.

The principles of mutual respect, reciprocity, and reflexivity were central to the research design (Minutjukur & Osborne, 2014; Morrison et al., 2019; Smith, 1999; Walter & Moreton-Robinson, 2010), enabling students to become knowledge producers that reflected their lived realities in remote community contexts. This is a political and social act through New Media (Chung, 2010 p. 68) where participants could share their 'artistic creations for cross-cultural exchange and political discourse' (Chung, 2010, p. 69). The research was conducted on Anangu Country; therefore, we recognised that Anangu pedagogy and practices already exist and are embodied by the students and Mary, the AEW with whom we worked. Anangu students enter schooling with funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 2013), and political and social world views that were embedded into the storyboard.

Co-constructing through teaching iVR and drawing out students' stories was critical to the teaching/learning cycle that occurred throughout the project. Co-construction included both Anangu and Piranpa (non-Aboriginal people) as learners and teachers within a 'community of practice' model (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Co-construction during the teaching/learning cycle enabled multiple voices to be heard whereby students' voices directed the creative works that were produced. All participants played an active role in the teaching/learning cycle, including modelling the iVR technology, meaning-making through embodied strategies, and collaborating on storyboards drawn from the students' collective cultural and intellectual knowledge. Co-construction and collaboration are key pedagogical strategies used in New Media and students, teachers, and the AEW became adept at cybermedia literacy.

Our research was informed by Anangu pedagogy that was directed by Mary who facilitated a culturally responsive approach to be enacted within our community of practice model whilst students developed digital and media literacies (Belshaw, 2016). This culturally responsive approach is a pedagogy that has proven to be successful in addressing issues of inequity and learners' disengagement across a range of settler-colonial education contexts (Bishop et al., 2007; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Morrison et al., 2019). In the context of Australia, literature reviews produced by Krakouer (2015) and Perso (2012) have centred on developing cultural competence as key, while in remote school community contexts, Guenther (2013) focuses on promoting culturally and contextually responsive schooling. More recently, Lowe et al. (2021) progressed the idea of moving towards an Australian model of culturally nourishing schooling. However, to date, little research has explored the need for culturally and contextually produced New Media and digital and media literacies for students living remotely.

The Project

This research took place on Anangu Country. Participants include eleven Anangu students and one Piranpa student (aged between 11 and 15 years), their Piranpa teacher, one AEW, and one Piranpa Aboriginal

Education Teacher (AET). Extensive communication and consultation had been in play with the school and broader community for 12 months leading up to the on-site visit to progress mutually agreed understandings of the nature, purpose, and intended benefits of the research. On-site visits were impacted twice by border restrictions due to COVID-19 breakouts prompting the need for remote communications through Zoom and email prior to the field trip.

Relationships had been built with the teacher and principal, but until the field trip we were not able to make connections with the broader community. Instead, we worked with the AEW, Mary, who acted as a broker between the researchers and community. Whilst on-site and working within this culturally mediated space of engagement (Carey & Prince, 2015; Flores & Springer, 2021), we introduced ourselves as 'guides' to assist teachers, students, and support staff in learning how to use the iVR technologies. In doing so, we were mindful not to influence or exert control over teaching and learning. Working in tandem, one researcher was mostly positioned in the background attending to research and data collection, while the other took a role in modelling the use of the iVR technology and supporting participants.

Video recording was used as a key data collection method agreed for use in this study. Two video cameras were set up at the rear of the teaching space using a 'broad pan setting' to record participant's engagement. Video data captures moments that are not only highly reliable but also consistently replayable to explore and re-analyse information. In this case, video data was replayed, time stamped and used for ethnographic analysis (Brophy, 2004; Santagata, 2014). These video data informed real-time engagement regarding the context of learning and engagement (Balzaretti et al., 2018). Field notes were taken as well as anecdotal notes. Our observations were further explored through reflective discussions conducted with teaching and support staff.

Our on-site work provided two immersive scenarios for investigation. The first was an embodied iVR experience using an interactive game. The second featured an authoring tool created by Ben Stubbs from the University of South Australia called IMMERSE. Students, teachers, and support staff were part of the learning community who interacted with

the students when they were immersed via VR headsets and/or the authoring tool (Shulman & Sherin, 2004).

Scenario 1: *Fruit Ninja* iVR—Exploration of Responses and Affective Moments

Scenario 1 took place in the seniors' classroom. The teaching space we co-organised with staff accommodated a large flat screen monitor positioned at the front of the classroom. The monitor was set up to cast a screen image of the 3D immersive iVR environment patched from the user's headset. In this arrangement of space and objects, the user experienced the immersive 3D virtual environment via the headset, while onlookers—as third-party agents—viewed the 2D panoramic version on the main monitor. The user's movements and choices were cast simultaneously to the third-party viewers. The user was afforded an open space in safe proximity from the monitor in which to interact physically, while others were seated around the classroom's perimeter. Researcher A's role involved demonstrating the use of the VR equipment and modelling how to navigate whilst in the immersive environment. Researcher B's role involved observing and video recording.

The iVR technology we selected for this scenario was a gaming technology called *Fruit Ninja*. The game requires the user to slice and dice objects of fruit that cascade from above within a 3D virtual environment. As individual and grouped formations of fruit are sliced and diced using the hand controllers (as sabres), points are progressively accrued. Bombs are also thrown in the mix of cascading fruit which, if diced, virtually explode. Slicing bombs detracts points.

Becoming adept requires the user to become aware of the types of fruit formations that accrue the most points. It also requires participants to learn the stages at which these formations appear. The game presents a series of layers, stages, and formations couched within a finite timeline where a final score is indicative of the player's performance. Learning to become 'ninja-like' within a 3D environment is complex and challenging.

Our choice of iVR game for this research was deliberate. *Fruit Ninja* VR offers a constellation of highly engaging interactive spatial and sensory feeds that provide the user with responsive feedback on each action performed. Video data, field notes, and after-action review confirm that students were highly attracted to the game's simple but powerful format and quickly overcame their shyness within a space of public performance. We used *Fruit Ninja* to capture moments of engagement and sense making co-generated between the interactions of 'self as user' and 'others as observers'. Through analysis of field notes and video playback, it was evident there was a learning dynamic that was created between the user and other students. The user's self-reflection on their individual performance signified engagement and focus. Social interaction developed a community of learners through the focus on the game and the gamers' performances. In this scenario we noted that players achieved a high level of mastery after three rounds of the game. The performance-based iVR game and its subsequent deployment as a learning technology clearly engaged students, teaching staff, researchers, and the AEW, who were all invested in the game.

Additionally, we affirmed students' performances to build their confidence and capability which was achieved through understanding the objectives of the game and opportunities to repeat the game to improve on scores. We also used media arts pedagogy that included demonstration of the equipment such as the headset and controllers, how to activate the game, how to navigate, and how to play the game. In this case, Researcher A demonstrated what happens when the headset is activated, how the headset view casts simultaneously to the monitor, and how the monitor view changes when slowly moving around the virtual environment. Researcher A then demonstrated how to select a game, and then how to use the controllers (which appear as sabres) and how to slice objects. Minimal verbal cues were used such as 'look—what happens when I do this…' and 'look—what happens now?' The teacher and AEW restated these prompts, using English and First Language respectively. Video playback confirmed that, through this phase, students appeared highly engaged, evident through eye tracking, forward-leaning body gestures and pointing, as well as through rich conversation and expression. Justification for using this pedagogical strategy aligns with Mayer et al.'s

(1999) work on temporal contiguity, where both visual and spoken assets are intentionally synchronised to enhance the learning effect. The positioning of simple prompts alongside repeated actions and imagery intentionally directs participants to notice causal relationships.

Our second strategy aimed to progressively develop user's confidence and capability. This involved each student taking turns over three rounds to develop mastery of *Fruit Ninja*.

Students' first-round scores ranged between 300 and 500, while third-round scores ranged between 1000 and 1500. We clearly observed increasing mastery displayed as confidence and capability developed through moments of immersion and self-reflection, and through moments of viewing and responding. Importantly, the AEW and teacher took key roles in encouraging, prompting, and affirming students' performances to build their confidence and capability.

When students played the game there were affective responses by all participants in the classroom that were activated by the colours, sounds, languages, contexts, movements, expressions, and emotive effects. Cumulatively, immersion and performance of the self (playing the game) and interaction by others (viewing the performance) activated responsive processes of sense making that elicited correspondence, comparison, and synthesis which in turn lead to mastery of the game. Embodied learning helped produce sense making that produced learning outcomes (Caillois, 2001; Dewey, 1997; Schön, 1995). We recognised the full potential of game-based learning as a way to activate curiosity, co-creation, and collaboration. This preliminary game gave students an understanding of working in a 3D environment to prepare them for the following scenario.

Scenario 2: Using the iVR Authoring Tool—IMMERSE

We further developed an existing VR Creator Tool called IMMERSE created by Ben Stubbs from the University of South Australia. IMMERSE allows the import of 360 video and images to create stand-alone scenes that can become connected as a virtual tour using the software's editor. A

novel feature of IMMERSE is that the scene is displayed as a timeline, similar to those commonly found in video editing software. This affords the import of 360 video footage in scene creation. The editor also provides options for inserting multimedia content into each scene such as static images, banners, text, video, and audio. We refined IMMERSE so that users in schools could more easily create an interactive iVR story. As a 'plug and play' type of software, IMMERSE was loaded onto USBs.

Scenario 2 involved the same cohort of students learning how to use IMMERSE to create interactive virtual tours of their school. Working as a group, the class had previously undertaken a series of learning experiences to identify specific places of interest to them within the school that would feature as their storyboard. The storyboard mapped out a sequence of scenes comprising school sites and extra content that was built into an 'iVR story' of the school. The storyboard was clearly organised and displayed as a sequential mapping of scenes, for example, Scene 1—Welcome to our School (Front Office and Entry); Scene 2—The Canteen and Cafeteria; Scene 3—the Art Room; Scene 4—the Basketball Court; Scene 5—Our Gardens. The class had also produced written and photographic content depicting what activities were relevant to each scene.

Our aim was to capture data on how the participants translated their storyboard into an iVR tour of the school. The teacher and AEW initiated the session by reviewing the storyboarding work. Researcher B activated a 360 camera and used his smartphone to control the view mode which was patched to the main monitor using mirror software to illustrate orbital, dual, and panoramic 360 views. Researcher B navigated the room, showing the camera view from his smartphone's screen to each participant and pointing also to the duplicate image cast to the main monitor. Repeatedly taking images and noting the outputs allowed the participants to make the connection that a 360 image orientates height and depth, as well as length and width. Attention was also directed to the dual lens of the 360 camera to show what happens when one lens is obscured or over-exposed to bright light.

The class did their filming in two groups. Each researcher accompanied a group with a 360 camera loaded to a tripod and synched to a smartphone. Students were able to take control of the equipment and take direction over which scenes they shot. We then downloaded the

images into separate folders and loaded them onto three PCs located at the rear of the room. The researchers demonstrated the use of IMMERSE as a content creator and editor. Using the same iterative pedagogical strategy, we repeatedly showed each step (cast to the main monitor) and invited students to come forward and try. This learning encounter took shape across three main moves. Move one introduced students to a premade iVR tour and demonstrated how the content was imported into IMMERSE to create each scene. Move two specifically unpacked how to create a scene. Move three demonstrated how to use the editor to add content such as HOTSPOTS, static images, text, and more.

The students worked in small groups at four PC stations—three located at the rear of the classroom and one at the front utilising the main monitor. Teaching staff, the AEW, and researchers assisted students to replicate the three moves. We observed that the intuitive design of IMMERSE's dashboard enabled each group to quickly navigate and make sense of its functions. Students imported 360 video or 360 image content, created successive scenes, linked successive scenes, and added content caches to each scene. Once confident and capable, each group then engaged with their storyboard to create their own versions of an interactive iVR school.

Mary, the AEW, achieved mastery of IMMERSE and, in conference with the class teacher, they noted the potential of this tool for teaching and inquiry-based learning. They said, 'The kids were so engaged and rose to the occasion … we learned that what is helpful is when there is an event on, such as sports day, and if you are filming, that you can create content to make it relevant in the moment with purpose and this is how they will use it in the future … they can experience it immersively and add to the story at a later point to continue creation of the tour, so it's an ongoing project' (Personal communication; Piranpa home group teacher).

Through the engagement of the participants (teacher, students, and AEW) with storyboarding and 360 filming we noticed how everyone 'leant in' and collectively used their funds of knowledge. 'This is the most engaged I have seen these students, some who rarely come to school. To maintain focus and concentration and engage in all the immersive activities over 3 x 2 hours sessions was incredible to watch and be part of' (Personal communication; Piranpa home group teacher). Participants'

co-design and co-construction strategies were evident during the capture of 360 images and video (on site) and through the augmentation of images and content assembled using the iVR editor. The community of practice model was deepened during the storyboarding when decisions were made about the story line and throughout the process of editing.

Students resisted 'fake' stories that did not reflect their lived realities. Instead, they focused on school life and areas within the confines of the school. Whilst this was partly restrictive as we had hoped to work outside of the school, the embodied experience of moving from classrooms to the oval to the tuckshop meant students considered how they live, breath, and engage with the schooling space in relation to each other and the space they occupy (Efland, 2007; Wang, 2001). Using their cultural resources and local funds of knowledge, students attached authentic meaning to their school story. Teaching staff clearly communicated substantially higher levels of engagement by students through immersion in *Fruit Ninja* and in the creation of interactive virtual tours.

Discussion

The learning design approach (Elliott et al., 2009) included embodied strategies that engaged both students and teaching staff. The project used a constellation of theoretical frames to create an arts-informed culturally responsive learning design. Centring the students' lived realities within the storyboards supported the flow of learning as they felt confident and capable to share and build on their narratives collaboratively.

In the first scenario, Anangu students, teachers, and the AEW engaged in a highly interactive, collaborative, and body-based iVR learning experience (Lee et al., 2020; Lindgren & Moshell, 2011). The students progressively made sense of the immersive experience through conversation, laughter, play, and interaction with the technology (Elliott et al., 2009; Lee & Choi, 2017).

The second scenario describes how participants created an iVR tour of their school. This involved students, the teacher, and AEW engaging in a sequence of meaning-making and affective processes, including storyboarding, capturing relevant 2D and 3D images and video, importing

files, and creating content. This work collectively emerged as an immersive product through IMMERSE. Students wrote storyboards from their perspective, developed skills in iVR, collaborated with other students on developing the narrative, and worked with the AEW and teachers collectively.

Mobilising a community of practice model in this educational setting provided moments for learning where the learner (both instructor and student) participated through their acquired knowledge and skills within the 'socio-cultural' practices of the local community. The affordances of the technology were learnt from a procedural point of view. Students showed mastery of what they were going to film and how to work in a visual environment in terms of spatial ordering. The opportunity for agency through decision making whilst creating an iVR tour was evident. The inquiry process and the technology married well together in this context because students developed New Media skills in storying, working in iVR, digital literacies, as well as multi-literacies that included banners in English and in Pitjantjatjara.

Conclusion

This research used a culturally responsive learning design where students, teachers, and AEW worked as a community of learners to capture their lived experiences through iVR. The students, teachers, and AEW were involved in the creation of the interactive virtual tours from storyboards that drew richly from local cultural knowledge and First Language. Storyboarding was used and considerations were made regarding space, location, and narrative within a 360 perspective. The students and AEW used this opportunity to discuss the way they wanted to represent their stories and why certain areas of the school grounds were more relevant than others. These narratives reflected their world view through iVR representational fields (Osei-Kofi, 2013).

Application of iVR in culturally responsive learning design enabled participants to become more intuitive, more responsive, and better suited to the teaching and learning needs of the school context. Learners demonstrated how they were capable and confident in producing

SMART-tech products reflective of the learner's higher-order thinking that is rich in local cultural and western knowledge. The use of CBL created safe yet creative space for participants to grapple with emergent ideas and to represent their stories through iVR.

Further, by enabling movement and opportunity for considering their locations within school, they could use their imaginations, resist false narratives, and create various camera angles from a 360 perspective that unpacked the dimension of space and their location within it at school (Sefton-Green et al., 2011). More cases are needed to explore the potential of New Media, CBL, and CRP in schooling. This knowledge is critical to Aboriginal education, a field that has been described by many commentators as in crisis (Rigney et al., 2020). Leading commentators in the field of Aboriginal education argue the need for more culturally responsive approaches to re-imagine and re-construct what learning means (Buckskin et al., 2009; Unsworth et al., 2018). This research highlights the potential of learning digital and cyber literacies in Aboriginal education within a CRP and CBL framework where Anangu students represent their narratives in iVR.

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Part III

Reflecting on Arts-Based Practices at the Edge

7

Negotiating Capabilities: A New School Design for Transition to Work

Nigel Howard

Introduction

Young people injured by schooling and broken post-school transitions are often regarded in deficit terms as not having the skills or attitudes to succeed and to be managed into work or training. Their lifeworld experiences, their relationships, and the knowledge, and skills they draw on to navigate their circumstances are made invisible by formal education systems, with a view they need to be managed across a range of different institutions to gain an income and access to education and work. Within formal education systems, it is becoming taken for granted that school doesn't work for some students, with an increasing emphasis on developing alternatives to mainstream school. The number of new forms and conditions for alternative provision is growing, within an increasing number of independent schools and training facilities being established that have no connection to mainstream educational institutions.

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Rather than developing a comprehensive understanding of school detachment and exclusion and school reform, education and schooling systems continue as though the post-school pathways are smooth travelling and well signposted. For all young people in Australia, the transition from school to stable work and positive community participation is taking longer, is harder to negotiate, leaves them vulnerable to issues around income and housing and can affect their mental health (OECD, 2016). This can also be true for young people who have completed schooling, have a vocational qualification or are graduating from university (FYA, 2018). However, for the young people who were already vulnerable because of interrupted or unsatisfactory experiences at school, the transition can be an unfolding disaster as they face complex issues and conditions in negotiating housing, an income, mental health, relationships and—for some—substance abuse. These issues can cascade and threaten to collapse their lives (Dooley et al., 2000) and test their networks, their resilience and their resources.

In Australia, the Commonwealth Government has outsourced youth services for income support, training, employment, housing and mental health issues to a range of non-government and government providers. Young people must negotiate a baffling range of compulsions, obligations and different agencies to be eligible for a substandard income (DESE, 2019; Walsh, 2019). While some are lucky to have connections to family that help them negotiate the worst of the down times, others—through lack of options—are forced to stay in family environments that are under stress. Some young people must do it alone, others rely on friends who have gone through the same maze to help them. Many are caught up with behaviours that see them fail the mutual obligations and mandated requirements that allow them to access income, training and even food and housing (Savelsberg & Martin-Giles, 2008). No matter how they negotiate this space, they are deploying knowledge and skills that come more from experiences of adversity than from a clear well-signposted post-school pathway.

Many of these young people share common experiences of lives being disrupted at home and in the community. These disruptions have been played out in their experiences of formal schooling. Negotiating schooling was difficult as they moved or were moved from school to school, and

from mainstream schools to alternative education sites that go under a range of names depending on the state, the local or the non-government organisation that auspices their placement. Even after complex negotiations of the many and varied flexible learning options that these young people undertake, many find themselves out of school, having to make a transition into work and community life (Bills & Howard, 2017). After years of being 'done to', they are left to negotiate the world on their own.

For many young people, the promise of 'leaving school' means being free to make adult choices in the world and to have a greater degree of control over their time, work and how they spend their money. For those with broken transitions, this idea of freedom is curtailed. In exchange for income support they trade certain freedoms and are managed by others into a world of mutual obligations and petty humiliations that limit the choices they can make. The learning programmes, brokerage and training that the young people are managed into, carry a deficit view of young people, their lives and experience (Bessant, 2002). The choices offered to them are punitive, low-level, tick-the-box exercises that assume that they need to be coerced into activities.

The policy discourse that blames young people for their unpreparedness for work positions them as lacking the capabilities, competencies, soft skills and, latterly, twenty-first-century skills that they 'need' (Rainie & Anderson, 2017). Capabilities and competencies are positioned as individual attributes that can be taught and will equip young people to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century (ACARA, 2020). A more expansive rendering of capabilities is needed if we are to understand the young person in relationship to the society and circumstances within which they find themselves.

The capabilities approach of Sen (2010) and Nussbaum (2011) proposes an education whereby all young people have the freedom to choose a life that they have reason to value. Placing education in the wider context of a global society, Nussbaum contrasts the curriculum for economic enrichment via 'basic skills, literacy, and numeracy' with that of a curriculum for human development that 'will promote the enrichment of the student's own senses, imagination, thought, and practical reason'. The young person's freedom to choose a life of value derives, in part, from developing the skills and knowledge to have impact on their own lives

and those of others and being able to realise their capabilities in a society that values them and recognises their connection to each other. Nussbaum outlines three capacities for the health of democratic citizenship: critical examination of oneself and one's traditions, understanding as oneself as part of a heterogeneous community and through engagement with the arts, and a capacity for sympathy. She writes, 'Instruction in literature and the arts can cultivate sympathy through engagement with many different works of literature, music, fine art, and dance' (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 7). Developing a more expansive notion of capabilities opens a rich conversation between young people and the world. The capabilities seen in this way are not individual attributes, but the freedoms needed to choose a life of value to themselves.

The young people I spoke to in my study of young people's experiences of an alternative school all had an idea of a 'better life' that put sustainable relationships at the centre of their pursuit of work and further education. Their freedom to pursue the 'better life' was curtailed because their capacities to explore their lives and their futures had been constrained by being excluded from school. In this chapter, I will draw on this study to examine the curriculum and pedagogical challenges faced by alternative sites in engaging with the changed lifeworlds of the young people in the twenty-first century. This is urgent work. Governments and education systems are in the process of creating a separate alternative education sector that is fragmented and without a conceptual framework of education for these young people. I begin by providing an overview of the changing landscape and marketisation of alternative schooling in Australia. I then explore, by way of a case study, the tentative steps of an educational start-up that I call 'StartUp Co', and how the staff at this site responded to the lives of these young people on the edge. I then outline the use of ethnographic portraiture as a tool for bringing the lives of young people to the fore in my exploration. This is followed by portraits of two of the young people from my larger study in order to begin to understand the work that needs to be done to engage young people in a more expansive view of capabilities.

The Landscape of Alternative Schooling

The landscape of alternative schooling in Australia is changing. Changes in school funding incentivise the establishment of alternatives to mainstream schooling. There is a significant shift away from state education provision to the development of more independent schools. Historically, alternative schooling had its heyday when there was a positive shift to a more humanist form of education in the early 1970s. Community schools, established by coalitions of parents and teachers, were developed as alternatives to a narrow, paternalistic, exclusionary education. These community schools were not primarily for students who failed school, but places where parents could look for an education that nurtured their child's development (Hill, 1967). By the end of the century, community schools had either disappeared or had evolved into sites for students who were not experiencing success in mainstream schooling (Short, 2011).

At the end of the twentieth century, as school-leaving ages increased and the youth labour market collapsed, schools looked to find alternative curriculum and, in some cases, alternative placements for students who were not pursuing entrance to university. Further changes in the youth labour market, the subsequent rise in school-leaving age and the pressure on schools to present a positive image, saw an expansion of alternate sites (Te Riele, 2014). In Australia, all State government jurisdictions had provision for young people under the age of compulsion to continue their education in non-mainstream sites in variously named Learning Choices or Flexible Learning Options. Ad-hoc or disparate arrangements were codified in South Australia under the umbrella of the Innovative Community Action Networks–Flexible Learning Options (ICAN–FLO) programme. The ICAN-FLO programme arose out of the new progressive government's social inclusion brief as an initiative to increase retention. After ICAN was disestablished, the FLO programme remained. Under the FLO programme, students were removed from mainstream school and were supported by a model which sought to address underlying issues through personalised case management and brokering of learning options (Bills & Howard, 2017).

In addition to public schools developing alternatives to the mainstream, there was a growth in independent schools that were established for the same cohort of students under specialised assistance schools funding. A specialised assistance school enables Federal funding for a 'non-government school in a State that has been, or is likely to be, recognised by the State Minister as a special assistance school, and primarily caters for students with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties' (Schools Assistance Act, 2008, p. 5). The Association of Independent Schools of Australia writes that specialised assistance schools 'provide alternative educational settings for students with high-level needs and cater for students with disability, as well as students who are at risk, have behavioural difficulties, or whose needs are better met by flexible learning structures that may not be available in all mainstream schools' (AIS, 2020).

More than fifty special assistance schools were established across Australia in the five years between 2015 and 2020 (https://asl.acara.edu.au/). One of these new specialised assistance schools—StartUp Co—developed from a youth employment programme, and was established as an Independent Specialised Assistance School in 2017. StartUp Co was established to cater for students who had been unsuccessful in negotiating the gap between schooling and stable employment and community life. Though aimed at young people who have been out of school for a year or more, StartUp Co is funded as a school. StartUp Co was at great pains to point out that it was a school but different. This aligns with research that finds alternative sites are usually small and community based and emphasise relationships and personalised 'hands on learning'. They can offer a range of engagement activities including Vocational Education and Training (VET) and the Australian and State-based senior school curriculum and accreditation. Most often they define themselves by what they are not, taking pains to differentiate themselves from a school (Down & Choules, 2011; McGregor et al., 2015).

StartUp Co

StartUp Co began life in 2006 as a short-term training course for the retail and hospitality industry. Supported by a philanthropic trust and designed by a social entrepreneur, its early mission was 'to provide life-changing opportunities for disadvantaged young people through a range of leadership, employment and enterprise education programs' (Kernot & McNeill, 2011, p. 231). The core of the programme was to link with business and to treat the young people as employees undergoing training, rather than regarding them in deficit terms. The programme was successful in leveraging the contacts to place young people in work, but ongoing follow-up with the young people placed in employment indicated continuing problems negotiating stable and successful transitions.

The Principal/Director of school suggested that while the course was supportive and provided mentoring, many young people continued to find the transition to work difficult. Issues around mental health, substance use and home and family instability resurfaced after a month or even six months in work, and they were unable to sustain their employment. The Principal/Director began to look for a sustainable model of long-term education and care for this cohort of young people. The idea of a school was mooted with the philanthropic board and was developed over the next eighteen months.

After considerable preparation and negotiation with both Federal and State bureaucracies, StartUp Co was able to secure funding as a specialised assistance school. The acceptance of StartUp Co as a specialised assistance school was key to its financial sustainability. StartUp Co had to satisfy the State authorities that it met all the criteria to qualify for registration as a school in the State—a premise, sustainable finance, governance, safety provision and the capacity to offer a comprehensive curriculum. In addition to the State registration, to qualify for specialised assistance funding it needed sign-off from the State Minister for Education that the school would 'primarily cater for students with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties' (Schools Assistance Act, 2008, p. 5).

Portraiture as Advocacy

Portraiture, the written portrait of the success story, figures significantly in the stories of alternative education sites. It appears as a standard trope of alternative education and is used by the sites, the media and supporters to build the programme and highlight its 'life-changing' effects. These portraits tell the story of a young person overcoming the odds by virtue of engagement in the alternative programme and are presented as an indicator of the general success of the programme rather than the story of one of the programme's successful participants. This standard trope of the young person who says—as one in my study did—'I probably wouldn't be here if it wasn't for this school' shouldn't be discounted, but neither are they the stories of everyone in the group. If we are to advocate for those excluded from schooling, we must examine the lived stories of all the young people engaged in alternative sites, away from the bright light of the success story, and look at the lived reality of their relationship to education in context.

In proposing advocacy-oriented research, Smyth and McInerney (2013) write:

> If we want to understand the human impact of social exclusion and educational disadvantage, we should start with the lives and histories of young people, especially those most alienated and left behind by their experience of schooling. (p. 4)

Methodologically, they propose a critically engaged portraiture that brings to the fore the voices of those made invisible by the sterile use of retention and achievement data.

For the young people in my study, experience of school was of a place that they didn't fit in; where the choice of an education and learning was closed to them because of the choices their schools made and the choices they made. They were not innocent dupes without fault, but neither did they need to be denied an education because of those choices. I wanted to explore their lives to advocate for them and, in following the injunction for a critical ethnography of youth, I wanted to explore their past lives, their present lives and what could be done differently in

relationship to their education. The single school in my ethnography was in a continual state of coming into being. It was attempting to do things differently for those that had been treated unjustly.

I conducted my ethnographic research at StartUp Co two days a week for thirteen months. When asked, I explained my work as telling the story of StartUp Co through telling the story of the young people involved. In telling the story through the portraits of the students, I want to advocate for change by involving the voices of the usually disenfranchised in helping to reframe the issues that they face from a different perspective (Smyth, 2016; Smyth & McInerney, 2013; Willis & Trondman, 2000).

My tools were the standard kitbag of the ethnographer. I spent large amounts of time with the students, sometimes on the edge observing, other times within the groups and group works. I participated when asked, but at other times tried to remain silent. I made field notes. I took photographs inside and outside the building. I conducted one-on-one semi-structured interviews, interviewed some participants in pairs and held two focus groups. Throughout all this, I reflected, threw ideas up against the wall, tested them against theory and spoke openly about what I was seeing, thinking, reflecting and trying to make sense of the lives of students as they came into this new organisation that was coming into being (Willis, 2000). I was trying to find the emergent themes in the experiences of those involved. The themes emerged through developing the portraits of the young participants at StartUp Co in context and trying to derive from that an aesthetic whole (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

I wanted the voices of the young people to be what drove, not only the representation but also the analysis, the discussion and my conclusions. The spatial context of the school, the street and the city, play a large part in the story, but that discussion is for another time. For this chapter, for the sake of brevity, I have chosen two of the portraits. The portraits are partial representations of the two students; they are unique to those students but carry echoes and sometimes rhymes of the other young people in the study.

Portrait: Lindsay

Late in an Australian November it's warm and sunny. The large windows at StartUp Co make the upper floor of the old red brick Edwardian building that houses the school light and airy. Lindsay is, in her words, a 'big personality', but that big personality masks anxiety that made her feel isolated in large schools and made her pine for the community that she felt she had in primary school:

> [Primary school] only had about 120 kids. It was lovely community school; I grew up with everyone. I know everyone's parents, if I was sick, I knew that like [a friend's] parents would come over to pick me up from school, because we all … that community was amazing … And it taught me so much and being removed from that messed me up a little bit.

The transition from a small primary school to a large super-school was traumatic for Lindsay and involved rebellious behaviours. After doing 'a lot of things I shouldn't have done', she was moved on to another school. Here, she found her way of negotiating school was to withdraw.

> I hid myself in classrooms. I wasn't supposed to be in the, like, out-of-bounds areas. I knew where there was power points that I could charge my laptop. And you know, Year 12s used to give me the, like, Wi-Fi password. So, I could go on YouTube, like nothing was restricted. And that's where I spent all my time and I wouldn't work and they said, well ... there was a day I also got caught doing illicit drugs on campus.

Rather than deal with the underlying issues of her disengagement—the acting out behaviour and the drug use and withdrawal—the school decided that an alternative placement in an FLO programme would be a 'better option'.

> Um, well, I before I came here, I was in a little bit of a tough spot. I was at a FLO Community Learning Programme …CLC programme. Yeah, it was a bit of a joke. So, I was there when I was living at my parents. And when I was kicked out of my house I continued to try and work through school at the FLO programme and was not getting me anywhere.

Though she was out of home and denied choice in schooling, Lindsay lived a rich life in the city's music scene. She is a talented musician and was feted in the alternative music scene. Anxiety and relationship breakdowns interrupted that choice.

Her initial thoughts on StartUp Co were not positive:

> I actually applied for this school … I think it was a job opportunity because it was on SEEK.[1] And I thought, 'Okay, there's some kind of youth worker thing. 17-year-old to 24-year-old'. I'm like 'such a weird youth worker age range, for sure'. And I applied and they sent me an email. I thought, 'Why not—I'll give it a shot'. Like, it's another school. My school isn't doing good at all. I came into the interview, and I just thought, like, this sounds like the FLO programme.

But having decided to give it a go, Lindsay found that sense of community that she had at primary school

> Everyone has the space to be their individual character, which I feel like is a beautiful part of the community. It's character building getting to know everyone on a personal level.

Portrait: Axel

Axel is always a presence; he is not only quick to anger but also quick to express it. Tall and slim, always in movement, he has an internal energy that seems to know no peace. Though he can—and does—yell and shout, he is not seen by the others as a threat, and in his quieter moments enjoys a strong relationship and friendship with the others. He is trying to straighten himself out—he has successfully negotiated a life without drugs but that has meant some tough compromises in his life; moving back in with his parents, being careful around old acquaintances.

His anger goes back a long way into his schooling where assumptions were made about his abilities, interests and talents based on his demeanour.

[1] An online employment marketplace.

> Let's say that they put me in the wrong classes—classes that I didn't want to do I wasn't interested in. The more classes they put me in that I wasn't interested in the more it just deterred me from wanting to go to school. I was wanting to hang with my friends at Beachside High School.
>
> …I was just going there to see my friends and then go and mess around in class. Yeah, heaps of suspensions ... They were gonna send me to another school for a couple of months, it was that full on ... say yeah ... multiple suspensions and whatnot, right? It was not the best.

He was given a choice of exclusion or placement in an FLO programme. He would have liked support to get his driving licence, but FLO did broker an apprenticeship, but that didn't work out.

> They put me on to FLO, then FLO they just didn't they didn't help me get what I wanted. They got me an apprenticeship and once again I was ... it was just the wrong timing. I was too young and doing stupid shit still. So just didn't work out unfortunately. Which is annoying. But yeah. Okay.

Unable to finish his apprenticeship, he continued in employment in the hospitality industry until injury and a bad experience in the workplace. He sees StartUp Co as chance to continue the process of straightening out his life. Getting his higher school certificate would be good but that is not the major motivation

> I want to change because I don't want this negative outlook on life. And, you know, I don't want to have this constant attitude and battle with myself trying to be a good person, or happier person … But yes, just on … on a change and whatnot. And that's also why I'm here because it's learning how to socialise with different people and they've got connection to the counsellors and whatnot so they can set me up with them. And they should help me sort of understand what's going on in my head and whatnot so kind of get understanding as well and what's going on my attitude and that so that's helping sort of as brought? the attitude down a bit and I first started was pretty bad. I'd just yell out of people whatever I thought yeah, that's what I mean by that is just a small step, steps. You know, hopefully, by the time I leave here, without showing me that I can't have the attitude I have.

Put in FLO

Rather than deal with the underlying issues that Lindsay and Axel presented, the schools pushed the problems and the students aside. Both of them talk of a complicated movement from school to school or being shifted within school and between programmes. For both, the end of their 'school journey' ended with them being 'put in FLO', a network of independent placements and casework under a broad Education Department alternative enrolment policy. Both Axel and Lindsay talked about engaging in behaviours that were in opposition to the good running and order of the school. They were problems that needed to be managed. Decisions on how to manage that behaviour were made in the best interest of the school. Axel and Lindsay were denied any agency or choice; what choice they were given was coercive. Neither the school nor the alternative to school offered them a place of learning or a place where they fitted in.

Lindsay and Axel had difficulty negotiating a place where they fitted and their experience echoed in portraits of other students. Fitting in is more than just having somewhere to be, it is about being accepted, and the adversity of your life and identity being accepted in that space.

Fitting In

Lindsay and Axel found out about StartUp Co through different routes: Axel through a friend who had been through the pre-employment course, Lindsay thinking it was a training course for Youth Work. But what was pivotal is that they decided to 'give it a go'—they exercised agency rather than being placed.

Axel and Lindsay were held in high regard as friends, mentors and colleagues, despite Axel's temper and Lindsay's frequent absence. They had an easy relationship with others in the group. Axel's opinions were carefully thought out and expressed, and though at times they were loud, they were valued because they were oppositional to the prevailing norm. Lindsay's big personality was valued, and she was missed when she wasn't

there. Both repaid this relationship to the rest of the group, namechecking other students they related to and paying tribute to the group. Lindsay describes the journey of finding a community:

> I can't stress enough how this place has made me have faith again in schools because the school that I've been to—such a huge school you can't get to know anyone. Everyone in it is separated and it's weird and I felt I barely knew anyone. It was just very … and then going from City Edge Voc, where I was isolating myself, and FLO where I was, I was crumbling … to a place where I have a community now. To a place where I can go knowing I have friends, like, even if you know five people, I can go to school and have a conversation with anyone.

Axel understands the difficulty faced by the others and knows that, if they are not focused, he will lose focus too:

> Students … I get along with a few of them … a fair few of them. And I think they like I can see them being potentially good friends. But still, there's a few that aren't as switched on or as focused as what they should be. Everyone's got their own problems and things going on their head, but I just wish that everyone was a bit more focused on where they want to be, where they want to go, that sort of thing. Yeah, so um, yeah,

In their present position at StartUp Co, Lindsay and Axel have found a community where they are accepted and where they accept others. They fit in, and for them now fitting in is the most important thing. StartUp Co has accepted them and brought them into a space that is modern, well set up and honours their decision to be there. The transgressions of anger and absence are still there but are issues to be worked on rather than reason to move them on.

Lindsay and Axel have re-engaged with schooling as a way to choose a better life. In their current experience, they have 'found their people'. They feel they have a place and a community where they are regarded as important. At StartUp Co, Axel and Lindsay have access to adults who are concerned for their wellbeing. They have access to counsellors who can support their mental health so they can take advantage of the opportunities available.

Axel's story of falling out of his apprenticeship, which is echoed by many of the students with experience in work training and further education, demonstrates that an emphasis on the vocational is not enough. Lindsay followed her passion into the music scene and found a place there and was feted but did not have the capabilities to sustain that, demonstrating that following her passion and being entrepreneurial won't be enough.

Engaging in Education

Fitting in and finding a place of belonging are important to both Lindsay and Axel, but they both want more out of being in a school. Both report frustration with the learning programme that is in a continual state of flux as the school seeks to respond to the lives of the young people who access the programme. The school began with a clear idea of the learning programme and what it would achieve. The StartUp Co curriculum started out as a 'job and more', moved through a period of 'enterprise with purpose' and then an emphasis on wellbeing and positive mindset—all within the framework of the senior school accrediting authority.

The rapid prototyping and creative destruction that marked it as a new educational start-up looked disorganised and chaotic to Axel and Lindsay. This continual remaking of the curriculum happened in response to the needs of the young people enrolled, but it was constrained by the institutional framework of the State's higher school certificate accrediting authority, which is outside of the control of StartUp Co. The Higher School Certificate and VET frameworks within which StartUp Co must work were designed for a different purpose, a different 'grammar of schooling' and a different cohort of students. Without a wholesale re-examination of the curriculum and pedagogical tools that alternative sites can use, we are forcing them to use inadequate tools left over from the system that young people have already rejected.

Axel and Lindsay are real people. Their lifeworlds and their desire for a better life must be brought into the curriculum in order to move them from the immediacy of finding a place where they fit in, to finding a place in a wider community where they have agency and can exercise choice.

The 'ethic of care' that is at the heart of StartUp Co has offered Lindsay and Axel a place and time to develop connection with adults, but primarily with other people in the 'same boat as them' (MacGill, 2017). What StartUp Co has struggled with is defining a curriculum and pedagogical purpose that goes beyond care (Thomson & Pennacchia, 2016). Lindsay and Axel put that down to the fact that StartUp Co is new and still finding its feet, but StartUp Co is in the 'same boat' as the many alternative sites that strive to provide a place where those injured by the system can receive an education in a style and manner that suits them. What defines success in the FLO and Learning Choices programmes is hard to elicit. Beyond the individual success stories and observational reporting of improved wellbeing, what is meant by success is opaque. These small alternative sites seldom produce the Higher School Certificate or VET outcomes that their students need to make real choices towards community involvement. Destination outcomes are hard to find, and so success is measured by anecdotes of improvement and self-reporting of wellbeing.

To demand that these sites comply with the same frameworks designed for mainstream educational and training sites is to leave Axel and Lindsay vulnerable. The alternative sites such as StartUp Co are small and responsive to the needs of the young people who access them, but they are independent and fragmented, and to expect them to carry the weight of curriculum and pedagogical redesign themselves puts too much on the shoulders of small independent providers. As the demand for alternatives to mainstream education grows, the universities, curriculum authorities and the State and Federal education departments need to work with these sites to examine the curriculum and pedagogical work that needs to be done so that Lindsay and Axel are able to access an education that enables them to negotiate successful transitions.

Your Image of the Young Person: Where Teaching Begins

Lindsay and Axel have found a place where they matter, where they can gain a sense of community and where they feel they have found their tribe and are supported by caring adults. What they haven't found is a place where the things that matter to them have a place in the curriculum. Where alternative sites feel free to challenge the relational issues that push Lindsay and Axel to the edge of schooling, they have not yet fully challenged a curriculum that follows those things that matter to Lindsay and Axel, and developed the pathways to a more liberatory curriculum. Lindsay and Axel need a place where, as young people coming into the world, they are extended the full rights of the society and the right to imagine to pursue a life of value to themselves.

The Reggio Emilia project in early childhood was born out of a resistance to fascism and was consolidated in opposition to the propagandised curriculum of the communist-run early childhood centres. Writing towards the end of the twentieth century Loris Malaguzzi, founder of the Reggio Emilia project, presented a seminar on *Your image of the child: Where teaching begins* (Malaguzzi, 1994). He outlined the need for the school and the teacher to establish the environment and develop the relationships within which the child could experiment and find their own way and meaning. He saw the importance of care but that the role of the school and the teacher goes beyond care, to a more liberated future:

> What we have to do now is draw out the image of the child, draw the child out of the desperate situations that many children find themselves in. (Malaguzzi, 1994, p. 4)

One way of drawing the child out of the desperate situation many children find themselves in is to allow them the full citizenship and rights in life and society which include the 'right to imagine'.

The mainstream schools had an image of Lindsay and Axel that denied them a place in the environment and relationships that made up the school—their 'desperate circumstance' defined them, and their

citizenship and rights to share in the life and society of the school was denied. Lindsay and Axel deserve a place that recognises their 'right to imagine'.

They have a right to imagine a better world and a better life for themselves and need the support and the pedagogical approach that helps them realise that world. This is a complex pedagogical and organisational challenge and one that can be out of the reach of schools like StartUp Co that are, in effect, small independent businesses. The small relational school is a necessary addition to our schooling provision to serve young people in their right to imagine, and it needs to be constructed as an integral part of the schooling system, not an afterthought where children fail into. The small relational school though, needs a curriculum that is rich in democracy and experience.

Arts-based practices are central to the realisation of the child as a competent citizen in the Reggio Emilia approach. The Atelier, the artist's studio, is a fundamental part of the Reggio experience. For Lindsay and Axel, arts-based practice will support them to imagine and realise a better world. Their Atelier is the community, the city in which they work and their arts-based practice, planned, purposeful and reflective, should become part of a curriculum and active involvement in the things that matter to them in the community that leads to a meaningful accreditation.

> [T]he humanities and the arts make a world that is worth living in, people who are able to see other human beings as equals, and nations that are able to overcome fear and suspicion in favor of sympathetic and reasoned debate. (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 13)

The humanities and arts are essential for Lindsay and Axel to ground their learning in their experience of life and imagine something beyond that. Anything less will leave them out of full citizenship.

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8

‘It’s Not My Story’: Revitalising Young People’s Learning Lives

David Channing, Lyn Kerkham, and Barbara Comber

Introduction

A generation of baby boomers, including the authors, grew up in a policy environment that allowed poor and working-class youth to aspire to and accomplish an education that far surpassed that of their parents. Free high-quality public education meant that increasing numbers finished secondary schooling and many went on to tertiary education. Not surprisingly, many educators from that generation have maintained optimism in what education can contribute to wider social justice and equality of opportunity. Yet schooling, as Foucauldian scholars continue to remind us, can be understood in far less romantic terms. Indeed, it can be seen as

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containing and disciplining the masses. There are no guarantees of equity or justice that come with education. Indeed, at its worst, schooling can alienate, exclude and sort the population in order to maintain, or even accentuate, the disadvantage. Writing this chapter, a year and a half into the COVID-19 pandemic and a few years after the Youthworx project to which we refer has concluded, we are all too aware of the contradictory and contingent effects of educational experiences, wherever and whenever they happen. This chapter explores the effects of an alternative education option, a ten-week filmmaking programme, on a small group of young people who had left school early, were unemployed and were living in a low socio-economic area north of Adelaide, South Australia.

Before turning to our main story, we preface our account with three important warnings from educational researchers undertaking a critical stock-take of where we are in terms of our understanding of education and justice. We see these warnings as providing a helpful frame for the stories that follow—a set of questions through which to filter or interrogate our claims and disclaimers.

Recently, Ball and Collet-Sabé (2021, p. 3) have argued persuasively, following Foucault, that we need to question whether the school should be seen 'as a sensible and necessary building block of modern life' at all. They argue that if we take the school as a given, we fail to examine other possibilities for educating children and conclude that 'the school, and education as currently conceived and represented by the school, as a site of equity, is a lost cause' (p. 3). Further, they argue that focusing on school reform may prevent us from reimagining education as a social invention. Consequently, educational researchers become locked into the categorised educable individual as the ideal subject of schooling. But what might be needed for an ethical, social renegotiation of an education that actually makes a difference? It may be that the young people who populate this chapter have key insights in that regard with significant implications for rethinking education.

Taking a comparative approach, Sefton-Green and Erstad (2018) have noted the uniform nature of schooling internationally and how what counts at school has infiltrated even alternative creative programmes designed for young people who have rejected and been rejected by school. Despite the work that is accomplished in the name of social justice in

making available engaging opportunities for impoverished youth to become involved in the arts as a pathway to further education or employment, Sefton-Green is suspicious of the broader global pedagogisation agenda. In other words, young people whose talents and learning needs remained unrecognised by the school are subjected to pedagogies to retrain them in being responsible for their own learning and management, in self-discipline, in compliance and the like.

As with the previous educational researchers, Lupton and Hayes (2021) have revisited assumed connections between education and social justice. Focusing on the policy settings and effects in England and Australia since the 1970s, they demonstrate repeated failures to deliver equitable educational outcomes and explore why this might be the case. They argue the need for a 'once-in-a-generation process of deliberation about the future of … systems' (p. 154) and the need for more humility and imagination in the process of understanding and addressing educational problems. In their framing, reforming education for justice is possible if we are able to remove ourselves from the assumptions and orthodoxies that constrain us. They also argue for a vision of education that tackles the big ethical questions facing humanity and the planet, rather than tinkering over short-term fixes or debating irreconcilable debates.

As we turn now to the tales of our project and participants' reflections on it, we invite readers to consider this as a small case amongst many. We offer the accounts of the young people and their teachers as a part of what Lupton and Hayes (2021) see as listening to and learning from the front-line workers in education—teachers, students and school leaders—as a key practice in developing policy that claims to address inequalities in education.

Youthworx SA: A Pilot Programme

Towards the end of the ten-week filmmaking and video production course, one of the students announced, 'You've ruined my viewing for life!' In a teasing fashion, it suggests that the teacher's (David's) critical approach to analysing films had fundamentally altered his ways of

viewing. In David's retelling of this moment there was a touch of pride and pleasure in what the students had achieved in a short time. More than developing skills and competencies, involvement in filmmaking had engendered new ways of being and doing from young people who had previously disengaged from schooling and doubted their prospects for future employment. In a student-focused context that invited negotiation between teacher and learners, founded on mutual respect and trust, there were opportunities for students to revise, reassemble and reimagine ways of being in overlapping worlds of learning, pleasure and work. Boldt's (2020) notion of 'revitalising' matches our sense of the potential of engagement in the programme to reinvigorate young people's energy for grappling with new forms of social and artistic practice, such as collaborative filmmaking. Boldt (2020) argues that when there is 'aliveness' in the learning context, moments of spontaneity, improvisation, playfulness and friendship matter profoundly to the learning. This 'aliveness' is the energy that 'flows through events' and 'keeps things in motion' as learners make significant connections with each other and with the teacher. Following Boldt, we try to capture how a teacher filmmaker worked alongside a group of young people telling 'their stories', without pretending that this experience worked magic on their lives or futures.

The short accredited filmmaking course piloted by Youthworx SA[1] enabled young people living in poverty in northern Adelaide to learn new things, in new ways, in new places with new people. The course took place at the Northern Sound System (NSS), a Youth Music Centre located in Elizabeth, a highly disadvantaged suburb on the outer rim of northern Adelaide. NSS is a community facility developed by the local council to provide music and creative arts as pathways to learning and employment for vulnerable youth. It has a 300-person purpose-built performance venue, live recording facility and rehearsal space and provides music and

[1] Youthworx SA, a collaborative partnership between education academics at the University of South Australia (UniSA), local councils, Creative Arts Industries (TAFE South Australia) and not-for-profit organisations, was established in 2015. Youthworx SA built on Youthworx Victoria's successful model of combining youth development, accredited media training, social enterprise and links to employment and training programmes. Two groups of young people, identified (through their contact with non-profit youth support services) as disengaged from learning and/or earning, or at risk of homelessness, were invited to participate in a ten-week filmmaking pilot course that would lead to an industry-recognised certificate II.

digital training (Northern Sound System, 2020; Youthworx, 2015). With images on the walls reflecting youth culture, and a skate park at the front, it is an appealing and comfortable teaching-learning space 'on their territory'. Although the filmmakers were 'constantly beset by rap music being recorded left, right and in every room around us', the noise was 'good, in a way, because it created the atmosphere' (David, Z13 interview transcript, p. 13).

The curriculum for the ten-week course included academic standards and work skills that complied with industry requirements developed in consultation with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS). The underlying concept was to provide educational and training opportunities to enable youth 'at risk' to develop a wide range of skills, enhancing their abilities to achieve employment within the Creative Industries Media sector and/or pathways to further study.

In revisiting this project, we are particularly interested in how the students and the teacher spoke about their experiences as collaborators and mentors, and how working relationships and friendships emerged as they engaged in film production. Drawing on both the students' and the teacher's reflections, we outline the accomplishments of the programme but also trouble the notion of 'authentic' youth voice as we discuss tensions around its goals: enhancing confidence, instilling critical thinking and making available new perspectives and identities.

As Soep (2006) pointed out some time ago, there is a danger with critical literacy researchers assuming that engaging young people in media production automatically gives them a voice or changes situations in ways which are necessarily empowering for them. In fact, such experiences are often much more complex and often involve 'crowded talk' where young people are negotiating, dramatising and experimenting with a range of ideas which may be contradictory. We first revisit young people's reflections on the programme, particularly in terms of how they credit their teacher, David, with enabling positive changes in them. Next, we analyse David's account of the programme, in terms of what he attributes to the students. Finally, we consider the implications of the study for policy and practice and further research. We use the conversations of the participants as much as possible because it is their story.

Youth Making Media: Ephemeral/Memorable/Life-Changing?

In exploring how creative arts-based methodologies can engage young people in new learning, we align with recent work that examines the effectiveness of community-based media and filmmaking programmes for disadvantaged youth. Much of this research privileges youth values, teenagers' perspectives on their futures and their capacities for facing the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead for them.

Researchers in the field of education and youth engagement with digital media (e.g. Hull & James, 2007; Hull & Greeno, 2006; Nelson et al., 2012; Sefton-Green, 2020: Sefton-Green et al., 2020; Sefton-Green & Erstad, 2017, 2018; Scott et al., 2020) have recognised video production as an effective tool for reaching youth who have disengaged from schooling. For the most part, they have focused on learning environments that exist outside the constraints of secondary school education. Interested in how youth become critical meaning-makers, there is a celebration of the creative energies and productive capabilities that arts-based pedagogies can release. Such studies highlight the 'voice' and agency of otherwise marginalised adolescents and generate positive accounts of their accomplishments as filmmakers. For instance, Scott et al. (2020) begin a paper with an alliterative list that captures not just the dynamics of production but the potential for youth to lead the process: 'To make meaning is to remix—to reassemble, re-voice, revise, and re-contextualize words, images, and media from all manner of symbol systems, piecing together, re-fashioning … putting one's mark, one's meaning into the world' (2020, p. 151).

As Rogers et al. (2010) point out, when youth transform genres and modes in their video productions they simultaneously 'produce new discourse narratives that become sites of subject positioning and, at times, as tools of social critique' (p. 301). This kind of artistic practice invites celebration as youth find a 'voice' and establish what matters to them in their own words and on their own terms. It paves the way for them to be seen and heard, to be acknowledged as visible actors in ways that were not possible in their schooling context.

While we want to run with the potential of youth media-making, we are nevertheless conscious of recent research that troubles the concept of

youth 'voice' and its uses in qualitative research (Mayes, 2019; Soep, 2008). The momentum that such approaches garner may mask both the complexity and fragility of what actually happens for different young people in such programmes.

To 'revitalise' the concept of 'voice', we draw on Soep's (2006) 'crowded talk' and the argument that we are multivocal, capable of speaking from different standpoints and always in relation to the words of others. Voice emerges from relations amongst others in particular places at particular times and, as Mayes (2019) points out, 'in dynamically shifting arrangements and re-arrangements' amongst 'objects, spaces, bodies, discourses, texts' (p. 3). To emphasise this relationality we pay particular attention to the ways in which the students spoke of and about themselves as emerging filmmakers and how they co-constructed their teacher; we also indicate how the teacher constructed the students as creative and agentive.

Crowded Talk

Drawn from Bakhtin's (1981) concepts of utterance and reported speech, Soep's 'crowded talk' invokes the concept of language—written and spoken—as replete with multiple voices that carry traces of the many different contexts in which it has been spoken. Intermingled with these traces are a speaker's own multiple voices. In reading the interview transcripts we noticed how the young people used the voices of others and observed their use of David's feedback as a guide to their assessment of the films they were editing. In their written and spoken scripts, we hear the interplay of multiple voices: disengaged youth, brother, sister, carer, friend, filmmaker. In the final film product, their own stories are interwoven, with comic effect, with the voices of celebrities who have won awards at the Oscars.

In establishing an authoritative position as filmmakers, these young people appropriate the discourse of filmmaking, lending weight to their conceptual work, their critical assessment of the films they produce and their creativity. Their production meetings with the teacher focussed on specific processes in the development of the film such as 'link pieces'; vagaries of weather for outside shoots; deciding on 'locations' for a specific shoot; storyboarding—audio/shot/duration; brainstorming

interview questions; and script writing. They learn these words and use their substance to speak of/as themselves as filmmakers.

Even as these workings in/with the discourse of filmmaking enabled them to refine and develop their skills and knowledge, we also hear talk of the importance of 'friendship' and 'being family' as significant for their learning. Their positive experience of the course, and their desire to continue learning together, is inseparable from the relationships that sustained them. Starting out as strangers to each other, David's pedagogy enabled close friendships to emerge as the group collaborated on a project that mattered to them. The affective dimension of learning and teaching that often goes undetected in a research account of programme outcomes was nevertheless clearly articulated in the students' evaluation of the course. David's public praise of the group of four as the 'most dedicated group that I've had for a long time' and 'a pretty special group' (Z11 interview transcript, p. 2 and p. 5) similarly reflects the affect and the importance of students' experiencing themselves as 'vital' members of the group.

We have alluded here to the multiple voices through which the students speak, and the complex and nuanced pedagogical relationships that characterise the interactions between teacher and students. There is 'aliveness' here, and 'revitalised' learning; affect juxtaposed with academic and practical. These multiple voices are reflected in the spontaneity of discussions in the production meetings and break times, and in the 'crowded talk' that is captured in the interview transcripts and observation notes.

How the Students Assessed the Course

The four students who completed the course came with very different histories and experiences with film and digital media. Paul had long been interested in photography and filmmaking and had already established himself as a video maker with his own YouTube channel; Kate came to the course knowing nothing about what was going to be taught and had no idea of filming or camera techniques; Andrew had a background in photography and joined the course because he was interested in the technology behind filming, and Suzie signed up on advice from her job provider, not expecting to enjoy the course but was glad of the experience of new learning.

In the following conversations where the students were invited to evaluate the course, we can identify the narrative threads they construct about themselves and their teacher. Kate and Suzie emphasise relational aspects of their experiences—employing language that pertains to feelings, friendships and family.

What were the things you got most from the course?

Kate: *I got a best friend out of it. That's really a cliché, and real, but seriously I got a lot of 'edufication' … I do keep a notebook. I'm a very forgetful person so I write down notes.*

Suzie: *No, you're not emphasising it enough! From Day 1 Kate had a notepad and she took notes in it for the entire time, the entire nine weeks she documented everything. You know what I liked? We documented every single part of it. You know, we have so many photos of everything that we've done throughout the course … we all have pictures together so there's memories of that for the end of the course.*

In this short interaction, a number of relational elements are evident. Kate's mention of a 'best friend' as the main outcome, and Suzie's valuing of the photos to assist their 'memories', indicates their appreciation of the social affordances of the filmmaking course. Kate also demonstrates that she has appropriated the vocabulary of media discourse with her 'serious' reference to cliché, 'edufication' and 'documentation'. Suzie's affirmation of Kate's documenting can also be seen as replicating the kinds of specific positive feedback that David typically offered to the students. This celebratory conversation foregrounds the best of their experiences as reported to the researcher. Kate also indicates she was well aware of David's critical standpoint in producing films in his requirement that they analyse film.

Kate: *Learning about filming to me was the weirdest thing 'cos I don't watch movies, I'm not going to lie. I don't watch TV, so watching movies now as I feel interested, I hate it! I absolutely hate knowing the camera angles and everything that they're doing 'cos I didn't know it before and now that's all I can see when I watch a movie … I'm really glad that's what I learnt though 'cos that was the aim of the course.*

As Kate and Suzie continue to discuss their best experiences, the idea of family is invoked.

> Kate: *I faced a lot of challenges personally through this course, like being in front of a camera. I'm not so bad now 'cos I'm with [T] but like actual being interviewed and the intimidation from the camera was horrible. But definitely with encouragement from David and Suzie and Paul and Andrew. Like definitely having us family supporting each other is hands down the best experience.*
>
> Suzie: *Same for me. I struggled a lot with being in front of the camera. I hated it … The comfortablest—most comfortable—was when we shot our movie last week and I had to do my speeches and all that … I'm the same as you Kate, having such kind people around us that make us feel comfortable enough to do it, it's so good. 'Cos I didn't feel judgement from anyone. Me and Kate had a couple of times where we were recording and we pressed 'stop' when we were meant to be recording. And then we'd come back in here [the recording studio] and watch and we'd be like 'NO!'*
>
> *Everyone's looking at us, getting shitty and like everyone is judging us right now. This one [Kate] was ready to leave, I was sitting there 'Right, I'm not doing any more'. But they said, 'Don't worry, it's all good'.*
>
> Kate: *In the end no-one cared, 'cos we learnt to edit around that, and that was good, like I'm glad we made that mistake, so we could challenge ourselves to work on that, as much as it was a challenge already … but it was an amazing—it wasn't a mistake it was a learning curve.*

In this short jointly constructed account, Suzie and Kate report how they overcame intimidation from the camera and fear of judgement through the support of the group. Actual mistakes were reframed as a learning curve and challenge. As we discuss in the next section, the girls ventriloquise David's pedagogical practice as they assess their experience, crediting both him and their peers, Andrew and Paul, as 'kind people', as 'family'. This experience prevents them from leaving when something goes wrong.

The students were very clear about changes in their bearing and confidence that also came with the friendships that evolved during the course. As Suzie and Kate discuss their experiences, they credit the course with affecting their personalities. They claim 'it's changed *us*'. Later Suzie attributes these changes not only to Kate, her peers and the course but also to

'you all' including the researchers who participated and sought their views throughout. Her agency appears to be contingent upon the support received in the setting, notably from the teacher and from peers as they collaborated on the project of filmmaking. Like the other students, Suzie offers insight into the potential for powerful learning when the teaching is student-focused, in-the-moment and in a context where inclusion and equality amongst participants are embedded in practice.

The Promise of 'Revitalising' Learning

David came to the project with many years of experience teaching and working in the field of media and film studies in a range of education contexts. He knew about youth on the margins and the complexity of their lives, perhaps in ways that were not possible to know in a classroom. For David, a meaningful teaching and learning relationship was entirely dependent on building trust and respect for each other. Establishing a safe and nurturing place that enabled students to talk and feel free to share their concerns and achievements was paramount, as was supporting each other and celebrating each other's ideas and plans. David's intention was to 'allow them to feel they could trust me and talk openly and respectfully without fear of criticism or dismissal'. Importantly, he understood that this approach 'gave them breathing space to actually learn along the way as well' (Z13 interview transcript, p. 2).

Teamwork is critical in video and filmmaking. As David commented, 'the team has to work', otherwise 'you've just got a group of individuals trying to do something' (Z13 interview transcript, p. 2). This principle grounded David's feedback to the group as well as discussion of the project in production meetings. For example:

> *We also need to talk about what we're going to shoot as a project. It's got to be a consensus. I think we can build it around you guys. Part of your journey here, literally and figuratively. You can talk about your aims … It's something you guys need to talk about … You can take them [stories], mould them to do what you want. Your stories.*

Transcripts and observation notes indicate the ways in which David voiced the importance of consensus and working as a team (in which he included himself, as suggested by his persistent use of the pronoun 'we'). Alongside the emphasis on the team was David's insistence that the project was 'their story'. He constructed himself as a guide, but the conceptual work was the responsibility of the students, as was making production decisions.

By way of accentuating David's approach to teaching, we briefly consider the responses of the students to the question of how their learning at NSS compared with school. Kate and Suzie highlighted 'bonding with everyone' and 'life experience'. But they also revoice David's 'safe and nurturing place' in talk about 'family' and the ease of being a learner.

Kate: *This course is, it's a family. It's not just you walk into a classroom and do your work, go out, change teachers. It's an actual, like David's my dad and he doesn't even know that.*

Suzie: *Yeah, and I've said it a million times and I'll continue to say it: this course wouldn't have been what it was if it wasn't for David. He was the most amazing teacher … He's humorous when it's the right time and he's serious when he needs to be, and he has so much life knowledge, he knows so much. I reckon there was twice in the mornings when we came in and we made him give us a history lesson.*

Kate: *And it was so worth it though.*

Suzie: *I was like what do you mean you've been to Japan? We want to know why you've been there.*

The young women's conversation makes clear that they attribute the power of the course to David, and that they value what he brings to them—life knowledge, international travel experience, his professional career, his patience and humour.

When invited to compare his experience with that of school, Andrew identifies three main problems with learning at school—too much paperwork, lack of teacher interaction and teachers giving preference to particular students. His advice to teachers is telling:

Stop giving pen and paper and be interactive. You're gonna get nowhere. Students honestly don't care if you give them pen and paper that's just there to complete and not having fun. That's what makes it stressful for students 'cos the teachers are not interacting at all, or very much, giving them poor support … I notice teachers tend to support only a certain group while the others all fall behind and I reckon that needs to change 'cos I saw it happen too much.

David makes sure we're all on track and sits by us when we're editing to assist us and makes sure we set up correctly, and giving tips on how to make it better.

Andrew lays out, in a nutshell, his experience of how school is ordered and how its practices ignore and disadvantage students who are not in 'a certain group'. He recognises what David does differently, highlighting David's physical presence in sitting close by and ensuring that they are set up ready to edit and giving tips, in contrast to distant teachers setting pen and paper tasks.

Paul, already a budding filmmaker before this course, is able to clearly articulate the positive affordances of working as a group and what each of them was able to contribute.

It took a couple of weeks but we all became pretty good friends just 'cos we were all a little bit interested in what we were doing. We all had different parts of the process that we were good at. We found that I was good at coming up with lots of ideas, and Kate was good at homing in on the good ideas and turning that into something cool. Andrew was good at camera stuff and Suzie was good at voicing her opinions and telling us what worked and what didn't. Yeah, so we were all good at different things and I think that helped the dynamic of our group.

Writing the script for the final piece was a challenge for Paul. He was very conscious of the role of writing in managing a more complex film compared to the little skits he had produced on his own. He also recognised that he had never actually been taught by a filmmaker before. He had gleaned his skills largely from YouTube; David on the other hand is a professional providing at-elbow advice:

I've never had someone teach these things before. I've always just looked up tutorials on YouTube or something, or just asked friends who make YouTube

videos, who obviously aren't professional. So having someone like David to teach me exactly what I want to know and to have someone there to answer any question that I have when I have them, it's very helpful. Very cool. In YouTube videos, for example, they teach a variety of things and not really homing in on anything. Whereas David, I could ask him a particular question and he'd answer and give as much detail as he could about that one particular thing. I think that's what I've needed this whole time.

Each of the students spoke about renewed interest and motivation to engage in learning, and their reflections indicate how that learning contrasted with their experiences in classrooms. Our point here is to underline the potential of shifting attention to a view of education as less beholden to narrow achievement targets and genuinely more open to reimagining schools and pedagogical relations amongst teachers and students.

From Euphoria to Despair

The intensity of feeling and levels of interdependence that arise when young people share vulnerabilities, aspirations and hopes as they develop new skills does not come without its dangers. Even as they came to see themselves not as failures but as competent, capable and creative, the young people discovered towards the end of the course that once the pilot programme finished there was nothing formal planned for them to continue as a group in the following semester. All the students expressed their concerns, but Suzie's statement best exemplifies how the ephemeral nature of such courses can leave vulnerable young people feeling abandoned all over again.

Suzie: *You cannot just grow me attached to people and then bring me away from them.*

When individuals' sense of values, purpose and meaning was bound up in the identity they had created for themselves as young filmmakers, and when the filmmaking was discontinued, they confronted the obvious question: Where to from here? For youth who have acquired skills and capabilities as filmmakers who may be encouraged to contribute to creative and cultural industries (as laid out in the goals of the pilot programme), what is

next for them when they hold a socially marginalised position in the wider society? So despite the optimism associated with their assessments of the course itself, and the way they attributed it to having significant positive impacts on their lives and learning, its limits became all too evident. Such programmes have differential effects on individual participants. Paul, for example, went on to win a scholarship that allowed him to continue his learning at the NSS, but there was not enough money to continue to pay for David to run another course for these students as a group, and their entitlements to certificated courses were restricted. Hence the success experienced in the ten-week course remained ephemeral for most participants. Suzie and Kate expressed their disappointment in terms of hurt and anger. Having put themselves into an educational situation wholeheartedly, when it finished the associated gains are seen as temporary. The lack of a sustainable programme of arts-based courses for these young people is not unusual (Sefton-Green, 2013; te Riele, 2012; Thomson, 2014) and, from our perspective, not excusable.

Conclusion

Researchers sometimes don't ask 'tough questions about the actual quality and impact of young people's learning experiences, or the extent to which the benefits carry over into measurable social and educational capital outside a short-term program' (Soep, 2006, p. 200).

As we have discussed, the promise and the reality of this filmmaking course indicated that as well as feelings of enhanced self-efficacy, there can be dangers with the intensity of this feeling and levels of interdependence that relate to the continuity of the setting and the opportunities provided. Referring to non-school learning opportunities, Sefton-Green (2013) concludes that 'a diverse ecology of provision' is needed. In this case, a range of beyond-school media production activities was required to allow these young people to continue beyond a one-off course.

While we can take the success of the ten-week course as illustrative of the potential for reimagining education and working from principles of justice and equity, we also confront two ethical questions: What is education for? What are schools for? To return to the view of Foucauldian

scholars to which we alluded at the beginning of the chapter, if schools are places that perpetuate educational disadvantage, to address the inequalities that stem from that we need a major reinvention of schooling. One thing which is clear from the COVID-19 pandemic is that a major, if not *the* major factor that counts for young people, is the quality of the social interactions they experience with each other and with teachers. Being together, treating each other with respect, developing shared memories, laughing and crying, and negotiating responsibilities are more than 'soft skills'. They are integral to the 'vitality' of pedagogical encounters and the well-being of learners and their teachers.

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9

An Arts-Led Recovery in 'Disadvantaged' Schools!

Adam Gribble, Jenna Miltenoff, Robert Hattam, and Katie Maher

Introduction

This chapter reports on the transformational work of two secondary school teachers—one who teaches music (Jenna) and the other performing arts (Adam). They work in a public secondary school in one of the most educationally disadvantaged urban regions in Australia (Phillips & Prosser, 2020) that has embarked recently on enacting a whole-of-school transformational plan (2015–2019). We invoke the term 'disadvantaged

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school' which can be considered a 'key word' in educational sociology (Williams, 1976) and hence operates as a place marker for what is a global problem for educators—the way that schooling produces inequality (Ashurst & Venn, 2014; Munns et al., 2013). In 2015, the state education department appointed a new school principal with a remit to do school differently, given that the school was struggling with declining student numbers, plummeting staff morale and despairing outcomes on any measure (Hattam, 2018a). The plan that provided a blueprint for reforms during this period was framed up as a whole-of-school transformation that involved substantial re-structuring, re-culturing and pedagogical change (Smyth et al., 2003). As such, the plan focused on re-structuring and reculturing for improving student achievement in mainstream classrooms (Hattam & Sullivan, 2016). This meant working to unsettle deficit thinking about the students and their communities (Comber & Kamler, 2004). Changes to practice were supported by whole-of-school action research approaches to professional learning focused on re-designing practice (curriculum and pedagogy) with support from critical friends (Hattam et al., 2009). Structurally, the transformational plan was driven by the hope for sustainable whole-school change through enacting 'educational' and distributive leadership (Hayes et al., 2017).

This chapter reports specifically on how the whole-of-school action research approach that was developed actually supported the transformational work of two of the arts faculty teachers and hence provides a telling case study of how teachers in so-called disadvantaged schools are working to turn around student learning outcomes (Kamler & Comber, 2005). One of the four authors of this chapter (Hattam) facilitated a whole-of-school action research approach in 2016 with a view to support staff to build capacity as reflective practitioners. Subsequently, the principal supported a small cohort of his staff to enrol in a *Master of Education* programme. All of this cohort completed a dissertation, and this chapter provides a very brief summary of two of these: *An Argument for the Arts: Rethinking Music Education* (Miltenoff), and *Student Empowerment and Project Based Learning: How PBL Can Lead to Cultural Change by*

Removing Historical Structural Barriers to Learning (Gribble). The opening two sections of this chapter are extracts from these two theses judiciously edited into two short portraits (Smyth & McInerney, 2013).

> These portraits offer a glimpse into 'a scheme of interpretation' (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 36) through which school life can and is made recognizable and intelligible. School practices—and specifically citizenship/global citizenship education—arise out of a school-based and local problematisation and in response to locally diagnosed problems. (Hattam, 2018b, p. 263)

On drafting narrative portraits, we draw on Marcus' (1998) argument for 'messy texts' (p. 198) that experiment with our representations and produce polyvocal or polyphonic texts, or put simply, 'saying more by letting "others" say it' (Marcus, 1998, p. 36). The two portraits provide a rich account of a school context, and specifically what teachers can create in redesigning Arts education in a disadvantaged school struggling with a history of disenfranchised and disengaged students. Both teachers have been working on redesigning curriculum and pedagogy with a view to improving student achievement through trialling strategies that offer some hope for re-engaging their students in 'hard fun' (Clifford & Friesen, 2003). Adam reports on his successful attempts to take up elements of Project-Based Learning (Leat, 2017), and especially giving his students more opportunities to construct their own learning as part of a class performance (Hyde, 1992). Jenna, on the other hand, redesigned her music programme with reference to critical pedagogy studies (Abrahams, 2005) to ensure the development of foundational musical knowledge whilst also maintaining personalised approaches to learning in the middle years (Wright, 2013). We conclude the chapter with some reflections on the unique potential of the arts curriculum to re-engage those students who reject the senior years of secondary schools. The arts curriculum has the potential to connect the identity work that young people are doing with the official curriculum of school. The arts curriculum as reported here are also exemplars of ethical and 'local curations of learning' (Atkinson, 2011, p. 151).

Rethinking Music Education: Jenna Miltenoff's Story

I have been working in the Special Interest Music Centre (SIMC), which is one of only four in South Australia. During my tenure, I have been Music Coordinator, and now Deputy Head of Music. But before telling the story, I will make case for music education in Australian schools.

The Case for Music Education in Australian Schools

In the current National Curriculum, music is a non-compulsory subject and is not highly regarded in the hierarchy of educational priorities. Embedding 'the Arts' into the curriculum presents issues around subject programmes becoming tokenistic or, more importantly, students missing out on enriching learning experiences. Generally, our students do not see music education as relevant to their lives or connected to their lived experience, even though there is a growing number of students with differing interests in their musical pursuits, including musical creativity through composition and music production. But '[m]usic can bring school success to those students unsuccessful in other curricular subjects' (Colwell, 1997, p. 20). Music can enhance other school subjects, strengthen communication skills and improve connections and application of learning across subject areas. Music enhances higher-order thinking and perceptual learning skills. It can assist students in dealing with ambiguity and stress and solving problems. Music can enhance worldly awareness, affirm a sense of self and improve self-management skills. Music education 'develops a connection between disciplined work habits and getting results … It constantly appeals to many different intelligences, visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, social, logical and more' (Colwell, 1997, pp. 20–21).

Unfortunately, traditional methods of teaching music are not working for our students, which I understand to be the main reason why our students have not seen music education as relevant. Classroom pedagogy for music is still highly constrained by the formal teaching of Western Classical Music which sets up the disconnect with students learning

music in schools. Music class doesn't connect with their enjoyment and experience of engaging in music outside of the classroom (Green, 2002). Instead, music educators need to find connections between formal teachings of music and the informal learning that our students are engaged in outside of school. Such a reframe locates the production and development of musical knowledge with the students themselves and thus allows for a higher degree of student-centred learning and a strong version of student voice in music classrooms (Comte, 2005).

My Journey as a Music Educator

I began working at the school as a graduate teacher in 2014 and was assigned a range of music classes from Years 8 to 12. I felt immense pressure to prepare materials without a clear set curriculum, documentation and mapping to guide me. As a recently graduated teacher it was essential for me to understand the behaviours and complex circumstances of students if I was going to have any success as their teacher. Initially, I observed that the majority of my students were reluctant to engage with what I was offering, and they relied on me to instruct rather than facilitate their learning. But the most unsuccessful lessons occurred when I attempted to lecture students without encouraging inquiry, discussion and exploration.

Students seemed to have low self-confidence and a fixed belief about what they could or could not achieve. I observed that my students struggled to adapt to change, lacked resilience and motivation and often refused to engage in anything outside of their comfort zones. Students would shut down and dismiss the unknown when I presented anything challenging. This meant considering the needs of all students in the class, understanding the diversity that exists, the larger social contexts and their physiological and emotional states. This presented significant challenges. Delpit (1988) is helpful here as she suggests that 'we must keep the perspective that people are experts on their own lives. They can be the only authentic chroniclers of their own experience' but in the second instance, students must also be 'assisted in learning the culture of power' (p. 286). An integral part of becoming a teacher, then, was to establish a culture of

learning that generated authentic experiences for my students to be active learners rather than passive recipients.

In my first year, in the Special Interest Music programme, I taught composition to Year 8 students, and musical styles to Year 9 students. But the students were not really engaged in my classes and significant time was spent providing one-to-one feedback rather than engaging the class. I endeavoured to engage students through relevant content such as modern film composition and rock and roll history. Whilst some students demonstrated high levels of achievement, too many were exhibiting a clear disconnect between musical literacy, creative applications and performance across the Special Interest Music course. During that year I also taught music technology to Year 11 and 12 students and noticed that, while there were some outstanding performers, all were very hesitant to compose music or demonstrate any applied musicianship outside of playing their instrument. As such, I was continually restructuring my music technology course to embed links to musical literacy, practical, instrumental technique, digital literacy and creative composition. The majority of students struggled immensely with creative composition and musical literacy. With a high emphasis placed on music performance, these students received intense support from both instrumental and classroom music staff to reproduce repertoire as a re-creative performance. Whilst the Special Interest Music programme was supporting students to become high-level performers, I felt a number of students were not flourishing and achieving their full potential as musicians.

In 2015, I was appointed as the Music Coordinator. This was an abrupt transition into educational leadership. I continued to develop relationships with students and their families and strongly encouraged new staff to do the same. As Fitzgerald and Gunter (2008) explain: 'Placing learners and learning at the centre of analysis has the potential to offer a new perspective on leadership, leading, learning and learners' (p. 338). I started to move away from assuming I was the centre of learning. Instead, learning should be flexible and shaped by making new discoveries about what knowledge and experiences the students bring to my classes.

In my current role as Deputy Head of Music, I support classroom, ancillary and instrumental staff, foster community partnerships, coordinate public performances and, most critically, lead the development of

curriculum and pedagogy. With that in mind, I turned to examine how critical pedagogy could inform a new music pedagogy.

Towards a Critical Pedagogy of Music Education

In developing a critical pedagogy for music education we drew on principles developed by Abrahams (2005), thereby working with these provocations:

- Education is regarded as a *conversation* between teachers and students who pose problems and solve them together. Thus, both students and teachers engage in collaborative dialogue that builds upon pre-existing knowledge (Abrahams, 2005; Schmidt, 2005);
- Education broadens teachers' and students' views of reality and changes the way that both teachers and students perceive the world. Our goal is to help students develop self-efficacy and provide them with the necessary tools to carry out their own musical explorations;
- Education is *empowering*, involving the idea of 'conscientization' (Freire, 1970) which implies an understanding and ability to act on learning in such ways as to effect change. Music education based on critical pedagogy seeks to empower students to be musicians and engages musical creativity, intelligence and celebration through performance (Abrahams, 2005);
- Education is *transformative*, with both teachers and students acknowledging a change in perception. Educators need to critically examine their own educational training and identities and to be flexible, creative and adaptable educators who are able to listen to and incorporate students' voices into curriculum; and
- Education is *political*, involving issues of power and control inside the classroom, school and community. This involves teaching students how to break down texts, source information, synthesise, develop self-regulatory routines and form their own opinions and use this knowledge to shape their own creative works.

Special Interest Music Programme Development

Since 2015, the Special Interest Music curriculum has centred on: composing and arranging through technology; jazz performance and improvisation; music performance (solo and ensemble); and musicianship and analysis. The jazz focus intended to consolidate a balance of formal and informal learning, technical proficiency, musical literacy and aural skill development. These elements form part of the essential learning required to understand and proficiently perform music in jazz styles, and are transferable across other musical genres.

In jazz performance classes, all students engage in an ensemble, learning to improvise and explore a range of different jazz genres. Through a blend of formal and informal instruction, students can develop their own creative ideas. By embedding improvisation as a core skill within the middle school curriculum, students can develop a higher level of musicianship and creativity through a continual cycle of learning a concept, practicing the concept and performing the concept. Theoretical concepts such as form, scales, modes, techniques and harmony are covered through creative applications and performance. For example, students learning about Blues music have the opportunity to perform, improvise and compose in this style. A high emphasis is placed on allowing learning experiences to be shared between students and teachers, and on aural development and class discussion. Students explore a diverse range of musical styles with their teachers, establishing connections between their world and unfamiliar concepts and the unknown.

While classical music tends to place a high emphasis on the ability to sight read and play from notation, jazz music places a higher emphasis on playing by ear, memorisation and improvisation. While focusing on jazz music, students are encouraged to develop technical versatility across a variety of musical genres. Students in the programme are given more class time to engage in a higher level of collaboration with their teacher and peers to further develop stylistic knowledge and establish clear links between practical and theoretical concepts.

Special Interest Music students now have the opportunity to be involved in a range of public performances at school, locally, interstate

and intrastate at events such as Generations in Jazz and Big Band Blast. The aim has been to establish more opportunities and platforms for students to present creative works and engage in creative performance, allowing students to develop stylistic knowledge, link practical and theoretical concepts, develop creative connections and explore music at a high level.

Another example involved empowering students to develop compositional projects and learn targeted content through guided discovery. This involved teaching students the fundamentals of music production and composing through technology, creative techniques and applied music theory. Guided discovery is student-driven, encouraging 'exploration, inquiry, and problem solving to process new knowledge, while incorporating their previous experiences' (Bicknell-Holmes & Seth Hoffman, 2000). Through guided discovery, students were able to harness greater control over their learning and engage with content through active discussion, collaboration, inquiry and self-discovery. I worked collaboratively with students as they created their own music as engineers, producers, composers and performers. Students developed higher levels of digital literacy through the extensive use of audio workstations and digital resources. This led to a number of students successfully gaining entry into specialist music programmes in tertiary institutions through non-traditional pathways. They submitted portfolios of high-quality, original work rather than completing exam-based subjects and a performance audition. Students also developed a range of transferable skills, leading them to successful pathways in other areas of study.

The Special Interest Music programme strives to prepare students for an uncertain, rapidly changing future. Our focus has shifted towards encouraging students to persevere, collaborate and overcome problems to achieve creative outcomes through composition and performance. We are continually working towards a curriculum where practical and theoretical activities are cohesively intertwined and, ultimately, build the stepping stones for students to then engage in their own discovery and explorations of music.

Contemporary Music Programme

Our redeveloped curriculum introduces clear pathways for Contemporary Music students through to Year 12 and beyond. The Contemporary Music programme focuses on performance (ensemble); composing and arranging using technology (song-writing focus); music production (live audio, studio recording, technical skills) and musicianship and analysis. Content has been expanded for more demanding musical literacy tasks and technical skill development to allow for successful progression into Vocational Education and Training (VET) music courses and South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) music pathways. A critical part of the music faculty's strategic plan has been to ensure that content is relevant to changing cohorts of students. Green (2002) notes that pop musicians may seek formal education as a means of acquiring 'analytic and notation skills' in addition to the knowledge and skills they have acquired informally (p. 163). I have observed students who enjoy contemporary class bands in Year 8/9 who then wish to take their music studies more seriously. Music staff are currently engaged in action research with the goal to improve students' musical literacy development. We have successfully created a vast range of opportunities and pathways for music students by establishing industry, tertiary and community links with a range of different organisations. Key partnerships have provided students with opportunities for paid gigs, studio sessions and work experience with professional sound engineers and music producers.

A New Approach: Primary School Music Pilot Programmes

Moving forward, we set out to support primary schools and embed music as a regular part of the curriculum, to normalise instrumental music programmes within primary schools and to create a clear line of sight for music excellence encompassing primary, secondary, tertiary and industry pathways. A culmination of instrumental learning came together in November 2018, where ensembles from all participating primary schools performed on stage and had an absolute blast engaging in a real-world,

authentic learning experience. Significant changes in the curriculum, pedagogy and staff support structures continue to develop. We have attempted to embed a love of learning as a part of our school culture.

Bringing about change for the most disadvantaged students means engaging in school reform that goes considerably beyond tinkering at the edges. Such reform is prepared to challenge and supplant some of the most fundamental and cherished assumptions about the way schools ought to be (Smyth et al., 2003, p. 178).

Addressing the urgent need for music programmes to commence in the primary years is critical as this directly impacts learning through the secondary years and beyond. There is a clear correlation between students who engage in quality music education and increased academic performance. The Australian Federal government mandates educational initiatives that prioritise the improvement of literacy and numeracy, while music and the other arts suffer. Government policy agendas fail to consider how music education can help address literacy and numeracy. Urgent work needs to occur in the northern region of Adelaide, South Australia, to break the mould and think beyond deficits in order to enact meaningful change and improve outcomes for students.

Performing Arts and Project-Based Learning: Adam Gribble's Story

I Grew Up in the Northern Suburbs

Having spent my life in the northern suburbs of Adelaide, South Australia, I have always been acutely aware of the view that people in non-northern suburbs often have of the North, often by the condescending eye-roll and knowing nod that people give when they attempt to communicate what it means to be from the outer suburb of Elizabeth. Mostly they communicate that somehow I was deficient because of where I was raised. However, I have also always been aware that these views are not adequately reflective of the diverse and talented group of people who live and grow up in my community. I was constantly reminded through the arts

and through the hardworking people around me that being from Elizabeth did not mean a person was going to be a failure.

As a counterview, working-class communities have been continually let down by a lack of understanding of the everyday challenges and complexities they face. While acknowledging the strengths of my upbringing, such as having a strong family matriarch, my family also experienced domestic violence, a high prevalence of mental illness, an absentee parent and poverty. My experiences are reflective of many of the lives of the students I teach. The influence of such complexities creates a classroom dynamic in which the traditional approaches to teaching—where students sit in neat rows and copy from the board—just do not work. Many of my students are living in poverty and hence live in families that are struggling financially and living week-to-week. This becomes significant when planning an educational programme, as you are battling with external factors beyond your control.

Diversity as an Asset for Teaching

My school has a remarkable and diverse student population with varying needs, desires and interests. The school has a culturally diverse student cohort including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (10%) and increasing numbers of students with migrant and refugee backgrounds (10%). Over 20% of students have additional learning needs. But students from low socio-economic backgrounds have their own sets of skills and understanding. They come to school with their own *funds of knowledge* (Moll et al., 1992), but these knowledges will not help them with education in many schools. Schooling as it stands does not know how to measure and value these skills. For instance, the traditional education paradigm is often dismissive of the knowledges of Indigenous peoples. And students from migrant backgrounds are consistently reminded that their knowledge and understanding are not valued. Although they have life experiences many of their counterparts could scarcely imagine, the skills developed through those experiences take a back seat to the dominant middle-class values that dominate education (Hamilton, 1999). The transformation of pedagogy at my school sought to honour

the diverse experiences and understanding that our students bring to the table (Bell, 2010).

But then I have often struggled to find an approach to teaching drama that works for each cohort. Often, I have not been able to engage students when depth of thought was required. Some students reacted with lethargy and indifference, which often turned to anger when approached about their lack of effort. While some dedicated students were excited to work on a production, others simply wanted to get a passing grade. Disengaged students did minimal work or used the dramatic process as an excuse to run around and be silly. Those who were only somewhat interested memorised and delivered their lines without any particular emotion. If I asked students why they weren't engaged, I was met with responses like 'I don't like acting', I wanted to do soccer but it was full'. John, for example, was really annoyed that he didn't get into Soccer Academy. In drama class, he responded exactly the same way when his character was hit by a car, as he did when his character discovered that he stepped on gum. When he refused to put any effort in it sapped the enthusiasm of the entire team. Even the students who were adept and interested in drama didn't do as well as they could have. Theatre is a group endeavour, and they were left with little to work with from their group members. I wanted to create a suitable learning environment that would allow the disengaged to engage, and the engaged to thrive. I knew that the school production would have to offer these students something different.

Enacting Project-Based Learning Approaches

I started teaching here in 2015, when a new principal was also appointed with a directive to improve the school's educational outcomes. Importantly for me, there was a whole-school focus on a new pedagogical framework called *project-based learning* (PBL) (Solomon, 2003) which provoked us to change the way that we thought about success. PBL teaching approaches support students to focus on those areas in which they can contribute and engage in their learning in a manner that allows them to feel more in control of their own situation. PBL aims to create an environment in

which students can work in collaborative groups or independently, depending on their preference, and allow students to defer to peers when feeling overwhelmed or confused. PBL allows students to formulate projects in which the measures of success are closer to their own personal values and goals and will be assessed, at least in part, by people within their own communities. This form of learning lets students utilise their own unique skills, knowledges and understandings. Teachers act more as educational guides than as guardians of knowledge. Students talk with teachers about what and how they are going to learn. They aren't being judged by some unknown external set of rules, rather by a structure that they themselves have helped to build. This is important in my community, where the attitudes of the families of students are peppered with a powerful distrust of those who seem to have the authority to take away what little they possess. This form of learning places responsibility in the hands of students. As students have been disempowered for so long, there is a widespread sense of apathy toward learning. Many are happy to fail because they don't believe the system is designed to work for them in the first place. But the dialogic learning model (Shor & Freire, 1987a) requires buy-in by teachers. Teachers who use this model of learning need resources, training and expertise to explain these paradigms to students and build in them a willingness to actively participate in learning again.

Conducting Action Research on My Own Practice

Alongside adopting PBL approaches, staff at my school had been involved in action research-driven professional learning since 2016. Given the challenges outlined above, a drama co-teacher and I decided to conduct action research on our attempt to extend our drama programme from in-school performances to a dinner theatre concept. Ongoing discussions with my colleague helped clarify observations and gave an alternative perspective on interpretations of student engagement and growth. We found that although students were engaged in drama, there was no drive to exceed expectations because they felt that the insular audience at the school was not worth the effort. We decided to expand our audience to a public performance, with a view to improving the level of student

involvement in the 2018 class. My action research was based around the question: 'How does empowering students through Project Based Learning (PBL) impact overall engagement and attitude to learning?' I focused on the drama component of 2018 Dinner Theatre production of *Peter Pan*. In this production, the students had *voice* in what they wished to perform. They performed for the public at a local theatre rather than at school, and were *responsible for* and *led* almost every aspect of the play, while teachers acted as guides. Because of the diverse range of roles, the skills practiced were relevant for *all* students.

The play wasn't forced upon students but was, rather, something they actively created. They identified with *Disney* and, in prior discussions, *Peter Pan* popped up a couple of times. We were going to buy an online script but realised that wouldn't represent student voices. They needed to feel like it 'belonged' to them, so we created a basic script that could be workshopped by students. We altered the script to fit ideas that students came up with. We held auditions, working with the students to outline each role and what responsibilities accompanied that role. For off-stage roles, the student shared what they wanted to do and why they wanted that role. Some of the disengaged parties stepped into roles more willingly than before. One student, Peta, really surprised me. The idea of performing on a real stage changed her approach entirely. Iris, who had been apathetic in the previous drama production, applied to do some work with the art team on the painting of sets and the construction of props. When the opportunity came for her to pursue a passion, she actually wanted to get involved.

Although attendance remained inconsistent, most students found time to catch up. But as the semester progressed, the student we cast as Peter (the lead role) was struggling. His attendance and engagement dropped, and he was replaced by Peta who had been diligently remembering her own blocking (stage movement) as well as that of the lead role. This highlighted the ongoing struggles of students and the need for structural school support for students to be successful. It also demonstrated the impacts of an engaging curriculum, with Peta able to step into the lead role at a moment's notice. Almost everyone turned up to holiday workshops. Overall, those who had been disengaged were now willing to work towards a goal, knowing that it was going to be on public display.

Louise, however, was still chronically absent and sat in the back of the class on her phone when she was present.

On day one of the performance, students 'pitched in', bringing in sets, props and costumes. They spent the day practicing running sets on and off stage, working with lights and music, learning where to stand and where everything is backstage. This is where some students really came into their own. Many of the students were adept at following instructions and completing tasks, but some really surprised me. John, who had been reluctant to engage, became a backstage leader. He rallied the crew and took control of the microphones, a big responsibility as the entire show relied on smooth and effective microphone transition. Jessica went above and beyond in her efforts to lead the backstage group. Without needing to be asked, she was setting up for scenes as they approached, making sure actors were on their marks and ensuring props were organised. My sole job throughout the night was supervision.

The performance itself went smoothly, with the students running the entire backstage of the show, and performing to an audience of more than 200 people. They transitioned each scene smoothly, delivered their lines precisely and completed their jobs without complaint.

Overall, the students demonstrated success through the production. Those students who were already adept at drama were able to improve and push themselves to new levels because they were working in an environment in which their peers were as engaged in their learning as they were. They could bounce off fellow performers who were taking the roles seriously. Peta, who had shown the potential to be a strong Drama student, took advantage of this learning environment and truly thrived, learning not just one but two complete roles, and taking the lead role in the production. Some improvements in student engagement were subtle, and others were amazing. Iris, for example, who was previously unwilling to engage in any meaningful way, received a very sound passing grade. She began to show initiative as I began to respect her learning dispositions and encouraged her to lead her own learning. When confronted with the prospect of performing for his family and friends, Jake began paying attention and putting effort into his performance. Although he often found himself in trouble for being too rambunctious, he was actually connecting to and engaging in his learning. The sole student for

whom this project was not a success was Louise. I attempted to work with her throughout the project, asking her where her passions were and pointing her in the direction of appropriate contributions, but I was unsuccessful. This demonstrated that while this method of learning can be powerful, it will not work with every person. Barring Louise, every other student achieved a passing grade. We continued to struggle with all of the usual traps of a low SES high school, such as attendance issues, wellbeing concerns and family struggles, but students were more willing to engage in and catch up on activities and took responsibility for the production in a fashion I had not seen from them before.

Shifting Power in My Classroom

I learnt several important things from my action research. Firstly, the 'student choice' element of PBL worked for most of my students. Many students who had been disengaged came on board in a big way. Several students really thrived. Peta, who struggled with intrinsic motivation to learn, found herself truly engaging when given extrinsic motivation. She realised that she actually liked what she was doing and pushed herself further and further to step into the lead role. Students took the power that was handed to them and used it to thrive. Secondly, engaging the local community was a powerful way to motivate my students. Knowing that their parents, friends, teachers and even people that they don't know were coming to watch them perform, the students had something to work towards. The students didn't want to be embarrassed by putting on something that wasn't very good. As well, a few parents said this was the best opportunity they had ever had to be a part of their child's learning. They were proud to watch their children perform and happy to be an active part of it. Students were performing to an audience who came from where they grew up, with many of the same values. Those people, through their applause and approval, were the judges of student success or failure. Third, PBL is not a magic bullet that will work for every student on every occasion. Not all of my students were completely successful. The student-led learning model left Louise adrift on those occasions where she did actually come to class. Some students, like Gary, had

difficulty finding a role in the production relevant to his strengths and interests. It is important for students to understand that skills are transferable. I failed to convince John that the ability to work in teams towards common goals would be something that would transfer well into the world of soccer, or that the ability to work under pressure in front of an audience might make him a better player when the heat is on.

By way of a conclusion, this action research project showed promising application of PBL methodologies, but there is also ample opportunity for further growth. While the students helped to select the play and workshop the script, they didn't have full control in selection. This could be expanded by allowing the students to choose the script and the manner and place in which it is performed. They could also organise and negotiate the venue, the catering, the menus and writing the script. Also, PBL is one part of a larger picture. PBL needs to be a part of a holistic educational approach that places students at the centre of their own learning, facilitated by teachers who are experts in dialogic pedagogies.

Transforming Arts Teaching in Disadvantaged Schools

Across both of the portraits we have identified several themes that we think provide some broad directions for schools and teachers who are committed to improving student achievement in the Arts in so-called disadvantaged schools:

1. Unsettling deficit views of young people living in high-poverty communities;
2. Refusing the marginalisation of the arts curriculum in schools;
3. Treating teachers' classroom challenges seriously and as *the* site for professional learning and pedagogical change; and
4. Enacting turnaround pedagogies that (i) provide high intellectual challenge; (ii) connect strongly to student lifeworlds and, (iii) support the performing of learning.

As a precursor to enacting alternative approaches to teaching, both Jenna and Adam explained their own struggles to think past deficit thinking that often manifests in disadvantaged schools. Both Jenna and Adam take up an approach that rejects the two variations of deficit thinking that are now very apparent in Australian schools. As they note, the most common deficit view, and one that has a long history, perpetuates negative stereotypes about young people living in high poverty communities, and renders them incapable of being successful at school (Hattam & Prosser, 2008). This version of deficit thinking operates as a self-fulfilling prophecy (Rist, 1970) for those who perpetuate its logic. A second and more recent deficit logic is now perpetuated by the policy regime for Australian schools. In the words of Sellar and Lingard (2014), contemporary neoliberalising policy is characterised by 'the absent presence of socioeconomic context'. This is part of a broader policy move, in Australia and globally, to 'bracket out', or hold constant, questions of school and social context in order to focus policy attention on improving and measuring the performance outcomes of students and teachers (Sellar & Lingard, 2014, p. 1).

Put simply, in the name of getting past deficit, current policy works like this: let's just ignore the way that inequality works through schooling (Bertrand et al., 2015). Once we ignore the inequality problem, then we can also ignore the reality of disengagement from mainstream approaches to schooling that is so evident in disadvantaged schools. Once we ignore disengagement, and too many young people have good reasons to reject what is on offer in mainstream schooling, then we can comfortably blame the students for their own failure. Ignoring widespread disengagement also enables policy makers to proclaim, unproblematically, that more explicit teaching will improve learning outcomes (Coffield, 2012; Luke, 2013). Or, to quote Comber (1998), 'how might we foreground material disadvantage without unleashing normative moral discourses which pathologise disadvantaged communities and reduce children to amalgams of categories?' (p. 7).

But then for teachers working in disadvantaged schools, neither of these positions is acceptable. Jenna and Adam are not naïve about the challenge. They both accept that their students are 'wounded by school' (Olson, 2009) and hence resist what is an offer. Thus, in too many

classrooms, the students are in control of the curriculum through a 'culture of sabotage' that 'produces a stalemate in countless classrooms' (Shor & Freire, 1987b, p. 125). What Jenna and Adam adopt instead is an assets-based approach to their students. Pushing back against the deficit stereotypes, both Jenna and Adam assume that their students bring productive funds of knowledge to their classrooms. There is an assumption that students 'are competent and have knowledge, and their life experiences have given them that knowledge' (González & Moll, 2002, p. 625). Rejecting deficit discourse is the starting point, but the real work involves redesigning curriculum and pedagogy to potentially turn around school failure, or to enact 'turn-around pedagogies' (Comber & Kamler, 2005).

Jenna and Adam have also had to work with and against the operation of a curriculum hierarchy that operates in secondary schools and that has serious impact in the final years of school (Teese, 1998). But then arts subjects do offer young people learning opportunities that enable them to actually engage in their identity work, that is, the work of *becoming somebody:*

> 'Becoming somebody' might be understood as the daily project of establishing a social identity or the 'construction of the self' (Tait, 1993). It names succinctly what students are up to: making a life for themselves. Becoming somebody might also be thought of in terms of a 'desire for recognition, and protection over time and in space and always under circumstances not of their own choosing' (West, 1992, p. 20). (Hattam & Smyth, 2003, p. 383)

As well, both Jenna and Adam have rejected the traditional approaches to their specific subjects and have redesigned what arts teaching looks like. As noted above, assets-based teaching approaches are driven by a demand for teachers to connect up the school curriculum to what their students bring to class, and hence not be paralysed by the view that they do not bring the right cultural and social capital. Deficit teaching most often slides into either a back-to-basics curriculum and/or learning tasks with low intellectual challenge. Assets-based approaches reject abandoning the rigour that is required for success in the later years of secondary school. This means that assets-based teaching struggles with the challenge

of sustaining high expectations for learning *and* positive relationships. 'The task then is to develop ways of understanding students' lives, as practiced and experienced, which *foreground* inequitable material circumstances, but which avoid the dangerous effects which have sometimes accompanied "background"' (Comber, 1998, p. 17, emphasis in original). On this point we must remember again Delpit's (1988) powerful argument:

> I suggest that students must be *taught* the codes needed to participate fully in the mainstream of … life, not by being forced to attend to hollow, inane, decontexualized subskills, but rather within the context of meaningful communicative endeavours; that they must be allowed the resource of the teacher's expert knowledge, while being helped to acknowledge their own 'expertness' as well. (p. 296)

The Delpit argument foregrounds tensions around what knowledge counts in the official curriculum, and this question has been at the centre of decades of debates in curriculum studies (Zipin, 2017). The long-term challenge here is to clarify conceptually and to further develop a more dialectical interrelation invoked by Delpit and Zipin. How can we provide some clarity around the lifeworld knowledges that young people bring to class?

The pedagogical challenge then is to find ways to integrate lifeworld and subject discipline knowledges in ways that don't trivialise either. The argument for lifeworld relevance of the curriculum is not a new idea and has taken various forms in the past. Lifeworld knowledge may include community knowledge, local knowledge, personal experience, media and popular culture sources. Whilst not exhaustive, the following list indicates variations for informing curriculum and pedagogical redesign:

- *Negotiating the curriculum*: Boomer (1992a) invoked the metaphor of composing the curriculum; the curriculum being 'a jointly enacted composition' (Boomer, 1992b, p. 32); which he argues provides a frame for thinking past the idea of curriculum as pre-packaged, involving 'lock-step teaching sequences' experienced as 'an almost self-perpetuating chain of subjections' (Boomer, 1992a, p. 5). Adam

provides an exemplar of negotiating or co-constructing the curriculum with his students.

- *Connectedness in the 'productive pedagogies'* (Hayes et al., 2006) 'presents students with a specific practical, real or hypothetical problem (set of problems) to solve' (p. 98) and which have 'value and meaning beyond the instructional context' (p. 97), and which makes 'a connection to the larger social context within which students live' (p. 55). Jenna's case study provides an exemplar of how arts teachers can connect up with their students' prior knowledge and, in her case, their own music practices.
- A *funds of knowledge approach* as a counter-discourse to scripted and over-determined curriculum designs (Moll et al., 1992; Zipin et al., 2012).
- A *local literacies approach* advanced by Street (1994) and Luke et al. (1994) proposes a focus on the vernacular literacies (McLaughlin, 1997) closely associated with subcultures that are marginalised, misrepresented or absent in mainstream institutions. Adam's students produced their own scripts which, in part, engaged their own vernacular.
- Connecting with young people's engagement with *popular culture and out-of-school learning settings* provides another productive site for curriculum and pedagogical redesign (Dimitriadis & Weis, 2001). Duncan-Andrade (2004) proposes a useful definition here: 'youth popular culture includes the various cultural activities in which young people invest their time, including but not limited to: music, television, movies, video, games and sport, Internet, text messaging, style and language practices' (p. 313). Jenna activated her students' engagements in music.
- *Place-based pedagogies* enable students to connect what they are learning to their own lives, communities and regions (Kerkham & Comber, 2012).
- The *multiliteracies project* (New London Group, 1996) argued for 'situated practice', or that part of curriculum that aims to 'recruit learners' previous and current experiences, as well as their extra-school communities and discourses, as an integral part of the learning experience' (p. 85).

By way of a concluding comment, and bringing the argument back to our title, our chapter has argued that arts teachers who are working in disadvantaged schools can:

- redesign their curriculum and pedagogy in ways that get past the deficit discourses that too often define our work;
- promote the arts in secondary schools as one of the key subjects for academic success, providing opportunities for students to engage meaningfully with the important identity work that is most often ignored by schooling; and
- provide a place at school that most powerfully enfranchises and engages young people in rigorous life-affirming schoolwork.

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10

Pre-Enchanting Young People in Learning and Employment: Building Safe Relations for Diverse Students

Bec Neill

Introduction

This chapter describes research exploring the capacity of integrated arts and digital-technologies curriculum designs to strengthen Year 6/7 students' (aged 11 to 12 years) sense of belonging and identity within a diverse Australian primary school.[1] This school is in an inner capital city suburb characterised by high levels of unemployment, poverty, and linguistic, cultural and religious diversity. Such diversity has been increasing in Australia since the 1970s, when the colonial 'White Australia' policy was dismantled and subsequently replaced with policies promoting

[1] The research formed part of a broader research project, conducted across a variety of public and parish schools. It focused on developing cultural and schooling connections, and enhancing educational achievement for refugee and migrant students, through site-specific initiatives, co-designed with school leaders and teachers (Soong & Comber, 2017; Wrench et al., 2017).

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multiculturalism, while noting that—prior to English colonisation—equivalent diversity also existed, with First Nations peoples speaking a minimum of 250 languages between them (Heugh, 2014). Ten students completed a term-long (ten-week) extension unit, scaffolded on a prior whole-of-class curriculum unit, in which students produced bilingual digital stories designed to instruct or inform (Robin, 2006) younger peers about school routines. Students in the extension group produced print media books in eight languages (beyond English). They crafted accompanying play resources and activities to be used in junior primary classrooms (students aged 5–7 years). Whilst the planned curriculum focus was on written instructional literacy, the pedagogical design of the book and activity-making focused on digital and cultural literacies. Understandings of the challenges such students face include disrupted schooling, varying levels of English competency and experiences of trauma and cultural displacement (Hattam & Every, 2010). The design established a 'makerspace' (Sheridan et al., 2014) in which students' funds of knowledge (Moll & González, 1997) were privileged and agency welcomed.

Using creative and critical systems approaches, the analysis re-imagines or thinks-in-images about the participating prospective secondary students' technical, practical and emancipatory knowledge interests (Habermas, 2005), which they shared as they developed and made digital and physical designs of books and play-based activities. The analysis explores the schooling interfaces that multilingual students experience by examining the relation-making and identity work they undertook in the making space, and the 'informational support' (Checkland, 1999a, p. 54) they sought in pursuit of their knowledge interests. This attunement to students' knowledge interests complicates dominant cultural views of their schooling experience within education debates and generates possible pathways for pre-engaging young people in learning and future employment during their transition from primary to secondary schooling.

The chapter proceeds by outlining the importance of pre-enchanting diverse students in learning and work opportunities and the arts-based, relational and Indigenist approaches which informed the research. It details the specific methods used to hear, synthesise, map and narrate their stories and the knowledge interests they enacted within the making space. It concludes by discussing the pre-enchanting possibilities for

sustaining diverse students' engagement with secondary learning and work opportunities that are offered by creative and arts-based approaches that integrate cultural/social/family relations within learning.

The Linguistic Paradox of Australian Schooling

In 2016, a little over one-fifth of Australian residents under 24 years of age spoke one or more home languages other than the language of schooling (English) (ABS, 2016). Assuming the 2011–2016 trend is sustained, that figure will rise to one-third by 2021 (French, 2016). Yet Australian education systems continue to be shaped by the 'monolithic weight' of monolingual policy settings (French & Armitage, 2020) which in turn drive quantitative and 'big data' educational research focused on refugee and migrant students' acquisition of English language literacy and proficiency (Ferfolja & Vickers, 2010; Wrench et al., 2017). Such research masks the experiences, knowledges and skills of multilingual refugee and migrant students, teachers and communities (Matthews, 2021, p. 727), as do national datasets used to shape broader public policy.

For example, in the 2016 Australian census respondents were asked 'Does the person speak a language other than English at home?', yet despite the more multiplicitous responses they might have supplied, only their (sequentially) first response was recorded (ABS, 2017). Nor is this linguistic data integrated into the scaling model used by the national curriculum authority to ensure purportedly 'fair' comparison of individual school performance for the purposes of school 'improvement' (ACARA, 2019, 2020). Australian multilingual students are more likely to attend government schools in which most students are multilingual (D'warte, 2015; Matthews, 2008), with their multilingualism likely to occur alongside social and economic disadvantages (French & Armitage, 2020, p. 93). Students living in relatively poorer and more disadvantaged communities are more likely to experience social, emotional, learning and physical difficulties than those in more advantageous (or advantaged, or privileged) communities (Edwards & Bromfield, 2010).[2]

[2] After controlling for other protective or advantageous variables such as parental engagement in the workforce and mothers' levels of education.

For multilingual refugee and migrant students, monolingual educational structures pose additional challenges. These structures preclude systemic adoption of authentic (Freire, 1983), culturally and epistemologically diverse (Nakata, 2007; Rigney, 2021) and multilingual (Canagarajah, 2012; Heugh & Stroud, 2018) approaches that are fundamental to socially just education for all students. Such structures create schooling spaces in which students' identity work, their complex and inclusive narrations of the political, historical and cultural contexts of their experiences, and hence critical reflection on them, are oppressed and absented (Matthews, 2021).

The Importance of Pre-Enchanting Diverse Students

This research attends to how refugee and migrant students might be pre-enchanted, or relationally supported in making safe and sustained connections and transitions to secondary schooling and, ultimately, future work learning opportunities. Australian students' transition to secondary schooling coincides with their emerging adult engagement with 'the world'. During this transition they experience profound physiological and psycho-social development, which many find challenging and, for some, is a catalyst for early disconnection from formal education (Pendergast et al., 2017). Where a priori experiences of trauma may neurologically shape adolescents' cognitive and psycho-social development (McLean, 2016), and hence capacity to connect with secondary schooling, students experiencing trans-cultural migrations, ongoing colonisations and poverty (Atkinson, 2002; Wrench et al., 2017) face further challenges to sustained secondary schooling success.

Approximately a quarter of Australia's humanitarian migrant intake is of young people aged between 10 and 19 years, with these and even younger refugee and migrant students facing significant barriers to educational success in Australia (Correa-Velez et al., 2017). Because schooling is 'profoundly relational' (Skattebol & Hayes, 2016), students from refugee, migrant and colonised families face more complex transitions to,

and interfaces within, secondary schooling. Many primary school educators express concern for their transitions to secondary schooling, noting they are likely to include further traumatic experiences (Wrench et al., 2017). For example, experiences of family poverty are amplified by higher rates of unemployment that often instigate disconnection to secondary schooling for the most disadvantaged students, making their future labour market engagement precarious (Nunn et al., 2014). Finding ways to pre-enchant and pre-engage prospective secondary students in secondary and employment learning opportunities is core to socially just education and crucial to their cultural and socio-economic futures.

Critical, Creative and Cultural Framings of the Inquiry

This inquiry adopted critical systems, creative, and Indigenist understanding of ways of being and knowing. Underpinned by interconnected ways of knowing, embodied ways of being, ethics of care, creativity and plurality, these understandings presume the 'fundamental interconnectedness' of 'everything' with 'everything else' (Rappoport, 1966, as cited in Hammond, 2003, p. 157), and ongoing, reciprocal and dynamic engagement with Country, culture/language, community, family and spirit (Nabobo-Baba, 2012; Rigney, 2021; Yunkaporta, 2009).

Critical systems approaches seek more holistic and irreducible understandings of human-activity systems and the informational support people require to make meaning within them (Checkland, 1999b; Georgiou, 2007; Hammond, 2003) through ongoing situated conversation, communication and creative social inquiry (Hirschheim et al., 1991; Lanzara, 1983). Equivalent relational approaches are necessary for culturally safe and decolonising ways of being, knowing and learning, and socially just education for all students (Rigney, 2018). These multimodal ways are centred by an ethics of care, love and relationality, and proceed through protocolled processes of listening, hearing, talking, picturing, singing, dancing, doing and making (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2014; Martin, 2008a; Nabobo-Baba, 2012; Yunkaporta, 2009).

Similarly, arts-based and creative pedagogies and practices argue for multimodal affordances that generate reasons to engage in more

purposeful learning experiences (Rankin et al., 2021, p. 285). Integrated within these learning experiences are embodied processes of looking, listening and perceiving, and a relational ethics of care (MacGill, 2019). These processes of dialogic meaning-making (MacGill, 2019; Rankin et al., 2021) offer ways of engaging in culturally respectful and safe dialogue. They privilege embodied experiences of emotion and feelings, encompass non-verbal and verbal communication and require 'ongoing affective attunement' or perceptual ability within reciprocal relations (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2014, pp. 323–327).

In school settings, learning within making spaces is supported through blurring disciplinary boundaries and incorporating multiple 'ways of seeing, valuing, thinking, and doing' (Sheridan et al., 2014, p. 527). Students engage in multimodal knowledge practices through talk, digital and physical materials, embodied actions, non-verbal communication and positioning themselves within physical spaces (Kajamaa & Kumpulainen, 2020). Such integrated pedagogical practices are unprioritised in Australian education systems (Pendergast, 2009) and present a key challenge with regard to teacher uptake (Paige et al., 2019). To date, makerspace/making research largely focuses on the use of digital technologies and STEM curriculum outcomes (Godhe et al., 2019; Kajamaa & Kumpulainen, 2020; Sheridan et al., 2014), drawing attention to ways in which some types of making are legitimised, and others marginalised within education policy (Godhe et al., 2019).

This research frames digital and material making as integrated learning processes that can facilitate culturally safe ways of knowing and being, and afford students opportunities to explore multi-disciplinary technical, practical and emancipatory knowledge interests (Habermas, 2005, pp. 315–316; Wallace et al., 2005, p. 156). Making processes are relational and reflective, embodied, and inclusive of human and non-human actors, affording students space to acknowledge and narrate diverse cultural lifeworlds and schooling experiences. They offer 'outsider' researchers (Martin, 2008b) opportunities to reflexively learn about cultural ontologies and epistemologies beyond their own.

To do so safely and respectfully, 'outsider' researchers must be transparent about their positions within research relations (Martin & Mirraboopa, 2003; Nabobo-Baba, 2008). Such transparency ensures critical and

creative systems research proceeds with 'validity' (McGrath, 2005). In this research, I am an 'outsider' in Asia Pacific geographies, my family having arrived in 'Australia' via 'settler' histories encompassing naval, public administration and agricultural colonisations of Asia Pacific cultures.[3] So too I am an 'outsider' in the students' learning spaces, a visiting 'university researcher'. My outsider position in the research shapes what can be understood about diverse schooling and participating students' social and schooling lives. It is one of many inherently incomplete and partially possible views of more socially just education that creative, embodied and relational methodologies and pedagogies might provide.

Relating and Making with Pre-Enchanted Young People

This section describes how the research proceeded through a whole-of-class curriculum unit and an extension unit with teachers at a small parish school[4] located in an inner-suburban community of an Australian capital city. In total, families attending the school identified with 22 cultures, various faiths, and spoke 40 different home languages. Post-World War II, the school's surrounding geographic community experienced multiple waves of refugee and immigrant families moving into the area (ABS, 2016). Residents experience some of the most extreme relative socio-economic disadvantages within Australia (ABS, 2018).

Cognisant of this context, school leadership committed to a programme of action research projects which sought to support students' being, belonging and becoming. In this specific project, iteratively co-designed curriculum units considered the significance of family engagement in and shaping of young people's cultural, linguistic and literate identities (Luchs & Miller, 2016; Phinney et al., 2001). Co-designs were also informed by digital storytelling research (Darvin & Norton, 2014; Lenette, 2019). Teachers and researchers decided on curriculum designs in which students produced bilingual digital stories designed to instruct

[3] For example, India, Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Australia.

[4] Part of the Catholic Education system in that state.

or inform (Robin, 2006) younger peers about school routines they needed to follow, as identified by the students and workshopped with teachers. Students chose a school routine and developed a digital procedural text, accompanied by photographs they had taken.

The extension unit design invited ten students to refine previously produced digital stories, produce print versions of them, and craft accompanying play resources and activities to be used in junior primary classrooms. It sought to create further authentic literacy learning experiences, and integrated opportunities for students to explore technical (design and digital), practical (schooling) and critical (cultural and multilingual) cognitive interests.

Making, Talking and Listening

Students were invited to explore available crafting materials and tools to create play-based activities to support younger peers' emergent reading skills. In this way, students engaged in crafting with caritas (MacGill, 2019) and empathetic relational practice that included human and non-human relations equally (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2014). Book and activity-making occurred in a communal space located centrally between several classrooms, with some desks and chairs in the middle and a 'wet area' at one end. Book making occurred in the middle space, to which researchers added a laminating machine and laminating pouches and a spiral binding machine. Most crafting activities occurred in the wet area, which contained an L-shaped bench underneath windows, with sinks and power points, and high tables and stools arranged centrally in a rectangle. Crafting materials and tools available in the space included coloured felts and leather, heavy cardboard, corrugated board and balsa wood, wools, thread and needles, coloured beads and baubles, hot glue guns, cutting knives, scissors, and needles, paints, papers and brushes.

The researchers workshopped students' activity design ideas and I demonstrated the use of crafting tools and book-making machinery. Whilst school, teacher-family research consent authorised me to be with students in the making space, they assented to me observing and recording, and making research representations, or not, of the identity work,

knowledge interests and information needs they shared whilst making. This trust was built over time and through listening to talk, silence and emotion (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2014), making with care (MacGill, 2019), and curriculum designs connected to students' authentic lifeworlds (Wallace et al., 2005). Semi-structured conversations and informal chats with students were audio-recorded with students actively exercising their right to remove sections of recordings they did not want to be included in the research data.

Listening, Picturing and Narrating

Audio recordings and researcher notes of the making sessions were subsequently transcribed by the researcher, and then visually mapped using critical systems methods. Transcribing and image-ing was a process of re-listening and wondering more, or as Arthur Frank explicated in a seminar with International Institute for Qualitative Methodology postgraduate students, 'hanging out' or continuing 'to live with' conversations that occurred in the research space (Eldershaw et al., 2007, p. 135).

Transcribing was a non-linear and iterative process, moving between recordings and transcribed sections as I reflected on and recalled interactions between storytellers and story listeners (Boje, 2006). It afforded further affective attunement to students' specific cultural understandings of personhood and identity (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2014), enhancing the analysis' capacity to sweep in and represent their perspectives. Final iterations of transcribing involved chronologically re-listening to each recording, and checking for further co-created story events (Boje, 2006).

Students' stories of their multilingual lifeworlds and knowledge interests were then synthesised using systems picturing techniques (Checkland, 1999b). Rich picturing can convey complex and interwoven problem situations, examine structures and processes within them and more holistically think through subsequent strategies to transform them (Checkland, 1999b). It allows for mapping difference and commonality within empathetic relations (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2014). Where rich picturing is 'thinking-in-images', it enables moving 'beyond the categorised and

known ('knowledge') into new experiences and new capabilities' (Cranny-Francis, 2008, p. 364).

Hence, I created two rich pictures, each critically and visually structured by the theoretical framings of the research. Students' cultural and linguistic identities, knowledges and family contexts and relations structured the first rich picture. Structuring the second was students' engagement with planned and enacted technical, practical and emancipatory knowledge interests (Habermas, 2005); that is, their 'learning about the way the world works'; relating and communicating to 'make personal sense and solve practical problems'; and acting with self-reflection 'to find harmony between personal, community and future generational needs' (Wallace et al., 2005, p. 160).

For each rich picture, I have woven students' original oral/embodied performances into accompanying situation narratives. These narratives are more textual re-tellings of students' stories, now shaped by layers of representation (Riessman, 1993, pp. 13–15). In the following two sections, the rich pictures and situation narratives provide a more holistic view of participating students' relation-making, identity work, knowledge interests and information needs. Pseudonyms, chosen from students' cultures and consistent with the original naming/cultural meaning, are used to identify participating students and their views. Such views are necessary precursors to considering how students in diverse schools might be pre-enchanted with secondary schooling and work learning opportunities.

Students in the Making Space

Figure 10.1 maps students' language literacies, identifying home and subsequent languages students could understand, speak and/or read/write, providing insights into family and cultural contexts. Between them, students could understand, but not necessarily speak, 14 distinct languages, in addition to their schooling language of English.[5]

Seven students each spoke ten different languages, with five of these students able to independently read/write first language texts in the

[5] This count does not include Japanese and Italian taught at the school as additional languages.

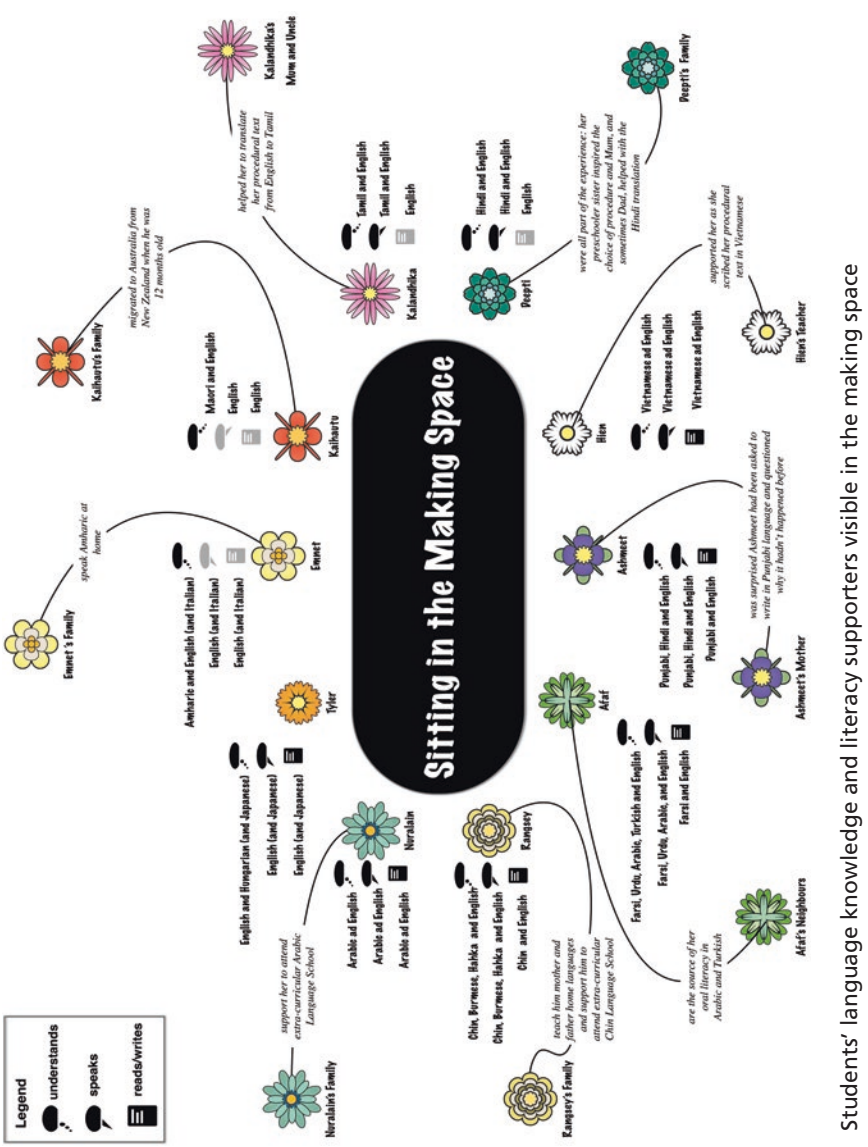

Fig. 10.1 Students' language knowledge and literacy supporters visible in the making space

relevant script or in transliterated Latin alphabet. Students used six home languages, together with Japanese and Italian, to produce their procedural texts.

Cultural Histories and Geographies

In the making space, students' conversations provided nuanced views of their cultural lifeworlds and Asia Pacific histories. Three students were born in India and one in Pakistan, countries in which multilingualism is the norm. Ashmeet wondered whether any of her classmates could '*hear me speak*' in Punjabi. Deepti, a Hindi speaker, responded, 'Afaf would' referring to an Urdu speaker. Ashmeet replied '*Oh yeah Afaf would and maybe you would but no one else*'. Ashmeet asked, '*Afaf, how much languages do you speak?*'. As Afaf began listing them, Kalandhika interrupted asking hopefully about her mother tongue, '*Do you speak Tamil?*'. Afaf's negative response emphasises how geographical and linguistic distances between languages shape students' relation-making. Ashmeet's naming of Afaf and Deepti as capable of 'hearing her' in Punjabi reflects the mutual intelligibility of Punjabi, Urdu and Hindi, all Indo-Aryan languages, in contrast to Tamil, a Dravidian language.

Returning to making, Ashmeet and Afaf tested out the mutual intelligibility of Urdu and Hindi, asking each other for materials and tools across the table. I asked if they were speaking Urdu, with Afaf saying '*Yes*' and Ashmeet '*Hindi*'. Afaf explained to me '*Yes, it's just the same*'. When Deepti asked, '*Isn't it [Hindi] the most common one?*', Afaf replied '*In India*' adding as an aside *'I'm so proud of myself that I speak Hindi—ha ha*'. Ashmeet contributed '*It's compulsory to know Punjabi and Hindi in India, they're the two main languages, English is […] an option'*. Deepti added a policy update, '*But from now on English too*'.

I wondered aloud, '*How many people speak Hindi in the world?'.* Afaf responded '*Our schools are in Hindi*[6] *not Farsi, so there's one*'. I replied, '*Once upon a time Pakistan and India …*' with Afaf completing my sentence '*Yes was same and then they had a fight*'. I introduced the role of the British empire's arrival and departure in this separation, after which we

[6] Possibly referring to Sindhi (or Urdu) rather than Hindi.

sat in silence together for a few moments. Afaf's linguistic repertoire included, '*Irani, Urdu, Farsi, kinda Turkish and kinda Arabic*' and perhaps now Hindi. Commenting *'They are all easy for me, I would be happy with [all] those languages*', her confident multilingualism sheds light on the complex histories of Pakistan.

It also provides insight into her family's migration history, given Afaf distinguishes between her home language Farsi, which she also reads and writes, and the Farsi spoken in Iran.[7] Nuralain, whose family migrated from Iraq, noted the difference between Afaf's '*kinda Arabic*' learnt from neighbours, and her home language, explaining '*The Arabic we speak is different from other parts*'. She is read/write literate in Modern Standard Arabic, attending extra-curricular language school[8] throughout primary school. Rangsey, like Nuralain, also attended language school, learning to read and write Chin. When naming the languages he speaks, he told me, '*One is Burmese, one is Chin and the other one is Hakha*', differentiating between his mother's Falam-Chin and his father's Hakha-Chin, both spoken widely across the Western Burmese state of Chin.[9]

Afaf, Nuralain and Rangsey's linguistic lives draw attention to Asia Pacific geographies characterised by high levels of cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, and shaped by ancient and more recent colonial sociopolitical histories. Kalandhika's and Hien's histories are also shaped by colonisation, although Hien's is shaped by Chinese, French and American, rather than British, forms of colonialism. As Hien and Kalandhika worked together on sewing-based activities, they began quietly speaking about Muslim people. I heard Hien explain, '*No Asians are [Muslims]*', responding '*There's lots of Asian Muslims*'. From another conversation, Ashmeet asked, '*Asian Muslims?*', whilst Hien simultaneously responded to Kalandhika, '*Well, like me*', referring to her Vietnamese heritage and Buddhist faith. I replied to Ashmeet, '*Some people call Indian people Asian people',* to which Deepti responded, '*We* are *Asians*'.

[7] Also referred to as Persian by some Iranian Farsi speakers.

[8] Offered as extracurricular programmes by both public and community providers in nearby locations.

[9] I use Rangsey's naming of his parents' home country here, which was re-named by military decree in 1989 to Myanmar.

Multilingual Literacies

In producing bilingual materials for younger peers, Rangsey and Nuralain, Ashmeet and Afaf independently transliterated their respective Falam-Chin, Arabic, Punjabi and Farsi texts using Latin script, with researchers facilitating an Arabic script version of Nuralain's procedure. Rangsey's mother '*laughed […] a happy laugh*' when he shared his bilingual procedure with her, and Ashmeet's mother, whilst approving of the bilingual texts, wondered why it hadn't been done before. Hien provided the Vietnamese text for her procedure in the Latin-based orthography Quốc Ngữ with occasional support from a class teacher who shared her home language.

Kalandhika and Deepti sought out family members for written language support for their oral knowledge of Tamil and Hindi, respectively. Deepti worked with her family to create her Hindi text in Devanagari script. Kalandhika worked with her mother, who at times found the process '*hard*', to transliterate her Tamil text in Latin script. Researchers facilitated a Tamil script version. Tamil and Devanagari scripts are essentially syllabic (or more accurately, abugidas).

Emnet's family spoke Amharic, a Southern Semitic language that he understood but did not speak or write. Talking about writing his procedural text, he told me writing in Amharic was *'really difficult'* as he *'couldn't find the right typing [...] language*', referring to its writing system, modified from the Ethiopian syllabary. His teacher suggested using Italian as a solution to this challenge, and offered him Italian language support.

Like Emnet, Tyler produced his text in English and an additional language learnt at school, accessing support from his Japanese teacher. When I asked if he would change anything about his book-making experience, Tyler responded,

> *I'd probably want to do it in a different language […] because […] my Mum speaks French and Hungarian and bits and pieces of Italian, my grandparents came from France and Hungary, my step-dad speaks Hungarian.*

Kaihautu did not speak his family language either because *'when I was born we stayed there [New Zealand] for one year and then came to Australia'.*

He compared this to his peers' experiences of their family languages, offering, '*Cos some of them were born there and stayed there for a long time*'. Kaihautu questioned *'the point'* of writing his procedure in Māori, given he and his upper-primary siblings were the only Māori family at the school. Regardless, he wrote his procedure in Māori and English, using '*Google*' rather than family support to provide the Māori text for his book.

This section has visually and narratively represented the students' storied performances of their schooling and family lives, making visible more holistic views of their diverse cultural backgrounds, lived experiences and language literacies. Also made visible are the ways in which students' family relations and socio-political histories shape their multilingual lives, and the relation-making and identity work they undertake at school.

Students' Knowledge Interests in the Making Space

This section pictures and narrates students' knowledge interests in the making space. Figure 10.2 is structured by the extension unit's planned technical (digital storytelling, book publishing and crafting experiences), practical (junior primary students learning school routines) and critical (developing home and school language literate identities) knowledge interests. It additionally maps students' knowledge interests they agentically enacted whilst making.

Learning About the Way the World Works: Technical Interests

Some students' choices of school routines for their procedural texts evidenced their technical knowledge interests. Nuralain and Afaf made *How to Wash Your Hands* books, with Nuralain explaining '*The kids needed to learn to get all the germs off their hands'*. Deepti added '*Some kids don't really wash their hands when they come out of the toilets*', highlighting the social or practical needs such empirical interests address. Ashmeet and

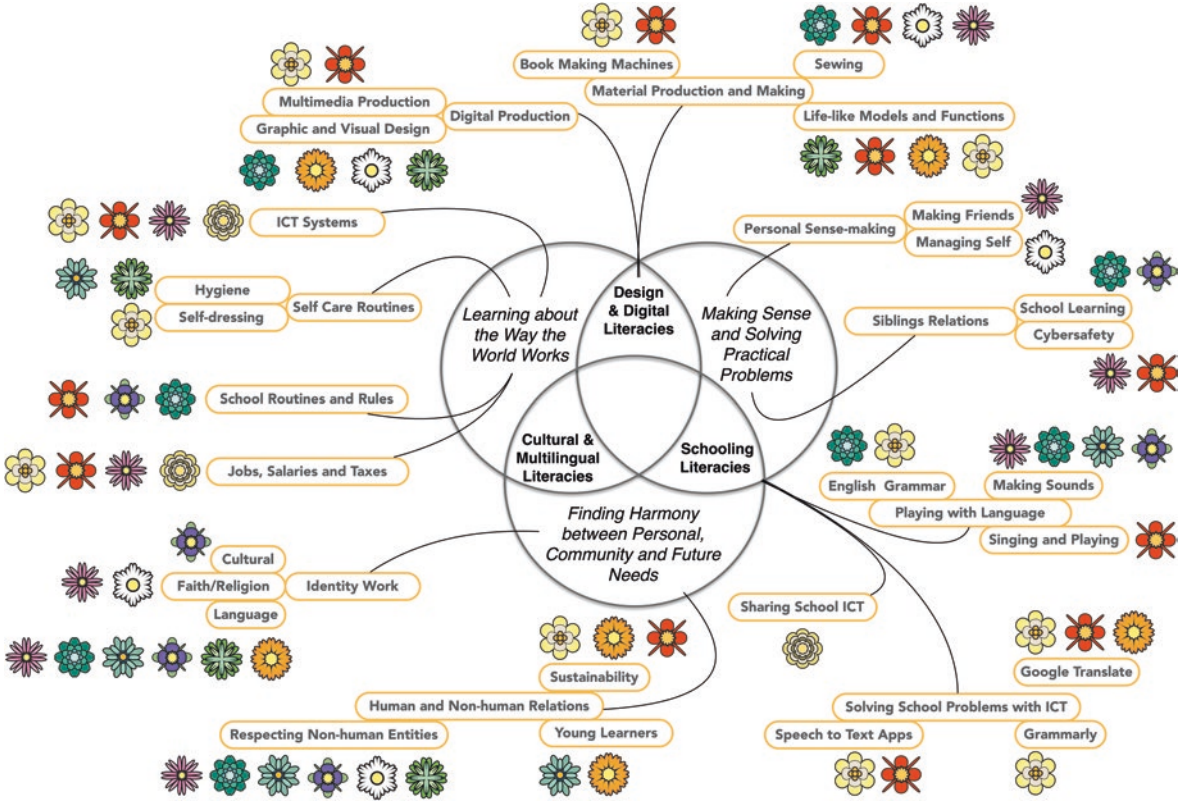

Fig. 10.2 Designed and agentic knowledge interests enacted in the making space

Deepti wrote *How to Get Ready for the School Day* and Kaihautu *How to Get Ready for Home* procedures, each focusing on regulated-process knowledge younger students need in order to transition to school. Emnet's *How to Tie Your Shoe Laces* procedure also focused on technical process, whilst addressing a practical need. He noted '*I see a lot of children struggling and asking me to tie their shoelaces, so this could help*'.

Material making engaged students' technical interests. Deepti made a miniature backpack, water bottle, fruit and reader bag as part of her procedure activity, sharing that making was what she enjoyed most about the extension unit, '*Cos' I've never done making before like this*'. Deepti, along with Kalandhika, Hien and Kaihautu, used sewing skills to make parts of their activity. They shared diverse, yet similar, cultural sewing literacies. Kaihautu was interested in creating authentic function within his play-based activity. Afaf built a three-dimensional bathroom and sink for her activity. Keenly interested, Kaihautu tested the tap she had made '*to see if it actually worked*'. Emnet, too, considered authenticity in his design thinking, wondering about an outer layer of leather and actual shoelaces to give his activity '*a realistic feel*'.

Digital making processes engaged students' material technical interests. Kaihautu and Emnet were interested in the machines used to produce print versions of their *How To …* books. Emnet described his extension unit highlight as, '*Playing with that thing down there [the binding machine] and the laminator*', building on his engagement with producing his digital book, '*Editing it – the fonts, add backgrounds, it was cool adding images and taking photos*'. Kaihautu and Emnet used digital production skills to incorporate Italian and New Zealand national colours into their books' visual designs. Hien, Afaf, Deepti and Tyler used technical skills to incorporate bilingual narrations into the digital versions of their books.

Students' social chat surfaced further technical interests, creating opportunities for information-seeking. Kalandhika, Emnet and Kaihautu were talking around the wet area's central table. Kalandhika said 'Y*esterday our Internet went off*'. From the bench, Rangsey interjected, '*I can't live with lag*'. Emnet suggested his Telstra[10] access meant '*the Internet is really*

[10] An Australian telecommunications provider.

fast'. Kalandhika shared '*We have NBN*'[11]. Emnet asked '*What's so good about NBN?*' and Kalandhika explained, '*It has fast networks*', with Emnet reiterating to me, '*Wait, what is so good about NBN?*'. As I modelled about-to-be-obsolete ADSL (running on twisted-pair cable) and NBN (running on fibre optic cable) networks using different coloured wools, Kaihautu wondered if you had to lay the cable yourself, and Emnet asked about the difference between Telstra and the NBN. Kalandhika said her dad worked with fibre optic cable.

Kaihautu was interested in Kalandhika's dad's job, asking '*Do you get good money for it*?'. Rangsey added, '*Dentists, I think they get paid two million dollars a year*', whilst Emnet asked, '*Why do we have to have taxes?*' and Kaihautu said, '*Hospitals, if you work in a hospital, you get paid lots of money*'. I explained taxes were used by the government to pay for things like the NBN, roads and hospitals. Emnet told us about a recent trade of a soccer player, saying '*He would get $400,000 a week, I thought it was a lot but when I heard about taxes, he would only get half*'.

Making Sense and Solving Practical Problems: Practical Interests

Hien and Kalandhika chose procedural topics related to their practical knowledge interests. Kalandhika explained the impetus for her *How to Make Friends* procedure: '*I found a few kids that were not with any of their friends*'. Hien's *How to Keep Calm* procedure guided younger students through a short meditation to relax their bodies and calm their brains. Deepti's and Ashmeet's books and activities reflected their relations with younger siblings, with Ashmeet sharing, '*I'm going to make sight words, 'cos my sister has sight words in Reception*' and Deepti responding, '*My sister is going to preschool, she's coming to school next year in July*'.

Emnet, Kaihautu and Tyler's digital interests provided them with practical solutions to producing their bilingual texts, each using *Google Translate*. For Kaihautu, using *Google* for Māori language support was unproblematic. Tyler initially did not disclose he used *Google Translate* to

[11] National Broadband Network.

produce his Japanese text, but when 'outed' by a peer offered '*I mainly used Google Translate. She [the Japanese teacher] made a few corrections because I don't think Google Translate always gets it right*'. Emnet was also 'outed' by a peer, but maintained across multiple conversations he only relied upon his Italian teacher.

Students' technical interests in language informed their thinking about practical interests. Deepti shared, '*I'm known for grammar mistakes, I am good at writing, coming up with ideas but its grammar*'. Emnet responded, '*Yes, that's why me and my brother have Grammarly on our Macs*'. Kaihautu told me, '*I actually don't like writing at all*'. He and Emnet were enthusiastic about the idea of software to translate spoken words into written text, simultaneously telling me such functionality would be '*soooooo much easier*' and '*so good*'. Otherwise disengaged with procedural writing, when homemade playdough became the topic of conversation Kaihautu confidently orated the procedural text, responding, '*You need flour, salt and water*'.

Kaihautu's practical interests extend to social problem-solving. Kalandhika, talking about her younger relatives' problematic technology relations, told us, '*They never come outside, most of the time they are stuck in the game*'. Kaihautu, admitting he was often banned from PlayStation due to *'playing it when I'm not supposed to*', offered the pragmatic advice, '*Take the game outside, or get them Pokémon GO, 'cos then they're going to have to go outside*'. When Emnet complained that his mum '*watches You Tube all the time, it gets annoying*', Kaihautu queried him '*What, she's on the Ipad or whatever all day, so you could do whatever you want?*', which made Emnet reconsider his claim, '*Not all day, usually just about an hour*', with Kaihautu confirming with him, '*So, not long*'.

Kaihautu's sense making involved music and song. When my phone rang during making, he began singing an alliterated version of my ringtone, perfectly replicating its rhythm and melody. Looking at Kalandhika's playground activity, he asked '*Why do they call it a slippery dip*?'. Emnet suggested, '*Because it's slippery*?' and Kaihautu responded, '*Dipping is when you go up and down, or down and then up, maybe you go down and then you have to go back up*', the rhythm of his voice matching the motion he was making with his hands. Emnet concluded, '*It just sounds nice for kids that's all*'. Whilst Emnet's answer did not satisfy Kaihautu, he looked

pleased when the group began avidly swapping stories of a large slippery dip at a favourite playground.

Students used unfamiliar vocabulary and sought English language support whilst making. When Kalandhika asked for a '*colour suggestion*' for her activity, her peers did not understand her. I repeated '*suggestion*', modelling the mouth and tongue positions for the 'j' sound in the middle. After practicing this sound, she said '*Sometimes I try to say words, that I know, but I can't really […] my tongue just gets twisted*'. I shared my difficulty making the 'throat' sounds of Farsi. Nuralain, naming these as Arabic sounds, demonstrated it and said '*It's easy for me*'. I introduced the 'rolled r' or alveolar trill found in many languages. Students broke out in a cacophony of 'rolled r' sounds. Later, Ashmeet and Deepti interjected in a synchronised chorus to correct my English pronunciation of the Hindi 'u' or 'oo' sound in 'puja/pooja', repeating it until I could replicate the sound to their satisfaction. Later again, Deepti asked '*Should I sew this?*' (pronounced to rhyme with 'few') followed by '*So, swa, I don't know?*'. Ashmeet modelled '*Sew, sew*' for her.

Finding Harmony Between Personal, Community and Future Needs: Critical Interests

Some students' choices of procedural topics blended practical and critical interests. Rangsey's *How to Use the Laptop Fairly* procedure addressed the problem of sharing limited numbers of laptops between students, offering a method of fair or equitable sharing. Tyler's *How to Recycle* procedure was driven by his interest in sustainability, his involvement in a local parish schools' Green Day Out program, and his school's collection and recycling of drink containers as a means of raising funds. Nurlain's *How to Wash Your Hands* procedure considered ways to communicate practical and technical knowledge to a younger audience. It instructed her audience to '*rub your hands together until the soap becomes bubbly*' and keep rubbing them together *'while you sing 'happy birthday' to yourself',* rather than designating a period of 'clock' time.

Students' conversations during making demonstrated further critical interests. After Emnet and Kaihautu enthused over the idea of speech-to-text software, Rangsey suggested it was '*the lazy way*'. When I asked '*Or [is*

it] just the new way with technology?', Kaihautu responded, '*Well, if we keep using paper the trees will die*'. His concern for trees mirrored female students' concerns over a fly that had been killed in the making space. When I asked them, '*Would you kill a fly*?', they each said, '*No*', with Nuralain saying '*They are animals, living things*', and Ashmeet saying '*Flies are a thing of nature, when they get annoying you would swat them but wouldn't kill them*'. Deepti connected these positions to students' dietary practices, asking, '*Is anyone a vegetarian, are you a vegetarian?*'

Students' critical interests were interwoven with their cultural and home language literacies. Ashmeet, when asked about producing her bilingual text, proudly asserted, '*I did mine by myself because I speak my language*'. When guided to be careful using a sharp knife, she responded '*Don't worry, I am used to sharp objects and fire*'. Kalandhika and Ashmeet indicated at times it was easier doing things in home language. Kalandhika mused, '*I kind of like speaking my language […] to speak two languages*' and Ashmeet responded, '*I speak three*'. Deepti said of her home language Hindi, '*I speak it fluently*'. Tyler shared his connection to his language knowledge, saying, '*I'm a bit weird, I like doing English, it's one of my best subjects, so I like writing things*'. Kalandhika reflected on her name, '*My mum gave me the name because of god, Saraswati, she is the goddess of art and I think music […] I am good at music*'. Kalandhika taught me how to spell and pronounce her name, testing me until she was satisfied with my Tamil learning.

This section has attended to participating students' agency in the making space. It makes visible the diversity of the extension unit knowledge interests with which the students engaged, and emergent interests and information-seeking they enacted.

Pre-Enchanting Diverse Students in Secondary School Learning

Participating students actively engaged in conceptualising their worlds and considering agentic actions they might wish to take (Checkland, 1999a). They showcased multiplicitous cultural and linguistic repertories within otherwise monolingual schooling (French & Armitage, 2020) and

attested to the senses of accomplishment they took from them. Students told of how migration timing and circumstance shape their home and subsequent language literacies and they demonstrated their attachment to family and cultural languages, regardless of whether they could understand, speak, read and/or write those languages. Making with caritas and empathetically listening and perceiving established creative, multimodal and non-linear ways of learning, and instructional and conversational exchange capable of narrating students' cultural realities and authentic lifeworlds (Yunkaporta, 2009, p. 21). Such attention to multimodal and multilingual tellings are a 'most important foundation for successful multilingual learning' (French, 2016, p. 301).

Critical to students' agentic telling of their stories was the making space's 'policy-in-action' (French, 2016), which listened to and engaged with students' multilingualism, translanguaging and code-switching practices (Canagarajah, 2012). Initially, students largely spoke English in my presence. If they noticed me listening to their occasional translanguaging, they quickly reverted to English. If peers noticed me listening to other students' translanguaging, they would admonish the speaker to revert to English. Despite repeated reassurances, it was not until students saw me as 'a learner' and 'a co-producer of knowledge' (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2014, p. 323) that students, in the first instance Ashmeet and Afaf, were willing to challenge the apparent 'English-only' classroom norm and openly use their home or subsequent languages in the space.

Monolingual 'English only' norms are widespread and persistent within Australian schooling policy and teaching approaches (Liddicoat, 2013, as cited in French & Armitage, 2020). Participating students' eventual challenging of these norms highlights the criticality of attending to the influence of power dynamics on knowledge exchange (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2014, p. 323). Adopting multilingual classroom practices can address such dynamics and support students' schooling success. Students took pride in their multilingual literacies, noting '*it was easier sometimes doing [school] things*' in home language. Building students' home language literacies is foundational to their school language literacies (Heugh et al., 2019, p. 28), whilst learning area content delivered in home language builds students' access to academic content and school language learning (Haynes, 2007, pp. 21–22).

Despite the extended periods of time it can take multilingual students to acquire school language (Haynes, 2007; Heugh et al., 2019), federal and state-level Australian education policies implement short-term and monolingual English language learning programmes for adolescent refugee and migrant students. Programme funding is grossly inadequate compared to multilingual students' English language acquisition needs (Matthews, 2021, pp. 727–728), whilst programme designs isolate newly arrived students from school language-speaking peers, and create exclusionary learning contexts within schools (French, 2016, pp. 300–301). Mapping students' cultural and linguistic knowledge and experiences (Fig. 10.1) has showcased their understanding of 14 Asia Pacific languages in addition to their school language. School community members spoke 40 different home languages. In this, and many other Australian schools, however, there is no intersection between families' and students' multilingualism and mandated 'Languages Other Than English' curricula.[12]

Where multimodal and empathetic relations within the space attended to the politics and lived experiences of their multilingualism, students articulated emergent identities, knowledge interests and informational needs through, rather than regardless of, their prior experiences (Hattam & Every, 2010). Participating students' interests (see Fig. 10.2) spanned learning areas such as English (Deepti, Emnet, Tyler and Kaihautu on writing and grammar), Humanities and Social Sciences (Afaf on Pakistan, Hien and Kalandhika, Ashmeet and Deepti on 'Asian Muslims', Tyler on sustainability), Science (Nuralain and Afaf on germs and hygiene, Ashmeet on fire and sharp things), Design (Afaf, Emnet, Kaihautu on aesthetic and functional design) and Digital Technologies (Rangsey, Emnet and Kaihautu). Beyond mandated curricula, students demonstrated personal knowledge interests and information-seeking through social connections that included topics such as managing younger siblings, future work opportunities, ways to leverage schooling success, the languages they spoke and their own and peers' cultures and faiths.

[12] Australian schools typically offer additional language learning as a discrete subject, with many of these languages, including Indonesian, Japanese, Italian, Greek, French and German, reflecting past waves of European migrations or Asia Pacific foreign relations.

For these students, future learning and economic opportunities can transform personal, family and community experiences of socio-economic disadvantage. In their, and similarly disadvantaged, communities residents often hold lower levels of post-secondary qualifications, and individuals and family households experience significantly higher rates of unemployment than national and state averages (ABS, 2016). Young refugee and migrant students' future education and employment trajectories are mediated by such disadvantages, but also by the bridging capital and broader social networks that engagement in schooling affords (Nunn et al., 2014). The students informing this research, for example, built social relations with peers through shared cultural and linguistic repertoires, knowledge interests and information needs.

Understanding students' identity work, knowledge interests and information-seeking is a necessary precursor to considering designs for systems change (Checkland, 1999a). This change is urgently needed to ensure all students can access socially just education (Heugh & Stroud, 2018; Matthews, 2021; Rigney, 2021) at increasingly complex cultural interfaces. Critical and creative systems analysis provides ways to think-in-images or imagine new schooling designs. Such imagining work enables the remaking of schooling experiences for migrant and refugee students (Soong & Comber, 2017). Here, it has made visible a more complex, and therefore more holistic, view of a particular group of students' lifeworlds. These necessary precursory understandings are accessible where students feel safe to critically reflect and act thoughtfully on their understandings (Wallace et al., 2005).

This analysis of culturally diverse multilingual students' agency asks us to consider what is absent but necessary, as well as what is emergent in diverse schooling contexts (Matthews, 2021). It asks us to imagine future schooling designs that work to sustain students' cultural, social and schooling relations through multimodal processes of multilingual communicative practices and authentic language and literacy learning. It asks us to imagine schooling as integrated and community-connected inquiry, which privileges and makes narratable students' cultural epistemologies, linguistic knowledges and socio-political histories, and centres their knowledge interests and information needs in learning designs and knowledge co-creation. In such re-imagined schooling, safe webs of

relations can be woven to pre-enchant all emerging adolescent students in secondary schooling and future work learning opportunities.

Schooling designs capable of pre-enchanting must engage students, educators and families in reciprocal and ongoing empathetic relations, within which creative, embodied and multimodal learning is primary. Designs must support students to undertake cultural, social and personal identity work, and leverage their relational pursuit of knowledge interests and information needs through their cultural and multilingual literacies. Socially just and pre-enchanting schooling designs privilege multilingualism, rather than monolingualism, and integrate intersecting evidence from diverse disciplinary research.

These requirements spotlight the (in)efficacy of current Australian schooling designs in which accountability principles are implemented through standardised testing (Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012). For example, these evaluation designs consider students' linguistic backgrounds, but not the multilingualism of the schools' surrounding community. Similarly, the Australian teaching workforce's cultural and linguistic diversity, competencies and skills remain largely uncharted and ignored within Australian teaching standards and are not analysed alongside data collected about students' diversity in school evaluations. Yet socially just education must be education capable of narrating students', families', educators' and communities' diverse lifeworlds.

This capability must be present not only in individual schools, teaching teams or educators, but also in broader education governance and reporting systems. Imagine if evaluation designs mapped the cultural and linguistic repertoires of the students, families, educators and school communities whom schooling is intended to serve. Imagine how such information and understanding could be used to plan for relational and integrated home and school language learning programmes to sustain and centre students', families' and communities' multilingualism within schooling. Persistent streams of Australian Indigenist and culturally responsive education research continue to present more complex understandings of students' cultural, linguistic and socio-economic experiences and evidence of the ways socially just education can proceed. Yet, these approaches are only now 'emergent in school pedagogies of teaching and learning' (Rigney, 2021, p. 579).

Pre-enchanting students in secondary learning and transforming diverse schooling urgently requires more imaginary thinking, rather than existing remedial and additive approaches to policy (Matthews, 2021). Where critical systems theories provide for creative and pictured approaches to systems design, they make it possible to think through and narrate monolingual status quo schooling configurations that perpetuate educational inequality and leave individual schools, teaching teams or educators bearing sole responsibility for enacting more socially just education in defiance of system policy. These structures presume educators' caritas and mask and absent their cultural and linguistic repertoires. In doing so these structures consume educators' caritas and cultural and linguistic repertoires as volunteer and unpaid labour, and amplify the risk of disenchanting rather than pre-enchanting already vulnerable students with equitable futures.

Conclusion

The relation-making, identity-building and information-seeking that participating students undertook, subsequently pictured and narrated here, counters broader deficit narratives about migrant and refugee students' schooling experiences (Soong & Comber, 2017; Wrench et al., 2017). Students' agency recommends strategies to pre-enchant and pre-engage emerging adolescents in secondary schooling. Such strategies require creating culturally safe spaces which enact caring and embodied ways of knowing that acknowledge multilingual and translanguaging practices and listen to diverse articulations of schooling and informational needs. In this case study, integrated arts-based and digital pedagogical designs provided authentic learning experiences and empathetic spaces, in which possibilities for pre-enchanting culturally diverse learners in secondary learning and future work opportunities were made visible.

Attending and attuning to these possibilities allowed a reimagining of education policy and systems capable of 'privileging Indigenous [and therefore all] voices, upholding integrity of cultural knowledges to resist hegemony, and empowering self- determination' (Rigney, 2021, p. 579). For the cohort of early adolescent students who participated in this research, integrated arts-based approaches provided them with trusted

spaces in which they could explore identity, social relations and emancipatory action. Within co-created stories of their cultural and linguistic lifeworlds, they explored cultural, community and personal identities, established new and extended social relations with peers, articulated technical, practical and critical knowledge interests, and demonstrated interest about employment structures.

Synthesising students' stories using critical and creative systems analysis methods created more holistic understandings of the requirements of socially just schooling in diverse communities. These analyses of diverse schooling experiences in Australia, whilst only ever partial and incomplete views, re-imagine education as ongoing, sustained and relational engagement enacted through multilingual, multimodal, and culturally and linguistic inclusive policies, pedagogies, processes and resourcing. In such schooling designs, diverse young students can be pre-enchanted, rather than re-enchanted (Smyth et al., 2010), with impending secondary schooling learning and future work opportunities.

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