

Chapter 13

Deliberately Owning My Practice Model: Realising My Professional Practice

Joy Higgs

Introduction

I start this chapter with the core concept of the book that deliberate professionals, being people who are informed by moral consideration of self and others, have the capacity and drive to promote positive changes through their professional practice. Since, by definition, these practices are pursued deliberately, knowingly and informedly, such practitioners need to realise (understand and make happen) their practices within a coherent and deliberately owned practice model.

The goal of this chapter is to explore the nature and responsibilities of practice from the perspectives of people who have realised their professional practice, conceptually and in action, and have made deliberate choices about owning their practice. The core argument presented is that practitioners should create, own and be responsible for their chosen practice model rather than blindly receiving, unknowingly adopting or unquestioningly practising ‘someone else’s model’ whether this be the hegemonic practices ‘prescribed’ by their profession, the mandated practice regulations of a workplace or the expected services of their social marketplace. This is not to say that research, professional discourse, workplace standards or socio-political-economic expectations should be disregarded; instead they should be heeded, appraised and critically incorporated into professionals’ practice realisations and their core professional practice obligation—to practise responsibly in the service of the clients and communities we serve.

In this chapter, I draw on research that I have been conducting and leading over a number of years through a series of research projects in the areas of professional practice and practice wisdom. I present quotes (identified by pseudonyms, for confidentiality reasons, and interview dates) from interviews I conducted with

J. Higgs (✉)

The Education For Practice Institute, Charles Sturt University, Sydney, NSW, Australia

e-mail: jhiggs@csu.edu.au

experienced professional practitioners who shared with me their ideas on, and experiences with, professional practice and practice wisdom. In the spirit of the interpretive research paradigm, these experiences are not generalisable or representative. Rather, they serve to provide insights from the deliberations of experienced reflective professionals; that is, people who have come to realise how they practise and why, and have chosen their practice models or approaches in a deliberate, knowing way.

Professional Practice – The Goals and Challenges

Before we, as academics or practitioners, can begin to realise our practice and deliberately own our practice model we need to consider what practice is. Consider the following conceptualisations of professional practice:

Professional practice refers to the activities, norms, standards and cultural practices of a profession. This is both a general social phenomenon, being the shared practices across professions that are socio-culturally, historically constructed by the societies in which professions practise, and the particular activities, expected behaviours and capabilities of members of given professions. (Higgs, 2016, p. xi)

Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) identified five different aspects of practice featured in different research traditions: the way the practitioner's *individual behaviour* appears to an outside observer; the *patterns of social interaction* among people involved in the practice as they appear to an outside observer; the intentions, meanings, values and actions that constitute practice as perceived by individual practitioners; *the language, discourses and traditions of practice* as perceived by communities of practitioners; and the composite historical view of the evolution of practice *as a social form*. In a related vein, in introducing his edited book, Green (2009) argues:

There are at least four senses in which the term 'professional practice' might be understood and operationalised ... Firstly, it can be taken as referring to the notion of *practising a profession*, as in the familiar expression 'practising medicine' or 'practising law'. ... Secondly, it could refer to the notion of *practising professionalism*—that is, the fact that one enacts professionalism, one practises what it is to *be* professional, or to be *a* professional. In this case, professionalism is itself to be understood as a practice phenomenon, a matter therefore of practice and identity. Thirdly, and relatedly, it can be understood as referring to, or evoking, *a moral-ethical quality*: a distinctive quality of being-in-the-world, an attitude or disposition towards the objects of one's practice, whether they be persons or not. ... Finally, a practice might be described as 'professional'—in contrast, then, to what might be seen as the sphere of the 'amateur'. (Green, 2009, pp. 6–7)

Schatzki (2012) discusses three commonalities across the work of practice theorists. These provide a valuable insight into understanding professional practice.

The first is the idea that a practice is an organised constellation of different people's activities. A practice is a social phenomenon in the sense that it embraces multiple people. The activities that compose it, moreover, are organised. The second commonality is the idea that important features of human life must be understood as forms of, or as rooted in, human activity—not the activity of individuals, but in practices, that is, in the organised activities

of multiple people. ... The third common tenet is ... that human activity rests on something that cannot be put into words ... Examples of the nonpropositional something are Ryle's *know-how*, Merleau-Ponty's *habits/schemas*, Dreyfus' *skills*, Bourdieu's *habitus*, and Giddens' *practical consciousness*. Standing behind these conceptions are Wittgenstein's ruminations on rule following and knowing how to go on. This nonpropositional thing, moreover, is bodily. (Schatzki, 2012, pp. 13–14).

While the depth of study of practice theory, professional practice and the role and expectations of professions in society is realistically an academic pursuit, the deliberate professional needs, I contend, to understand the nature of professional practice and what it means to *be* a professional practitioner, not just what it means to *do* this practice. I have previously argued (Higgs & Titchen, 2001a) that professional practice encompasses doing, knowing, being and becoming—each of these combine in the deliberate embodied practice of professional practitioners.

Practitioners should understand that professional practice is socially and historically constructed: it comprises individual activities and shared activities and expectations across a community of practice; it is manifest in language, discourses and traditions; its conduct is linked to morality and ethical conduct; its standards and implementation are regulated and evaluated by individual practitioners as well as the practice community, external authorities and society; it is manifest in a range of levels of expertise development; and beyond all of this, practice is embodied through practical consciousness. To be a deliberate professional requires this understanding and ownership of decisions made in shaping the path, impact and nature of one's practice and model of practice.

Professional Socialisation – Practice Deliberations and Absorptions

To critically understand the growth and fashioning of individuals into professionals, and occupations into professions, we need to understand the concept and phenomena of professional socialisation and professionalisation. The former refers to how individuals become part of professional society and the practice communities of their profession. The latter conceptualises the transition of an occupation into a profession, a societal entity that provides recognised services to its communities, organisations and clients. Both phenomena reflect journeys (individual and collective) into practice that are ongoing; practitioners and their practices continue to evolve, while socio-cultural, and historical forces—organisational, policy, legislative—continuously reshape the professions and their contributions to society. Professional socialisation and professionalisation may occur blindly, unquestioningly, with acceptance of dominant practices, discourses and norms, or they may be chosen, critical and deliberate paths open to self and shared challenge (or most likely, a blend of both).

The notion of professional socialisation is embedded in education for professional practice. Wenger (1998, p. 263) contends:

Education, in its deepest sense and at whatever age it takes place, concerns the opening of identities – exploring new ways of being that lie beyond our current state. Whereas training aims to create an inbound trajectory targeted at competence in a specific practice, education must strive to open new dimensions for the negotiation of the self. It places students on an outbound trajectory toward a broad field of possible identities. Education is not merely formative—it is transformative.

Similarly, Kemmis (2012) represents education as a means of initiating people into forms of understanding, ways of relating to one another and the world, and modes of action that foster the self-expression, self-development and self-determination of individuals and collectives, thus promoting individual good and the good of humankind. These ideas are also reflected in the interpretation of education as ‘the passing on of cultural heritage ... the fostering of individual growth’ and the initiation of the young/novices into worthwhile ways of thinking and doing (Bullock & Trombley, 1988, p. 254).

Consider the following experiences of professional practitioners. These three stories provide important points of reflections about the professional development and career paths of practitioners. They indicate that decisions are multifaceted and the consequences unpredictable. And, we see that professional development and work practices can be driven unconsciously and uncritically by hegemonic rules, knowledges and practices, and/or they can be critically chosen or constructed practice models and identities.

How did I learn my profession? Well, I watched my father in his law practice and did some work experience in the practice during school holidays so that I could get some sense of what the job was like. I decided to follow in his footsteps and completed my uni degree including work in a variety of law offices before and after graduation. Then I decided that it wasn’t actually being a lawyer that was my preference, but I wanted to use my law background in politics – I went to work in the office of a senior politician. This was *my* path, not the one my father had taken. (Dennis, 2011)

During my physiotherapy studies there were many times that I heard my lecturers talk about the importance of research and science underpinning professional practice. I liked the confidence this brought me when I entered practice; the rightness of these views, the strength of evidence-based practice. After two years I realised that I found professional practice complex and unpredictable. So, I went back to university and started research work and PhD studies. I chose—without having to deal with that inherent practice uncertainty—to work in a biomechanics lab in pursuit of empirical research. My journey re-affirms what I enjoyed about the certainty of my undergraduate studies, and my research will contribute to the future knowledge base of biomechanics. (Alex, 2010)

My career as a nurse has been a journey of three phases. The first was straight after completing my nursing diploma—I was committed, dedicated—and I took all my learning and experience and embedded these into my work. I gained a real understanding of the value of nursing and learned to respect the expertise and wise practices of many of my nursing seniors. I found that I wanted to work in maternity and completed a midwifery course. I spent three glorious years in this field—it was immensely rewarding. At the time I thought that this was the best choice of my career. My next career phase was prompted by the need to balance work with motherhood responsibilities. I took on a job as a venepuncture nurse and developed good skills in my tasks and came to appreciate the importance of this role in making home visits to patients who couldn’t easily come to pathology units. This job which started as a work hours convenience had become another way of caring for sick and elderly

or disabled people. Phase three began when my children were all at school and my work hours could be more predictable but I needed to have flexibility in school holidays. I tentatively applied for a teaching job in a nursing school. Much to my amazement—this new role, once I got past my initial very steep learning curve, became my enduring job fulfilment. In each phase I made deliberate choices that blended life and work priorities and passions. Each choice brought new challenges and new demands for learning and skills development. My choices were planned, the expectations they created *for* me and *of* me were amazing. (Beryl, 2013)

Early Realisations – Pre-professional Education

Professional pathways can commence long before enrolment through the influences of life, family, role models and community members. They may also be encouraged choices by careers counsellors, last minute decisions depending on university entrance scores, or something unpredictable. In this preliminary stage, many attitudes towards the novice's future career are framed, from unrealistic aspirations, stereotypes that may be upheld or may come crashing down in the face of work and workplace realities, or they may be embryonic visions that reflect sound life/work deliberations as illustrated in the following experiences.

A key influence in choosing my career path was the people I came in contact with during my undergraduate course and also people I met during high school work experience. I knew from family influences that I wanted to enter a profession where I could work with people and make a difference to their lives. In looking at the role models I encountered it was not just their professions I caught a glimpse of but the people themselves and their approach to their professional work. Unconsciously, at first, and then more deliberately, I started to make a list of questions: What sort of a person and practitioner did I *want* to be? What sort of person and practitioner did I *not* want to be? (Simon, 2007)

I entered my practice field traumatically. I had a car accident. Before that I worked in a physically demanding, non-professional job – but that was no longer possible. For twelve long and painful months I worked on my rehabilitation with a series of health professionals. Many times I would have given up except for their encouragement, their belief in my recovery and their unflinching support. They were positive that I could walk again so eventually through the grief and pain I experienced, I came to believe it too and gained some strength and courage through them. One in particular was a rehabilitation therapist – so inspiring! I compared his job to my unchallenging previous employment and knew that I wanted to go to uni and become a rehab therapist. So that's what I am today. And, I set out to be the best practitioner I could be—partly to thank those who helped me rebuild my life, and also so that I could help others in the same way. (Jack, 2009)

Realisation Through University Professional Education

To educate deliberate professionals in preparation for emergent futures requires us to conceptualise what it means to be and become deliberate professionals, to look at the emergent futures of practice, to envisage education that can prepare this type of graduate for these practice futures and to understand the nature of deliberate

practice. University education faces many responsibilities and challenges in shaping future practitioners and citizens. In professional education these two outcomes merge since professional practice, through its role in the service of society (collectively and individually), blends the technical or profession-specific provisions of the profession with the expected behaviours inherent in professionalism, and with the moral and interpersonal choices that professionals make. Students becoming deliberate professionals should consciously pursue all of these areas of performance, choice and capability. Not least of these pursuits is the need for students to understand that during professional socialisation morality and ethics become reframed from the attributes of citizens to include professional ethics and the capacity to make informed moral choices that guide the practitioner's own behaviour and the choices made with and for the clients and communities they serve.

This balancing of professional educational goals across preparation for practice, professionalism and citizenship is reflected in the following representation of these eight key social practice dimensions of university education for professional practice (Higgs, 2012, pp. 76–77). This conceptualisation of university professional education as a social practice arose from a one year fellowship program of research and development I conducted as an Australian Learning and Teaching Council Fellow.

- **Practice and higher goals**

Practice-based education (PBE) aims to realise the goals of developing students' occupationally relevant social, technical and professional capabilities, forming their occupational identities, and supporting their development as positively contributing global citizens.

- **A pedagogical frame**

Pedagogy refers to a form of social practice that seeks to shape the educational development of learners. PBE is a pedagogy that prepares students for a practice and occupation.

- **Education in context**

Professional and practice-based education inevitably occurs within contexts shaped by the interests and practices of students, teachers, practitioner role models, university and workplace settings, and society. Both planned processes (e.g. curricula, pedagogies) and unplanned factors (e.g. changes in workplace access, student numbers) need review and enhancement to address these goals.

- **Understanding (the) practice**

Students' prospective practice needs to be continually appraised and evaluated to provide a relevant frame of reference to situate their curriculum and pedagogical experiences.

- **Socialisation**

Through pedagogical practices students are socialised into the practices of their occupation and into the multiple communities and circumstances of practice of their working worlds.

- **Engaging in relationships**

Practice and pedagogy are essentially about relationships. These are realised through learners/academics, workplace educators/practitioners/academics, peer learning, inter-university and industry/practice, university/regulatory authority and professional group/society partnerships.

- **Authenticity and relevance**

Authenticity and relevance are themes embedded in the goals, venues, activities, student assessment and program evaluation of professional and PBE programs. That is, the curriculum and its key pedagogical perspectives are focused on relevance to graduates' future practice. The education approach, including educators' role-modelled behaviours, should reflect the expectations, norms, knowledge and practices of the profession.

- **Reflecting standards, values and ethics**

A dimension that needs to permeate all aspects of curricula and pedagogies is the concept and practice of standards; standards as reflective of practice expectations and professionalism and professional codes of conduct or industry standards that are part of practice/professional socialisation; standards as accepted pedagogies across the discipline and standards of higher education – good educational practice.

In these social practice dimensions of education for professional practice lie multiple opportunities for shaping deliberate professionals and for students to take the initiative in seeking their own practice identities. Figure 13.1 below illustrates



Fig. 13.1 Deliberate practice and deliberate education

the connection between deliberate professional practice and practice-based (deliberate) education and how the journey towards such practice can be realised. This argument resonates with Trede and McEwen's (2016) 'pedagogy of deliberateness' in this book. Practitioners continue to be students of practice. Students are learning practices of learning alongside their professional practices. Each of these paths ideally involves realising daily practices within an emerging, increasingly coherent and deliberately owned practice model. Such models while pursuing coherence are not closed to change from within, or influence from outside. Deliberate professionals engage in critical reflection not just about their practices, but also about the ongoing relevance of their practice to their context and clients, and the matching of their practice model with who they are becoming. The learning or development environment and learning practice activities are indicated by the outer (radiating) set of practice frames and emergent practice capabilities in this interpretation.

Deliberately Owning My Practice Model: Realising My Professional Practice

Considerable research into the experiences of new graduates has identified that reality shock is most likely to occur when novice practitioners are confronted by much higher workloads, more challenging practice tasks, increased complexity of practice situations, increased responsibilities without the guidance and supervision of workplace learning educators or supervisors, than when they were students. Roe-Shaw (2004) identified that professional entry education that lacked a graded approach to preparation for graduate practice was likely to result in reality shock. Hummell (2007) found that workplace learning placements incorporating a graded increase in client workloads, responsibility and accountability and a graded reduction in direct supervision, in combination with effective mentoring and support, contributed to graduates' smooth transition into the workplace and a reduced level of reality shock. Participants in her research identified the value (in reducing reality shock post workforce entry) of seeking mentoring and introducing university subjects (particularly in the final pre-graduation year) that examined work roles and strategies for managing work stressors.

A key area of choice for individual professional practitioners, is the practice model they adopt, pursue, embody and are shaped by; and consequently the practice model through which they shape their practice relationships and impact. Each of these choices is a reflection of the deliberateness involved in owning one's practice model and realising one's professional practice.

For five years after I graduated I threw myself into learning all I could about my practice field. I went to stacks of workshops and courses to develop new skills. I worked in different sub-specialties so that I could gain breadth of experience. ... Looking back, I was trying to find *me* and my place in the system. I had thought I was trying to find my practice niche but it was more than that. I kept running into problems or brick walls—system rules that I didn't feel comfortable with, not wanting to 'do things the way they're done round here', and

generally feeling like a square peg in the proverbial round hole. I talked to some of my mates at work and to a couple of people who were my mentors. They told me about how difficult it was to change the system—and how they dealt with things. In the end I knew my option was to practise—my practice—in my practice. So, now I'm a private practitioner and I have created my own mini system that operates the way I want to work, the way I want to be. I don't make a lot of money—but I feel good about myself and what I offer my clients. (Sam, 2014)

There are times when making practice choice is just as much about unlearning as it is about learning. Professional socialisation can be something that 'happens to you while you aren't looking'.

For me there was a moment in my career that still stands out as a watershed. I loved being a uni student, I loved studying, I soaked up all the teachings and was a good student—high grades all the way through. Graduated, entered practice, flying high. I fitted in very well with what I *now* know as 'the dominant practice paradigm', but *then* just saw it as good practice, the proper way to do things. Then I attended this postgrad course where the whole language switched—from science to philosophy. I learned about the impact of practice cultures and paradigms on what counts as knowledge and truth and practice. I thought I had known how to critique practice, how to make and justify practice decisions, how to be accountable for practice. But I had never learned how to question the underlying assumptions of practice. In this course I unlearned the acceptance of the 'way it's done' and learned to understand and challenge my own (and others') practice ontology and practice epistemology—What a liberation! What a challenge to personally choose to live up to! (Suzanne, 2012)

Practice immersion, that is, direct engagement with professional practice roles, responsibilities and experiences, begins prior to graduation through workplace learning experiences. In recent doctoral research, Patton (2014) used a photoelicitation research strategy to encourage students to reflect and deliberate on their learning processes and the choices they made in their practice. Her findings support the contention that students can and should be agents directing their own learning and critically evaluating their own practice decisions, actions and outcomes.

Despite the possibility and desirability of such deliberations and self-direction, students typically face a managed induction into practice: from structured curricula and graduate attributes, to planned patterns of workplace engagement. This brings benefits; for instance they can rely on their senior colleagues (academics and graduate practitioners) to know more fully the scope, standards and expectations of practice. But it also brings problems, mainly linked to the lack of self-direction and limitations in problem solving in unfamiliar and complex situations that reliance on others can imbue. Students should be encouraged, and allowed, to pursue curriculum goals through their own initiatives (as well as through guided curricula) both to achieve curriculum learning outcomes and to model professionalism in terms of sharing responsibility for their own standards of practice.

Challenging Concepts of Expertise, Artistry, Practice Wisdom and Good Practice in Relation to Deliberateness

A key aspect of being deliberate about practice is choosing our own standards for practice. In previous work on professional practice and decision making a colleague (Mark Jones) and I examined the concept of expertise (Higgs & Jones, 2000, 2008). Along with other researchers (e.g. Benner, 1984; Ericsson & Smith, 1991; Jensen, Gwyer, Hack, & Shepard, 1999), we were interested in understanding what marked experts apart from other practitioners. We examined the classic research of Glaser and Chi (1988) on expert attributes (see Table 13.1, column 1) and identified that expertise in professional practice required more than generic expertise, particularly in relation to taking a client-focused approach to professional practice; we added key dimensions to the notion of a professional expert, requiring this person to be not only technically expert but also socially capable, ethical and self-regulatory. We drew on a model of practitioners as interactional professionals (Higgs & Hunt, 1999) whose effectiveness required interaction with their immediate and larger work environment, with the key players in that context and with the situational elements pertinent to the client and case under consideration. Professional practice was viewed via a social ecology model as occurring within the wider sphere of social responsibility of professionals which requires practitioners to be proactive as well as responsive to changes in healthcare contexts (Higgs, Neubauer, & Higgs, 1999). There are numerous similarities across these models and the deliberate (aware, agential and situated) professional concept in this book.

Returning to this question in 2008 (Higgs & Jones, 2008), in consideration of emerging trends in practice, and the context and discourse of practice, we added further expectations of experts. In this expanded view we portrayed professional expertise as a continuum along multiple dimensions including practice outcomes, personal attributes such as professional judgment, technical skills, communication and interpersonal skills (to involve the client and others in decision making and to consider the client's perspectives), a sound knowledge base, an informed and chosen practice model and philosophy of practice, as well as cognitive and metacognitive proficiency.

In progressing across the three columns in Table 13.1 the notion and practice of deliberateness (including preparedness, critical practice implementation and attention to enabling capabilities and strategies) becomes increasingly evident. Interestingly the left to right transition in Table 13.1 also evidences an increasing emphasis on the complexity and nuances of practice and a view of expert practice that demonstrates greater clarity in how professionals are expected to deal with people as individuals and groups including recognition of the partnership contributions of clients. Such deliberateness could be labelled particularity and also artistry, a type of practice that goes beyond the techno-rationality of the physical sciences to the humanity of the social sciences and the finesse of artistry. This is high-level practice.

Table 13.1 Characteristics and expectations of experts and expert practitioners

General characteristics of experts (Glaser & Chi, 1988)	Particular characteristics and expectations of health professional experts (Higgs & Jones, 2000)	Further emerging characteristics and expectations of expert professionals (Higgs & Jones, 2008)
Experts excel mainly in their own domains	Experts need to pursue shared decision making between client and practitioner if 'success' is to be realised from the client's perspective	Experts should demonstrate information and communication literacy
Experts perceive large meaningful patterns in their domain	Experts need to monitor and manage their cognitive processes (i.e. to use metacognition) to achieve high-quality decision making and practice action	Experts should value and utilise the expertise of other team members, including their clients
Experts are fast: they are faster than novices at performing the skills of their domain, and they quickly solve problems with little error	Experts critically use propositional and experience-based up-to-date practice knowledge to inform their practice	Experts own and embody their practice model
Experts have superior short-term and long-term memory	Expertise requires the informed use and recognition of client-centred practice	Expertise goes beyond technical expertise in pursuit of emancipatory practice
Experts see and represent a problem in their domain at a deeper (more principled) level than novices; novices tend to represent a problem at a superficial level	Expert practitioners are mentors and critical companions (see Titchen, 2001) to less experienced practitioners	Expert practice is community-oriented
Experts spend a great deal of time analysing a problem qualitatively	Experts are expected to communicate effectively with clients, colleagues and families and to justify professional decisions articulately	Expertise is informed by reflexive practice as well as research
Experts have strong self-monitoring skills	Experts should demonstrate cultural competence	Experts are informed about the relevant characteristics of and demographic trends in the communities they serve
		Experts' behaviour demonstrates a strong moral commitment to beneficence through such behaviours as client advocacy and non-judgmental attitudes

Professional artistry ‘reflects both high quality and standards of professional practice and the qualities inherent in artistic or flexible, person-centred, highly reflexive practice’ (Paterson & Higgs, 2001, p. 2). Professional artistry refers to ‘practical knowledge, skilful performance or knowing as doing’ (Fish, 1998, p. 87) that is developed through the acquisition of a deep and relevant knowledge base and extensive experience (Beeston & Higgs, 2001). Artistry builds on, complements and works in synergy with, technical and scientific capabilities. Professional artistry reflects a uniquely individual view within a shared tradition involving a blend of practitioner qualities, practice skills, and creative imagination processes (Higgs & Titchen, 2001b). Readers of this book might question whether the concept of deliberateness (drive, practising knowingly) is entirely compatible with practice artistry. I would argue that practising in a way that proclaims to own one’s practice is to *live* not just *perform* this practise, to know it deeply and embody it with finesse and wisdom. Deliberate does not mean abrupt, decisive, harsh and unequivocal decision making and practice but intentional, knowing, embodied and particular practice, enacted with authenticity and commitment to the client’s interests as well as to the practitioner’s values and practice model.

When we consider good practice we are often influenced by external frames of reference: standards, ethical conduct, evidence-based practice, peer judgments, and client satisfaction/outcomes. Terms like wisdom are often dismissed in the modern world as being antiquated, non-scientific, indefensible or quaint. Practice wisdom and wise practice—like any other way of understanding and performing practice—need to be challenged. Current research being conducted with colleagues (Alison Gates and Di Tasker) at The Education For Practice Institute, Charles Sturt University, is pursuing this goal. Participants in recent interviews share these views on practice wisdom.

Practice wisdom—I think it’s about really, deeply understanding your profession, your practice, what you do to do your job well—and using this understanding to inform your practice. But, it’s probably the opposite thing too—by doing your practice well, you come to understand it better. (Brenda, 2013)

Well I’ve been in this role of principal for five years now. I’ve learned a lot—not just how to do the job but also how I do it, how I live it, what sort of person do I want to be in this job. I’ve found a lot of parallels with teaching—there’s planning, and helping others learn and develop. And accountability—I was responsible for the students’ learning, now I’m responsible for my team and my school. There was a series of realisations where I recognised the wisdom or skills or knowledge that I had had as a teacher and the way these things brought me confidence in my ability to do my job as principal. (Linda, 2013)

So—for an interpretation—practice wisdom would involve having a rich understanding of how a practice has evolved in society and in the profession—what are the social and cultural influences on this evolution and on the practice of the profession today. I guess also having insights into how and why the practice and the profession will continue to evolve into the future. That would set the scene and provide the knowing about practice—but I think wisdom would demand something more—judgement and vision—to be able to deal with the uncertainties and when things just aren’t at all straightforward—including when you work across cultures—which is pretty well all the time. I’d like to think that there is an ethical component too—being committed to doing things in broad terms ‘with a strong moral compass’ and more particularly—in the way that the profession expects ethical and

professional practitioners to behave. So that means you need to throw in quality and standards also. (Louis, 2014)

Practice wisdom is the coming together (of many parts of practice) within an individual. They craft their own practice wisdom as an amalgam of what the rules say they have to do, the sort of transmitted practice wisdom, whatever personal theories of practice they have got and whatever they happen to be reading at the time, but in a theoretical or conceptual way. ... what I am really interested in is praxis, which is deeply self-aware practice that is not just around the cognitive or even the emotional dimension but it has got an aesthetic, ecological, and moral dimension as part of the work. So for me a (person with) fully informed practice wisdom is not just somebody who has got more than technique, it's somebody who is able to look at what they are doing from all those perspectives, from the cognitive, the emotional, the moral, the spiritual, the aesthetic. Wise practice, by comparison is interactive ... A wise practitioner is somebody who is able to ... yes they have got all the head stuff, but they actually know it's not enough. It doesn't help for them (just) to be wise—wise practice is a dynamic. It's about bringing practice into shaping the possibility that somebody else's life could be. (Freda, 2012)

As with any other judgment construct, 'good' practice is an interpretation. It is set against other views of practice to imply something that is appreciated, valued, recognised as quality in the delivery, experience and outcomes of practice. The term can be attributed when an episode of practice is ranked against norms and expectations, research findings and practice standards. Good practice is also a matter of perception by the person receiving or participating in the practice as the client and is a matter of satisfaction with the experience and/or outcomes.

Conclusion

Moving on from this position the question remains 'how can practitioners know good practice when they see and practise it?' In this chapter the deliberate pursuit and choice of a practice approach and model is a core part of this answer, along with the intention to provide the best practice possible for the client and the situation. This may well take the form of the modest practice offerings and potential of novice practitioners, greater competence and effectiveness of more proficient and experienced practitioners, or advanced expertise, artistry and wisdom of highly experienced and capable practitioners.

I end with the voice of the client, through whom and for whom practice has its ultimate and essential purpose.

I came to you
with respect
seeking your help
your advice and guidance
your skills and expertise
your humanity

What is it
that you have chosen
to give me?

Whether you know it
or not
your practice is your choice.

Your deliberations
in thought, word and action,
in collaboration,
affect me.

In respecting me
you offer your practice.
I seek your best practice
... best for me!

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