

# scope

*Contemporary Research Topics*

**flexible learning 5**

November 2019

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A short biography – less than 50 words – as well as title, details of institutional identity and affiliation (where relevant), and contact information (postal, email and telephone) should be provided on a cover sheet, with all such information withheld from the body of the submission. Low resolution images with full captions should be inserted into text to indicate their preferred position. High resolution images should be sent separately (see information for contributors) or check with the editors.

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## Flexible Learning 5:

November 2019

## CAPABLE NZ – DIVERSITY IN ACTION, ISSUE 5

Steve Henry and Malcolm Macpherson

*Scope: Contemporary Research Topics* is published by the Otago Polytechnic / Te Kura Matatini ki Otago, a vocational tertiary institution in Aotearoa / New Zealand, whose mission is “Our people make a better world / Kia tū ki te tahi.” *Scope (Flexible Learning)* 5 is produced by staff at Capable NZ.

On August 1st, 2019, the Minister of Education, Chris Hipkins, announced a number of government decisions about the reform of vocational education, including the creation of a single national institution, merging the current independent polytechnics. What became clear through the consultation that accompanied this reform is the value of educational programmes that are flexibly delivered, do not require large campus infrastructure, and have learners anywhere. Capable NZ fits that prescription<sup>1</sup>.

The articles in this edition – all with their roots in Capable NZ staff and learner enquiries – illustrate the benefits of diversity, novelty and deep reflection. The work of the future will inevitably meld traditional and emerging needs into new multidisciplinary models of professional practice. New ways of working will mean that learning processes will have to be re-thought, with the emphasis changing from vocational training led by subject area specialists, to learning happening in work, at work and about work, with learners customising how their learning is designed and delivered, supported by process experts.

This is quite a shift, but a necessary one if graduates are to successfully address the wicked complexity of a world where learning is failing to provide viable answers to the increasing chaos of business as usual, and where conventional assumptions about growth and consumption in resource-constrained economies are increasingly being challenged.

Participating in a series of four Radio New Zealand panel discussions marking Tuia 250 ki Tūranga, a commemoration of the first contact between European and Māori<sup>2</sup>, and talking about traditionally Pākehā ways of organising Māori knowledge, cultural expert Karl Johnstone said, “We don’t discriminate between history, mythology and metaphor. So we say we came [to Aotearoa] on the back of a whale. But the introduction of the written word particularly the Paepae Tapu, or Bible, changed those things, making our form of history-making more didactic.

“Māori forms of knowledge actually need to be understood without prejudice,” Johnstone said, “traditional narratives are often diminished by saying that they are mythological. I often respond by saying, “Was Moses splitting the Red Sea a mythology?” And people say, “Well, no, that’s the Bible.” So there’s a really interesting dynamic there.”

One of the abiding myths of traditional ways of learning about work is that it happens outside the workplace – *apart* from work – and are taken back in. It’s time to lay that myth to rest, and for work-based learning to be business as usual, customised in real time, in real work environments.

As for history and metaphor – this fifth issue of *Scope (Flexible Learning)* is rich in both. In ten quite different articles it captures a cross-section of the outputs, outcomes, and work in progress, of researchers and learners: working individually, as collaborating learners and mentors, and in small cohorts; applying life experiences and emergent insight to build new knowledge, new competencies, and new capability. Making a better world.

Tertiary Education Commission. (2019). *Reform of Vocational Education (RoVE)*. Retrieved from <https://www.tec.govt.nz/rove/reform-of-vocational-education/>

Johnstone, K., and Wallace, E. (15 September 2019). Awkward Conversations about museums, culture and history. *Radio New Zealand*. Retrieved from <https://www.rnz.co.nz/programmes/awkward-conversations/story/2018712954/awkward-conversations-about-museums-culture-and-history-with-karl-johnstone-and-eloise-wallace>

## MY TURAKAWAEWAE: A REVIEW OF LEARNING

Ray O'Brien

### INTRODUCTION

I have written this review of learning to meet the requirements of the first course of the Doctorate of Professional Practice (DProfPrac) through Capable NZ at Otago Polytechnic. As the first assessment the primary aim is to establish whether I have sufficient experience, skills and knowledge to progress into the later parts of the doctoral programme. In addition, my personal aims for the review are to (i) explore and articulate the influences and events that have shaped my professional growth to date and, (ii) to provide a line in the sand on which to reflect during the next three years of study.

The review has three parts. The first is a narrative of a short journey in my home area which relates my interpretation of environmental and cultural contexts of the area, to my past and my identity. The narrative of the first section is not intended to form a review of learning in its own right, but rather provide context, themes, examples and a data sources for the second part. It is deliberately not referenced or written in accordance with academic tradition. The second part is a critical evaluation of the extent to which the narrative supports that I am sufficiently experienced, skilled and knowledgeable to progress into the later parts of the doctoral programme. In the second part I use a more conventionally recognisable academic style. The third part is a future focussed reflection on the first two parts.

The first two section are deliberately juxtaposed with contrasting styles and formatting. This is partly to demonstrate versatility, but also as a challenge – a descriptive narrative is quite far from my default style of communicating through text. The third section is a reflection that moves away from the polarised styles of the first two sections towards a voice through which I could write the narrative of my professional growth in the doctoral programme. I see this process of finding an authentic voice as an important development in my professional framework of practice.

I invite you to walk with me through my narrative reflection, and to cast your critical eye over the discourse of the evaluation.

### PART ONE: A PERSONAL NARRATIVE IN MY TURAKAWAEWAE

#### Walking the Talk

Every journey needs to allow time to stop and look around. A time to look back on the paths trodden, to check your location and to plan for the route ahead. Educational journeys are no different. The winding path of experiential learning weaves its way through a landscape of knowledge, understanding and capabilities. You can find yourself breathlessly climbing the steepest slopes, or shivering from fording the fastest rivers in the deepest gorges. This type of learning can be an unforgiving and time consuming route.

It is easy to get lost. You can be blown off course by the storms of conflict, disorientated by a mist of stress or lost in a forest not knowing which path is the one you want. For this reason, it is important to take advantage of opportunities to recover; to get to know your landscape, triangulate your position from what you know, and listen to the stories that are shared along the way. You need to take time to review what you have learned from the encounters you had planned, and those that you had not.

It is a review of my learning that I am sharing with you here. This is a time for me to take stock of my journey so far, understand its significance to where I am today, confirm the direction I want to travel, and prepare for the next arduous leg of the trip. The next leg may be difficult to navigate. I am an educator and a generalist. As a result, I have a broad range of experiences that currently do not seem, on the surface, to link together: I have followed parallel professional streams of education, innovation, and purpose seeking. I think they all flow into the same direction, but I have not yet found their confluence so cannot be sure.

This review is set in the narrative of conversation and encounters around Otago Harbour, near Dunedin in the South Island of New Zealand. It is the landscape where I now live, where my whānau are growing up, where I work and play. Before I describe my time spent reflecting in this landscape, I should introduce myself properly.

*Tēnā Koutou.*

*Ko Te Rotopāteke te tūrakawaewae.*

*I tipu ake au ki Scotland.*

*Ko Mount Brandan te mauka.*

*Ko Lee te awa.*

*Ko Atlanti te moana.*

*Ko Celtic te iwi.*

*Ko Dalcassian te hapu.*

*Ko Brian Broru te tino tipuna.*

*Ko Galarus Oritory te marae.*

*Ko O'Brien rātou ko Gibson ko Hislop ko Auchterlonie kā whānau.*

*Ko au tēnei.*

*Ko Ray O'Brien tōku ikoa.*

*Nō reira, tēnā koutou katoa.*

## Setting Off

There are handful of cars in the rough gravel carpark next to the small ferry jetty. As I walk across the carpark the clunk of the car locking is behind me. One door does not lock and I will never get round to fixing it. There are left over snacks on the foot mats, mud on the seats, and grime on the windows (at least I don't need to worry about it getting stolen). This is the pragmatism that I bring to most of my life and work – it works, it gets me where I want to be. It lets me focus on doing more things or visiting more places. The car is parked two spaces from a smart new black SUV. It belongs to a great family who I know and respect, but I reject the materialism and hierarchy that the car implies. I left those symbols behind with my UK passport when I decided that New Zealand was to be my tūrakawaewae and where my whānau would grow.

An extended family of Silvereyes flock from a Kowhai tree to more densely leaved pine tree. Their agitated calls break the calm of the still winter morning, echoing out across the water as if thrown into it like handful of gravel. The reason for their angst becomes clear as a Kāhu glides over-head casting his sharp eyes from side to side, tracing the line of the road side plantings.

The fingers of his wingtips make regal gestures to swiftly and precisely adjust his flight. This noble gesture did not go unnoticed in years past. One whakatauki suggests that because of their nobility ko te kahu te whakaora, waiho kia rere ana (that the kahu should be saved and allowed to fly on). This is described in stark contrast to the Kārearea who was to be snared for being betrayed by their swift and agile flight as being bold and treacherous – Homai te kēaeā kia toro-māhangatia. No noble ending was in store for the Kārearea.

*Homai te kēaeā kia toro-māhangatia  
Ko te kahu te whakaora – waiho kia rere ana!  
The karearea must be snared  
And the kahu saved – let it fly on!*

Retrieved from Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand. Original source not known.

My encounter with the Kahu is not my only light brush with such nobility. *Brian Boru te tino tipuna*, was crowned king of all Ireland in 1004. His descendants became the Ui Brian (O'Brien). He was born into a newly emerging tribe known as the Dalcassians around 940 AD in what is now County Clare. From there he had the benefit of living near and interacting with Viking settlers. He used the knowledge of new weapons and better boats to carry out river-raids in quest to rule Munster. He was a relationship builder, an innovator, a collaborator an early adopter. His later claim to control all of Ireland was challenged by the Norse invaders and Leinster men alike. Ultimately, he led the Munster troops to victory in the battle of Clontarf (1014 AD). But he paid a high price for this success. Brian, his son and grandson all died in the battle.

What sort of leader was he? Was he a kahu or a Kārearea? He seems to have swooped with agility in the changing times rather than flying steady in the winds of change. Pondering my own sense of being a leader, I'm not sure which I would have preferred my distant ancestor to be. The Kārearea flying boldly close to the cliffs with rapid changes of direction is more in line with the agility I aspire to. I ponder whether my flightiness is viewed by some with the same distrust as the Kārearea met. Did King Brian's tendency to maximise on relationships, innovation and being an early adopter somehow make its way to me through the generations?

As the Kahu rounds the corner and out of sight, my attention is drawn to the water, as a boat engine thumps into life. One thing is for sure, the engine is much better at winter mornings than I am. I head off to the water taxi that will take me to Kamau Taurua or as the Scottish Presbyterians labelled it, Quarantine Island.

### **Don't Pay the Ferryman?**

From the rear deck of the ferry I can look down into the strong tidal flow that separates the geometrical 1980s architecture of the University Marine Research Centre from the old colonial buildings of the island. The water drawn in from the ocean to fill the harbour pushes through rocks and over shallows creating waves and swirls that dissipate as they pass the island and enter the safer waters of the harbour – the harbour is taking its twice daily deep breath. Downstream a seal pops his broad nose above the water for no more than a glance. A moment later his preoccupation becomes apparent. A loud slap draws our attention to the seal thrashing his head on the water. Kekenō the seal had a tasty prize – an octopus. The brutality of his attack tears all of my thoughts way from the tranquillity of the sea washing the rocks. Te Wheke is being torn apart limb by limb. It is an unjust end for such an intelligent animal and is heavily laden with sad irony as he is so often used as a kaupapa Māori metaphor for health. Kekenō does not seem to need to accommodate this injustice, nor the metaphor.

The harbour is alive and has provided for many more than Kekenō for a long time. The depths and the shallows have provided sustenance for Māori since they first explored the area in 9th century.

As Tahu Potiki describes:

The Otago Harbour is a site of singular importance to the Kai Tahu, Kati Mamoe, and Waitaha people of this district. It has been a source of nourishment, a major highway, a sheltering location for human settlement, a burial place and a symbol carrying the ancestral, spiritual and religious traditions of all the generations prior to European settlement.

(Tahu Potiki, Te Runanga o Otakou, submission regarding 'Project next Generation' on the harbour 2011 retrieved from <http://quarantineisland.org.nz>)

While the water provided kai moana, the bush provided both food and medicine aplenty. Behind me rises the cone of Here Weka. While this hill casts its shadows and reflecting onto the same bays and islands as it did when the Kati Mamoe first arrived, today it manages no more than a stubble of the rich vegetation with which it was once adorned. It is a distinctive remnant of the volcanic history of the landscape, a bookmark for those, like myself, becoming acquainted with the Otago Peninsula. It is the mauka to which my son relates.

On the other side of the globe Ventry Bay in County Kerry has a similar geological history, morphology and significance. Standing over the waters of Ventry Bay, Mount Brendan casts its shadow. – *Ko Mount Brendan te mauka*. Its namesake is St Brendan the navigator. St Brendan his disciples reputedly set sail sometime around 500AD from the very shores on which my great grandfather played as a boy. They voyaged for several years, discovering sea monsters and sailing past a hell where the fires rolled into the sea and several of the crew were overcome by the stench (possibly modern-day volcanic Iceland). Their ultimate objective were the Isles of the Blessed – also known as the Fortunate Isles – a collection of islands in the Atlantic Ocean, near to North America. It seems he did set foot there at some point. They took refuge one night on an island. When they set a fire to keep themselves warm the whole island sank. – it was a whale. Brendan's story lives in Irish folklore, Norse saga, and Roman legend.

Around the same time Maui and his crew were navigating the shores of the whenua-teitei that the long white cloud had drawn them to. They also encountered taniwha and kewa. They were following the migration of the kewa, one of the many navigation tools available to explorers in those days. Maui's story lives in Māori tradition, it varies from iwi to iwi, and from pacific island to pacific island. It may be that over the centuries there have been many Maui's who now belong to the same story retold in many places, like a Viking saga of the south.

Like the rocks over which the tides pass, our stories have survived by taking their shape from the gradual washing of time. How do we understand what is true through the lens of our today, with our yesterday being so open to interpretation?

## **Banter on the Beach**

As I disembark and wander down the old creaky jetty past the hulks of decaying boats, a kayak arrives in the enclosed bay. As it reaches the rocky beach the kayaker, seemingly without thinking, tilts the boat far to one side and curves the hull around landing carefully and gently on the rocks without damage. A small wave scurries away from him niggling the jagged rocks of the beach as it goes. We greet each other, and he seems as surprised as I am to hear how similar our accents are. A west coast Scottish rolling "rrr" is unmistakable. He sits on a rock near his kayak and I dangle my legs from the jetty. I am curious. Who is he? How did he get here? With common ground established, we start a conversation.

"That's a fairly unusual paddle you've got" I say.

"Yes, it's a Greenland-style Paddle." His reply rolls off his tongue, like a well-practiced elevator pitch. He seems to welcome the interest and continues. "It's great for long distances and windy conditions. The Greenlanders use this style partly because they couldn't make fancy carbon blades, but mainly because it was better for hunting with".

"Have you kayaked in Greenland?" I ask.



The kayaker obliges, keen to tell me more of himself. "Yes. I went to compete in the Greenland Kayak Games. It was a really special thing. I've spent most of my adult life sitting in a kayak for work and for play. I work with the military, training leaders through outdoor activities, so get into some fairly challenging situations. That trip was so different. There is such a strong link between kayaks and the Inuit that there was a whole other layer to understand".

"There was also this thing going on in our heads about colonialism. Although it is Denmark governs Greenland, we were there on a Winston Churchill Scholarship. I had to wear a suit and meet two of his grandchildren for an interview in some posh club in London – it didn't feel very Braveheart!" We both laugh. The irony of how Mel Gibson has become such a non-Scottish Scottish icon, isn't missed on a Scotsman. Perhaps it's the ultimate form of colonisation in its own right.

Having satisfied his need to share what he had done, the kayaker asks what I do for a job. His reciprocation of interest is welcome, but the question he asks betrays the fact that he has not been in New Zealand for very long. Even the least useful of expat websites will tell you that asking that typically British question before getting to know the person shouts in screaming LED lights that you have just stepped off the waka – which he has.

When I say that I am a lecturer at a local polytechnic, he raises his eyebrows and nods slowly. It's a show of cynicism that he makes little attempt to hide. "An academic?" he states, more as an accusation than a question. If the conversation has been egalitarian until now, his cautious response changes the mood slightly.

"Some might say pracademic," I say, as a form of confession, "but I think you might as well own up to it. You sound like you've got some thoughts on academia?" "Well it's not the real world is it?" he responds.

I shrug my shoulders, in partial agreement. I want to explain how relevant academia and tertiary education can be, but the words floating around my head all seem to reinforce his point. Heutagogy. Future focussed. Self-determination. Transformation. Emancipatory. It's become a conversation I am familiar with.

My father's career took him from a tradesman to corporate trainer and played a part in an economic development agency. He was a man with a catholic hard work ethic and an old-labour unionised sense of knowing through doing and lived experience. These were the traits that carried him through. As I am the first in my family to study at a tertiary level I am supposedly at more risk of academic failure than others. However, I am my father's son. I am grounded with a critical mind-set that has given me license and confidence to challenge the assumed reality and wisdom of education. It may also explain why it has taken me to now, at the level of doctorate and to professional practice learning before feeling strong alignment with the process of education.

Without saying so much, we agree to both agree and differ on the relevance of academia. I wish him well and leave him to the beach. I take a steep path that cuts its route across the hill towards the remaining buildings of the Old Quarantine Station.

## Flue with a View

Quarantine is a strange concept. From the high point of the island I find an old chimney breast silhouetted against the skyline. It bends into the wind; an old woman, wrapped in a shawl, expectantly looking out to sea. It is the last part of the old hospital. The remaining pieces of a 200+ year story. In the late 1800s Pākehā settlers – after weeks on the ocean in tortuous conditions – were forced by the powers of the day to spend time on the island to ensure that their diseases did not land in their home to be. More than 70 of these visitors never left the island. Restricted to their hospital beds by their illness, with the smell of the harbour blowing through the windows. They had only to stand to find a view where the home they had dreamt of for so long cruelly taunted them. The nearby cemetery is a sober reminder of their passing. While many graves are unmarked, the tiny pillows of grass provide a reminder of the sadness that many young couples would have taken to their new Otago homes. For me it is a reminder that some memories are best left buried and forgotten. The pain of reflection does not justify the gain.

I sit by the chimney to consider my journey and how to navigate the next leg of it. I too travelled across the planet with my whanau seeking a new life. We have made this landscape before me our home. I am also to some extent in a type of quarantine – proving my fitness and health to progress to the next step of this doctoral qualification. While this plays on my mind for a while, in this setting, the trials of an academic process or the possible outcomes, seem trivial in comparison those which the hardy Presbyterian travellers from so long ago faced. *“If I’ve made it this far” I can hear them say.*

Like it has for me, this landscape and its communities continue to provide shelter for weary travellers from all around the globe. While most of the immigrants now arrive in search of an even better life than the one they enjoyed elsewhere, some still come to escape the horrors of war, famine and persecution. Today, they are mostly greeted with open arms. But the feeling of arriving on these shores – bodies aching, minds fearful – has not been lost through the generations.

This concept of welcoming – of being open to all, of being willing to make a difference – is core to my work and life. It was not long ago that I was holding a new born child of recently arrived Syrian refugees. It was without doubt the strongest symbol of infinite hope I have ever experienced. A feeling I am sure would have been familiar to many of the Scots who settled here in the 1800s.

### **Homeward bound**

I leave the kuia to her lonesome vigil and take a walk around the island. A new path guides me through both regenerating forests and sheep clipped fields. With my hair and my lungs full of the harbour breeze, I make my way back down to the ferry, waiting for me at the jetty.

From a seat at the rear of the deck, it is clear that the waves and swirls have now disappeared as the tide makes its twice-daily change of mind and the boat enjoys the respite of slack water. The rusty cliffs of the island and the slow dancing clouds above are reflected in the stillness of the water. Standing on the boat in the harbour, the relationship between the changing tide, the still weather, and the gravity of the sun and moon, seems tenuous at best. The change is however conspicuous and the relationship strong.

The ferry draws alongside all too soon. I reluctantly step into the jetty. The relationship between the landscape and the busyness of family and work, sometimes feels uncomfortable. Like walking in well fitted but odd shoes. It is a relationship that has changed over time and will continue to – it waxes and wanes and ebbs and flows. The change is subtle but conspicuous and the relationship strong. It is complex and I know it – this is my Turakawaewae.

## PART TWO: CRITICAL EVALUATION OF NARRATIVE

In this second section of the review of learning, the extent to which the narrative in the first section supports that the author is sufficiently experienced, skilled and knowledgeable to progress into the later parts of the doctoral programme is critically evaluated.

Critical evaluation can be interpreted in many ways in different contexts, therefore it is important to clarify how it applies to the author's context before proceeding. The root of the word critical can be found in the Greek *crit* which refers to separating or choosing (Michigan State University, n.d.) and *évaluation* (French) refers to prescribing value or merit (Online Etymology Dictionary, n.d.). Therefore, critical evaluation can be considered a process of separating in order to place a value. Within the author's tertiary education context this reductionist approach of separating in order to ascribe value is at the heart of a significant tension (Ings, 2017). The reduction of learning into smaller units in order to assess merit has the potential to diminish the perceived value of understanding the whole (Freire, 1998). The critical evaluation of the narrative, carries that tension between holism and reductionism, giving value to both micro and macro elements. The dualism in this is valued by the researcher throughout.

Dualism is reflected in the structure of this section. The extent to which the narrative describes how the author's specific experience, knowledge and skills will support them in their doctoral study is evaluated first. Supplementary information is provided where the narrative falls short. Then, the extent to which the narrative describes the paradigm through which the author will approach doctoral study is evaluated. This evaluation examines the text of the narrative through the structures of four characteristics of paradigm: epistemology, ontology, axiology and methodology. It is expected that to conduct professional practice research at a doctoral level the author should be acutely aware of the paradigm through which they view their research. A conclusion is then provided that incorporates both specific and holistic aspects of the author's capabilities.

### The author's experience, skills and knowledge

To critically evaluate the author's skills, knowledge and experience, it is important to clarify the evaluative criteria against which they are being evaluated. The aim of the DProfPrac at Otago Polytechnic is for candidates to "create new knowledge that will advance practice" (Otago Polytechnic, 2016, p. 1). In this case the advancement in practice will be focussed on the author's own professional practice, and as such is strongly aligned with an auto-ethnographic approach (Holt, 2003). The focussed critical question is therefore, to what extent does the narrative demonstrate that the author's professional and research experience, skills and knowledge are suitable for conducting auto-ethnographic research in the context of work based learning at a doctoral level?

As the narrative describes a short journey through the author's local geography, it would have been detrimental to both flow and authenticity to exhaustively describe the research and professional knowledge of the author. While some specific writing skills are demonstrated and some personal experiences referred to, the narrative more adequately demonstrates, through implication, the worldview or paradigm through which the author interprets research and professional experiences in order to build knowledge. While this is a strength of an auto-ethnographic approach, it is necessary to supplement the narrative with an evaluation of the suitability of the knowledge, skills and experience gained through the author's research and professional roles.

While the author's research experience is commensurate with that of an emergent researcher, there has been a range of roles undertaken in a relatively short time frame. Creswell (2012) presents two roles a researcher may assume when observing ethnographic research; the non-participative observer and the participative observer. The author has previously conducted and published research as a non-participative observer some of which examining the author's field of practice (Boyle, O'Brien, & Sellar, 2018; Collins & O'Brien, 2016). In O'Brien (2016) the author's own practice and work place was excluded in an attempt to increase objectivity. The author also has experience of conducting and publishing research on their own practice in the role of a participant observer (Mann, Ker, Eden-

Mann, & O'Brien, 2017a, 2017c; O'Brien, 8,9412018a). However, even a participating observer's role does not fully align with a researcher's role in an auto-ethnographic approach; being the observer, the participant and the subject (Chang, 2008). Both O'Brien, (2018b) and O'Brien (2018c), are examples of the author stepping into an emerging role as an auto-ethnographic researcher. This emerging role is fully supported by extensive professional knowledge.

The author's professional capabilities have been developed through formal training and qualifications across a range of professional contexts, and from a range of tertiary institutions and training roles. The majority of these qualifications have been undertaken while in full time work and were fully integrated into the author's work. The author's current role involves the evidence based development and delivery of new and innovative practice which is *creating new knowledge and advancing practice*. This professional knowledge is fully integrated with the research knowledge described above; all research activity directly related to or influenced the author's practice. How new knowledge is assimilated into our schema shapes our view of the world and the action we then take (Syed, 2015). Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate the extent to which the narrative demonstrates that the author is sufficiently aware of the paradigm they bring to their professional and research roles.

### The author's world view

While Kuhn (1970) provided very specific criteria to define a paradigm, more contemporarily it is seen as "simply an acceptable worldview" (Mackinnon & Powell, 2008, p. 24). As has been the tradition in educational research, a more contemporary and open description of paradigm has been adopted to unpack the world view implied in the narrative (Donmoyer, 2006).

Guba and Lincoln (2005) described the concept of paradigm, as it applies to research, as having four main elements: epistemology, ontology, axiology and methodology. Kivunja & Kuyini (2017) explain how these key aspects of research paradigms relate to education research. As illustrated in figure 1, the same four key elements can be used to unpack the paradigm described in the narrative.

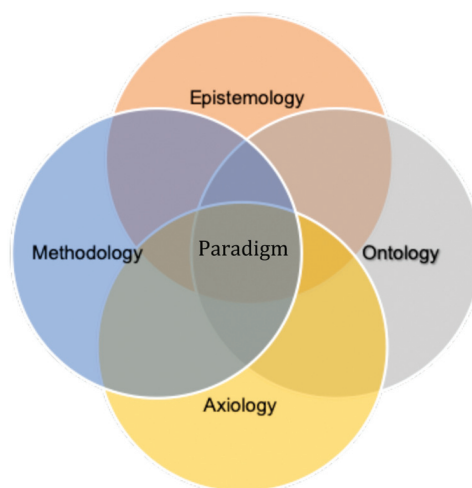


Figure 1. The four elements of paradigm.

### Epistemology

Epistemology is concerned with the basis of knowledge and justified belief (Dudovskiy, 2018b). The narrative implies a *constructivist epistemology* through the metaphor of learning as a journey- knowledge being constructing from the experience of the journey. Ültanır (2012) describes the basis of constructivism as the idea that development of understanding requires upon active engagement in meaning-making. It is an integration of, landscape, family, culture, people, history and present to construct knowledge and an understanding of place. It is an interaction of thinking with experience. This is supported by specific examples in the narrative. For example, the claim that a pragmatic approach is adopted in order to focus in doing more things or visiting more places. This value on learning through experience is also embedded in the description of the author's ancestors from an ancient relative, learning new battle skills through interactions with Vikings, to the hands-on sense of knowing demonstrated by the author's father. A constructivist epistemology is clearly a central element of the author's world view.

## Ontology

Ontology is concerned with the assumptions we make in order to believe that something is real. Baghrmian and Carter (2018) describe a *relativist ontology* as being in tension with concepts of absolutism, objectivism, monism and realism. The narrative suggests the author's alignment with a relativist ontology through implied tensions with all four concepts as follows.

Rather than demonstrating a belief in one absolute truth or value-set, the narrative demonstrates relative truth and value. For example, relative to time, truth and values are seen to change, such as describing the values of the author's ancestors including his father. A fictitious conversation with the author's younger self on the beach specifically related to a changing professional identity or sense of being specific to a time and place rather than being absolute. The shifting of truth and value through time is also metaphorically described through the changing of the tide and how it interacts with the rocks of the harbour.

The narrative provides several examples of subjectivism being valued over objectivism. For example, when the author questions other peoples' perceptions of his flightiness. The questioning shows that the author's sense of being or identity is subject to interpretation by others and he is not an independent agent. Another example, is the symbolic reference to the author giving away their passport and changing how they approach the task of getting to know another person through a new cultural lens. The interpretation of identity is subject to changing cultural values and context rather than being an objective process.

The narrative is a three dimensional description. It is not, as Sousanis (2015) describes, a flatland of monism where everything can only be viewed from one perspective. The author values pluralism over monism in two specific cases. Plurality can be found in the conversation on the beach in the plurality of the author's sense of identity as an academic. This is a tension between what is traditionally seen as the identity of an academic and the author's more contemporary and practice based interpretation. Another layer that the narrative unflattens is the relationship between the author and Te Ao Māori. While the author does not identify as iwi Māori, the narrative provides many examples of how Māori knowledge and world views have been integrated both in practice and in identity. For example, the author has integrated the use of Te Reo Māori into the narrative without providing direct translations. This is based on the expectation that the reader will anticipate and value the integration. In some cases the Te Reo Māori word and the English word have been alternated. The use of Te Wheki or Octopus and the description of the old woman or kuia are two examples. This is not merely a switching of vocabulary from one language to another; the words are sufficiently culturally loaded to create the opportunity to interpret the scene with some understanding from more than one cultural standpoint. The author introducing themselves through a mihi, relating observations of nature to a traditional whakatauki, and drawing parallels between the historical stories of Māori ancestors and the author's ancestors, are further examples of a culturally plural approach to interpreting what is real.

The last of the four concepts described as being in tension with a relativist ontology is *realism*. While this has strong links to the concept of pluralism described above, the narrative provides examples of the author recognising that there can be several concurrent versions of reality in the same situation, rather than a singular and objective truth. There are several realities that run to some extent in parallel within the narrative. The historical accounts of Maui and St Brendan run in parallel and themselves have other branching truths, such as different versions of the stories in many different cultures and languages around the world. Where realism encourages seeking one singular truth, the narrative accepts the parallel truths and interpretations. A specific example of this is the dates that have been used to place these stories in history. The date of St Brendan's voyage was based on accounts written by monks several centuries after the voyage. The dates for Maui's voyage are based on counting back through generations of a whakapapa using 20 years as an average generational gap. Neither approach has been described in the narrative as more accurate or valid – both are based in parallel cultural realities.

Given the examples above, the narrative strongly indicates that the author has adopted a relativist ontology that accepts relative truths or values, subjectivism, pluralism and multiple accepted realities over absolutism, objectivism, monism and realism.

## **Axiology**

Axiology is concerned with concepts of value (Dudovskiy, 2018a). In the context of research axiology relates specifically to decisions based on ethical or aesthetic values (O’Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015). This is quite different from the ethical considerations and processes relevant to specific research activities. Axiology is a meta-ethical view of the world. The narrative implies the author has assumed a position of axiological naturalism aligned with the work of Dewey (as cited in Hart, 1971). Naturalism supports both ethical and aesthetic value being assigned through an interlinked relationship between feelings, interests, desires and experiences which is not seen as fixed in time but expected to evolve. The following examples describe how the narrative implies the value placed on equity, wellbeing and indigenous rights within the author’s worldview.

Equity is a guiding value for the author. The statement rejecting an expensive car as a symbol of materialism and hierarchy is one example. Behind the rejection are relationships between past experiences, moving from one country to another and the family who own the car. A high value is placed on wellbeing. This is seen in the author’s self-care in not reflecting on experiences which are too painful to justify the possible learning, and in the author’s discomfort at observing the brutal attack on the octopus. Behind the value placed on wellbeing are relationships between family, experiences, wildlife and a sense of place. Throughout the narrative the author refers to Māori indigenous knowledge. In fictitious conversation with the author’s younger self, reference is made to the importance of Inuit culture around kayaking. Placing such a high value on indigenous understandings is a result of dynamic relationships between the author, the natural environment, traditional stories, interpretation of the Treaty of Waitangi and personal connections.

Axiology is not only concerned with values that guide decisions and actions of the researcher, but also relate to the expected outcomes of the research i.e. does the research result merely in increased understanding or does it actually make a difference (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017)? The value placed on practical application, groundedness, and making a difference is explicitly stated as core to the author’s life and work as a pracademic (Posner, 2009) .

Given the examples above it is clear that the author is guided and influenced in their ethical and aesthetic decision making by values of equity, wellbeing, indigenous rights and the need to make a difference. These values being subject to change through time and complex relationships.

## **Methodology**

Methodology is concerned with the research design, methods, approaches and procedures used in an investigation. Based on the design of the DProfPrac there are two levels of methodology to be considered; (i) the methodology used to develop the aspirational framework of practice (ii) the methodology used in each of the projects that create the knowledge which prompts an iteration of the aspirational framework of practice (Otago Polytechnic, 2016).

As described already the author is subject, observer and participant. Ellis, Adams, & Bochner (2010) describe auto-ethnography as the systematic analysis of personal experience in order to understand cultural experience. Therefore an auto-ethnographic methodology is appropriate for the higher level methodology (Dyson, 2007). This can be further refined as aligning with the reflexive ethnography as it will document changes in the researcher as a result of conducting research (Ellis et al., 2010). The iterative and practice based nature of the aspirational framework of practice align with the cyclical and problem solving focus of action research methodology fits well (Herr & Anderson, 2014; Koshy, 2009). Thus, the overriding methodology is that of auto-ethnographic action research. The narrative thus becomes the first cycle of action research- based on experiences and informing the iteration of an early framework of practice.

For each of the action research cycles that contribute to the iteration of the aspirational framework of practice, a different methodological approach may be required. Indeed, the triangulation of varied methodologies not only aligns with a constructivist epistemology and a relativist ontology, it can also be seen to add explanatory power

(Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, & Morales, 2007; Joslin & Müller, 2016). Given the evidence of a constructivist epistemology, a relativist ontology, and an axiology guided by equity, wellbeing, indigenous rights and the need to make a difference, there are some methodologies that may align more strongly with the authors world view than others (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). It should be noted that while some methodologies may be better aligned to the authors world view, there is no implication that others would be excluded.

Methodologies that align with the author's world view, as implied by the narrative include; Naturalist methodology (Guba & Lincoln, 1982), Narrative inquiry (Mitchell & Egudo, 2003), Case Study (Baxter & Jack, 2008), Phenomenology (Tuohy, Cooney, Dowling, Murphy, & Sixsmith, 2013), Ethnography (Hammersley, 2018), Action Research (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014; Herr & Anderson, 2014), Critical Discourse Analysis (Asghar, 2013), Design Based Research (Barab & Squire, 2004) and Futures Studies Methodologies (Inayatullah, n.d.; Ramos, 2002).

Therefore, although the narrative did not directly describe the methodological elements aligned with the author's world view, through inference from epistemology, ontology, and axiology and the design of the DProfPrac, a set of credible and well aligned methodologies has been identified.

### A pragmatic paradigm

As described by Guba and Lincoln (2005) and Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) and illustrated in figure 1, paradigm is influenced by four elements; epistemology, ontology, axiology and methodology. Each paradigm has a distinctive profile across the four elements. As illustrated in figure 2, the narrative describes the author's constructivist epistemology, relativist ontology, and axiology guided by equity, wellbeing, indigenous rights and the need to make a difference. This profile is also well aligned with a range of mixed or qualitative methodologies. This profile implies an alignment with a pragmatic paradigm (O'Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015).

Core to pragmatic paradigm is the notion that "beliefs are guides to action and should be judged against outcomes rather than abstract principles" (Ormerod, 2006, p. 1). Furthermore pragmatism serves practitioners well in that it; accepts the uncertainty and changing nature of findings; recognises the individual interpretation of meaning; accepts that inquiry and knowledge are social; supports learning based on experience; and is flexible enough to accommodate other paradigms (Ormerod, 2006). This final point being particularly significant as many of the features that have been used to describe elements of the authors world view would also support constructivist or interpretivist paradigms. For example, the characteristics of a constructivist epistemology clearly align with a constructivist paradigm and a relativist ontology aligns with an interpretivist paradigm. However, the over-arching need for practical outcomes that make a difference tips the balance towards pragmatism being a more appropriate description of the author's paradigm.

The adoption of a pragmatic paradigm is not only supported through implication from the four elements of paradigm, but also with direct reference in the narrative. For example, the pragmatism displayed by the author not being concerned about their car being left unlocked in fairly overt. The author embraces that they have been part of several parallel professional pathways that have not yet found their confluence. This indicates that they are not concerned about a perfect framework, but rather one that works.

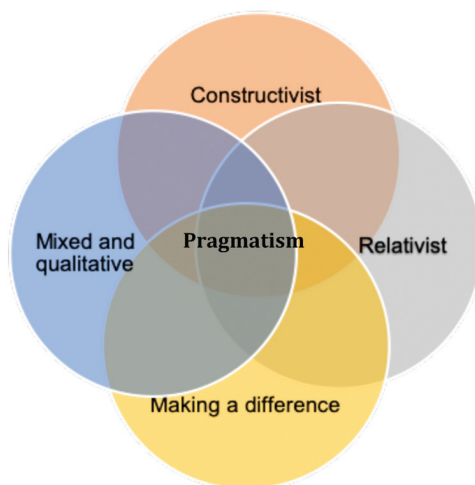


Figure 2. Elements of Pragmatic paradigm.

In conclusion, as pragmatic paradigm has been described through both direct reference and implication, it is reasonable to claim that the author is sufficiently aware of the paradigm through the way they view and interact with their professional and research roles, to continue in a path of doctoral studies.

## CONCLUSION

The focussed critical question this evaluation addresses is: to what extent does the narrative demonstrate that the author's professional and research experience, skills and knowledge are suitable for conducting autoethnographic research in the context of work based learning at a doctoral level? New Zealand Qualifications Authority describe doctoral study as; producing knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of professional practice; conducting critical reflection on existing knowledge or practice and the creation of new knowledge; and demonstrating a sustained commitment to the professional integrity, and the development of new ideas or practices at the forefront of discipline or professional practice (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2016).

This question has been addressed from a reductionist perspective of looking at specific experience, skills and knowledge and from a holistic evaluation of the extent to which the author was aware of the paradigm through which they approach their research and professional roles.

The narrative did not fully describe the author's specific skills, knowledge and experience, so supplementary information was provided in appendices to provide adequate evidence that the author is capable of the research and professional roles expected of an emergent researcher at doctoral level.

The narrative was comprehensive in its description of paradigm both directly and through inference. This evaluation was structured in alignment with accepted philosophy traditions and research. Given the significance of paradigm in auto-ethnographic research, where the author is observer; participant and subject, a high level of awareness of the paradigm through which one views their professional context and research is important. The narrative supports that the author has such a level of self-awareness and would be well equipped to progress in doctoral study.

In conclusion, both specific and holistic analysis of the narrative and supplementary evidence support that the author is sufficiently skilled, experienced and knowledgeable to progress towards and Doctorate of Professional Practice.



## PART THREE: REFLECTION

### Three strong legs

I have completed this review of learning in three stages. Firstly, writing a narrative of a short journey described through my own eyes. Secondly, writing a critical evaluation of the effectiveness of the narrative in demonstrating my readiness to continue along a doctoral pathway in professional practice, which adopts an auto-ethnographic action research approach. The third stage is this reflection on the significance of the learning in the first two stages.

Mezirow (1991 as cited in Coghlan & Brannick, 2014) describe action research as a three legged stool with content, process and premise as supporting legs. Upon reflection, I see that this review of learning has generated learning in all three of these aspects. Content learning has been addressed through evaluating specific skills, knowledge and experience. Process learning has been addressed through a novel and diverse writing experience. Premise learning has been addressed through describing and establishing my alignment with a pragmatic paradigm through which to approach professional practice and research.

Moving forward, the most significant aspect of this learning is the description and alignment of a pragmatic paradigm. There are four key reasons why this is significant learning for me:

- I am now more able to fully articulate the influence my paradigm has on how I interpret phenomenon.
- I can now be more confident in how I create understanding and knowledge, as my approach is legitimised through a recognised paradigm.
- I now have an increased awareness of the philosophical basis of differences I may need to navigate, when practicing or researching within a context where others may align with different paradigms.
- I now have an increased awareness of how my paradigm might influence the most appropriate methodologies for my research.

This is what Coghlan & Brannick (2014) describe as *actionable knowledge* which is usable in practice, and theoretically robust from a scholarly perspective. It is knowledge that I will take into action as I progress in planning my research projects. It is knowledge that will support me in way-finding through the “messiness and unpredictability” of action research (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014, p. 83).

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# ACTIVATING TUIA LEARNING ENVIRONMENT. WEAVING WAYS OF KNOWING. EXPLORING LIFE'S INTERCONNECTIONS. NOURISHING SHARED FUTURES

Julie Crocker, Emma Morris and Alexa Forbes

Mā te rongo, ka mōhio;  
Mā te mōhio, ka mārama;  
Mā te mārama, ka mātau;  
Mā te mātau, ka ora

From listening comes awareness;  
from awareness comes understanding;  
from understanding comes knowledge;  
from knowledge comes life and well-being

*This article is co-authored by Emma Morris and Julie Crocker. We are part of a group of six who are activating the Tuia Learning Environment (formerly known as The Centre for Socio-Ecological Learning) in its early conceptual stages, along with Dave Hursthouse, Cameron Ryan, Chris Anderson and Sam O'Sullivan. We are both current students with Capable NZ, where Emma is exploring a master's in professional practice and Julie exploring a graduate diploma in professional practice (leadership for change). Both inquiries are focused on exploring transformative learning experiences, through different lenses. Emma's master's project is a discovery into the life-force of learning, how to vivify learning experiences and nourish the vitality of learners. Julie is exploring the power of movement and body intelligence to inspire personal and collective transformation. In this article we tap into our personal essences to describe our shared vision for this learning environment.*

In this article we're setting out to take you with us through the creation story of this organisation, where we've come from, where we are now and where we are heading. Our challenge here is to introduce the Tuia Learning Environment (Tuia) in a way that balances clear, accessible language with ecological, metaphoric language. This article will discuss the why, what, how and who of Tuia through the metaphor of a whole natural landscape, "ki uta ki tai" (*from the mountains to the sea*). In this way the article becomes part explanation, part learning experience. This approach models one of Tuia's core organisational 'theories of change'; the belief that by being aware that all life is interconnected we deepen our ability to nourish a thriving people and planet. We believe this can be facilitated through transformative learning experiences that deeply question our way of thinking and knowing. Our hope is that we stimulate this experience at all stages of contact with the Tuia Learning Environment, including the experience of reading this article.

There is a growing understanding of how our outside environment interacts with our internal states, including how the patterns of language can affect a speaker's worldview, or cognition. We have been experiencing this ourselves, as the two of us have embarked on Te Ara Reo Māori (*the path to the Māori language*) with Te Wānanga o Aotearoa. To us, this journey has felt like a dance between the language and the culture, the two so wholly enmeshed that we cannot tell where one starts and the other ends. The deeper we are welcomed into Te Ao Māori (*the Māori world*), the clearer we can understand how everything is connected. We are grateful for the wisdom of tangata whenua (*people of the land*) as it is in light of this wisdom that we can foresee a beautiful future together.

With that in mind, welcome to this experience. We invite you to this story of Tuia which starts to speak the change that we wish to live. Take a moment to breathe deeply, grounding into your body. ta kina (breathe in), ha puta (breathe out). Presence yourself in your space, at this time, and read on.

*We see Tuia as “Ki uta ki tai”, a whole landscape system, from the mountains to the sea  
Those who interact with Tuia experience a dynamic cycle through the learning environment;  
a transformative learning experience.*

*Te Moana (the ocean) is the big picture,  
the wider systems changing in response to the learning environment.*

*We seek to cultivate rich upstream conditions in the learning environment that have flow on effects to the ocean, the desired sea of change. As the learning environment grows the landscape changes, causing ripple effects to flow in all directions. We seek to shift the ocean from one dominated by broken systems to one abundant with deep relationships.*

The dream for Tuia emerged from the desire to unite in the face of our rapidly changing, highly complex times. Tuia is a response to the current stuck and broken systems which are resulting in ecological decline and social injustice. We believe that shifting these systems will start with collectively questioning the dominant ways of knowing which neglect the role humans play within wider systems. When we ignore the relationships between ourselves and the systems we are nested within, we are unable to perceive our personal impact on the planet. We privilege ways of behaving and knowing that can marginalise and disempower others.

Every person feels reality in a different way, and sees it through a lens informed by their unique cultural stories and values. Our deepest wisdom may only emerge when we weave different ways of knowing into the cultures they emerge from. If we question the prevailing ways of knowing we can begin to observe the relationships – in-between all elements of life. We start to see what indigenous wisdom and

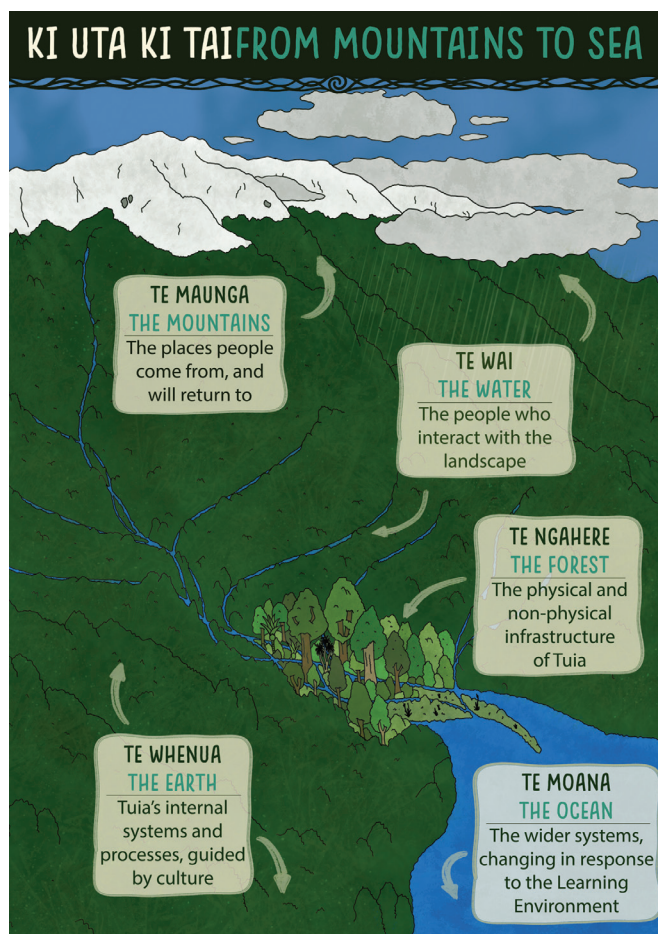


Figure 1. Ecological metaphor for Tuia Learning Environment.

holistic sciences have been indicating for eons: that everything is interconnected. We see how personal decisions and patterns of behaviour affect social inequity or ecological decline – how our inner worlds affect our outer worlds. By exploring the interconnection between inner and outer systems we can become aware of the changes we can make to nourish a shared future where the well-being of both people and planet thrive.

Tuia will create space for collective sharing, and thus a space for collective learning. *Mehemea ka moemoeā ahau, ko ahau anake mehemea ka moemoeā tātou, ka taea e tātou* – If I dream alone, only I benefit, if we all dream together, we can succeed together. This whakatauki (*Māori proverb*) from Te Peua Herangi (Waikato Tainui) reminds us of the significance of dreaming. Tuia is a dreaming space – a space for visioning, knowledge and learning, a space for expanding what is possible, a space for connections. When we dream alone the benefits will be limited. When we dream together, we open the possibility for the emergence of a genuine shared future which supports collective wellbeing.

*Te Ngahere (the forest) is the physical infrastructure;  
the buildings, the natural spaces, and the non-physical infrastructure; the learning experiences,  
the businesses and the organisation as a whole.  
Each tree in the forest nurtures a distinct area of focus through communication and resources.  
Each tree has a number of branches, these are the working groups that turn energy into action.*

Tuia will be a land-based learning environment focused on contemporary skills in regenerative practices for human and planetary wellbeing. The learning environment will offer a wide range of short-term and long-term learning experiences to equip people and communities to adapt to fast-changing environmental and social climates. The learning experiences will be oriented towards land-based learning, social and cultural learning and wellbeing, woven together to provide integrated learning experiences. Examples of learning experiences include: regenerative agriculture, permaculture design, waste management, decolonisation, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, living organisations, physical health practices, mindfulness, emotional awareness, behavioural and movement therapy.

At the beating heart of the Tuia Learning Environment will be a welcoming, living learning centre. This will include indoor and outdoor classrooms, spaces for events, places for wellbeing as well as short-term accommodation. To embed learning in place, build capacity and financially support the learning centre, the wider landscape will integrate income-generating activities and demonstration systems. For example, a learning experience focused on organic horticulture could offer experiences of a successful orchard operation on the land. This orchard operation could be financially supporting the course and provide employment opportunities to learners beyond the course. In this way the wider learning environment becomes the classroom.

For humans and the environment to flourish, we need a shift in learning. In shifting how we learn, we shift how we see the world, how we live in it and how we choose to thrive. We want to shift away from seeing education as something that can be compartmentalised, planned and measured. Instead, we seek guidance from the natural world and Te Ao Māori where we are learning that learning experiences are alive; they are dynamic, living systems. When we treat our learning experiences as living systems, we awaken a sense of aliveness, vibrancy and self-creating creativity. By designing learning experiences to resonate with the structures and rhythms of nature they hold space for uncertainty and paradox; adaptive systems that are continually changing. This approach creates space for ways of knowing and learning that are co-created. In providing space for different ways to interact and connect, what emerges is something new and contextually appropriate, something no single learner could have foreseen or created on their own.

Learners are treated as living systems too, the whole person must be cared for; te taha hinengaro (*mental well-being*), te taha tinana (*physical well-being*), te taha wairua (*spiritual well-being*) and te taha whanau (*the well-being of the family*). Rather than traditional transmission teaching, learning will be explored through a balanced experience of different learning styles that feed total wellbeing. This means integrating the more inner/felt dimensions (through creative expression; arts, story, play, movement) as well as weaving theoretical and practical dimensions.



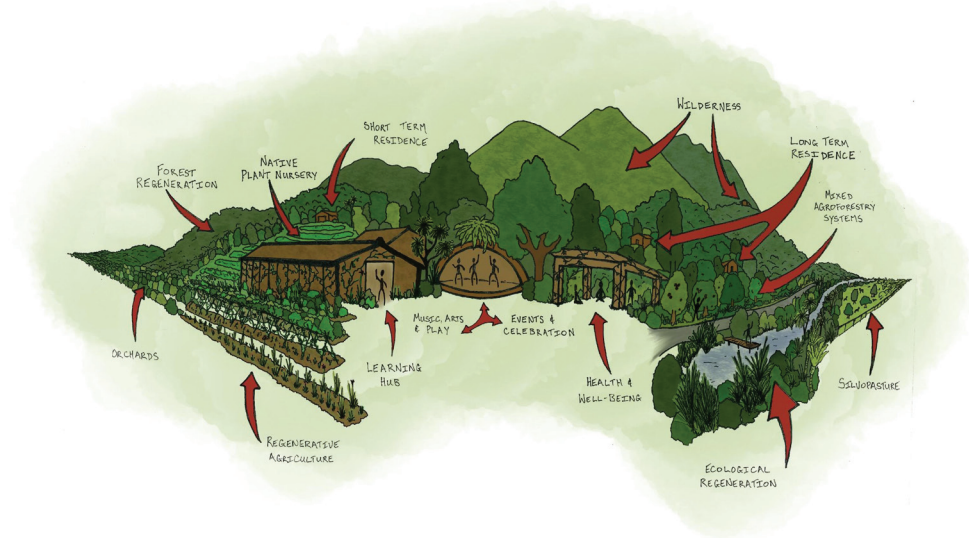


Figure 2. Sketch of Tuia Learning Centre.

The learning experiences will be facilitated by a diversity of local, national and international facilitators, who will weave different ways of knowing, across cultures, generations and backgrounds. Tuia intends to collaborate and partner with a range of organisations and industries. For example, tertiary learning providers could have in-person learning retreats offered at Tuia learning environment to cater for their growing online classes in areas such as leadership for change. Partnerships with education providers at all levels will offer youth opportunities to engage in change-making work before they leave school/university. Partnerships with commercial organisations could be fostered, to provide workplace and organisational training and career development. Governmental organisations such as local councils could engage with us to learn fresh approaches to guide their policy development (such as how to deliver on climate emergency declarations and wellbeing targets).

*Mā te huruhuru ka rere te manu*  
Adorn this bird with feathers to enable it to fly

This whakatauki inspires us to focus on developing the capacity of learners to express their unique potential to evolve themselves and contribute to the wider systems they are part of. Learners will be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, cultivating space for cross-cultural sharing. By experimenting with dynamic experiences which explore relationships and systems, we can reflect on the changes we can make to support a future where both people and planet thrive.

*Te Whenua (the earth) is the culture of the learning environment, the internal systems and active processes that provide the foundation for the healthy growth of the ecosystem.*

We appreciate that for anything to grow well, the soil must be rich and healthy. We see this soil as our organisational culture and systems, which everything grows from. That is why we have devoted considerable time and effort into articulating our culture and designing living systems with constant feedback.

Our organisational systems and processes are guided by the wisdom of the natural world; observing its patterns, systems and relationships. Weaving our inner and outer worlds we also look to ourselves, because we are nature

too; wise and alive, also with patterns, systems and relationships. This way of understanding ourselves and our co-created culture feels like remembering a simple truth; that we *are nature* living, learning and knowing itself! As we practice Te Reo Maori we are being invited into this remembering, where we are learning how this way of knowing is so deeply embedded into Te Ao Māori. We are learning to speak, learn and behave in a way that holds an understanding of pluralities, complexities and interconnections. This affects the way we perceive the world, relate to each other and how we approach our systems and processes – as alive, nested and interconnected.

An example of one of our organisational processes is our Holistic Decision Making (HDM) model, which is a cultural framework for making decisions. Among other internal systems, the HDM is one of the most significant elements of the soil of the learning environment – it is the living culture of this organisation. It informs both the approach we take to achieve our vision and the way we adapt and evolve. It offers support for making decisions that align with the vision and purpose of the project. The HDM framework acts as a filter and not only allows decision making processes to unfold organically, but also for people and decisions to be held accountable to it. Embedded in the framework is an understanding of the whole in balance with the parts, and the awareness of the relationships in between.

The HDM holds a series of truth statements – what needs to be true to realise our vision. Each truth statement contains multiple enabling actions – the more tangible actions required for the truth statements to be true, and the vision to be realised. The following image illustrates one of these truth statements surrounded by its enabling actions:



Figure 3. One of the truth statements of our HDM surrounded by enabling actions.

Other layers of soil that make up the how are our internal governing systems which are based on transparency, dispersing power, autonomy and self-organisation. For decision-making, we use consent-based decision making and advice processes to dismantle power-over hierarchies and empower groups and individuals. Our organisational structure is a variation of sociocratic governance, conceptualised as a forest. The forest is made up of mostly autonomous sub-organisations (the trees). These sub-organisations are made up of more specific task-oriented groups (the branches). Humans act like fungi, moving information and nutrients between all the trees in the forest, ensuring that the trees are interconnected and mutually supportive.





Figure 4. Images from Activation group gatherings.

To support this organisational model we use a range of integrated digital tools that help with efficiency, transparency and visualisation. For online communication we use an application called *Slack* where discussions are themed by sub-group (tree) of task-group (branch). This means while we aren't all involved in the same groups, we can follow what is happening in all areas while being able to focus communications into the relevant place. We use online the visual mapping technology *Miro* to visualise everything (such as our HDM in the image above). This means we can pull work out of word documents onto large digital whiteboards for effective imaging. We also use the *Google Drive* suite for shared online information databases, email and calendar; the task management application *Asana* and online video software *Zoom* for high quality video calling given we live in different areas of the country.

For the last two years, an 'activation group' has existed to bring this learning environment to life. For now, this group is stewarding the establishment of *Tuia* nurturing this initiative in its early stages and cultivating a space that is ready (enough) for the engagement of many, many more people. The activation group has had weekly gatherings, monthly weekend workshops and mini-working groups in between. These have been intensive sessions of *mahi aroha* (*work for love*) where we make decisions and strategise collectively. We have been nurturing the soil, clarifying intention, establishing essential systems, and laying the legal foundations.

As we are transitioning to the new organisational structure discussed above, these processes will change. Instead of activation groups meeting together we wish to start experimenting with meeting with the sub-groups (trees) and task groups (branches) instead. We are getting ready to let go of the existing centralised decision-making power to provide room for more autonomy and empowerment. The activation group will cease to exist, providing space for the organisational 'forest' to grow.

As we wade through uncharted waters during this transition, processes like our cultural framework become incredibly significant. By ensuring that our culture and systems are healthy, we can be confident that the new growth will thrive.

*'Te toto o te tangata, he kai; te oranga o te tangata, he whenua'*  
While food provides the blood in our veins, our health is drawn from the land.

*Te Wai (the water) is the people who interact with the learning environment; experiencing a dynamic cycle. They arrive from the mountains of their own experiences and flow through the landscape, guided by their own process of learning. As they flow, they mix with other waters, converging in a shared future; more resilient and united at the ocean. Like water they transpire, returning to their own communities, showering their gifts and offering new perspectives and skills for growth, continuing the cycle.*

While the activation group has been stewarding the establishment of *Tuia*, it is already shaped by the rivers of many others. Through our passions, *mahi* (*work*), education, *whānau* and friendships we have a growing network, crossing diverse communities. Our communities include: local *iwi* and *mārae*; the New Zealand permaculture community; conscious movement communities; activism groups; mindfulness communities; ecological groups; festival communities; alternative farming communities; local board and councils; *wānanga*, universities, polytechnics and local schools.

People from these communities, and others, are deeply influencing the development of Tuia and are continuing to be engaged through our online communications platforms such as our regular newsletter 'mycelium mail'. Within this network is a group of people who have expressed interest in being involved in Tuia more directly and we are currently in the process of developing pathways for their participation as we transition into the new organisational model.

A significant stream that has been mixing with these waters has been that of the leadership for change whānau. By participating in a learning community that embraces reflection and different ways of knowing we have experienced the capacity for collective learning. In this community of learners, we are encouraged to suspend assumptions and enter into genuine dialogues together, allowing the collective to access insights we wouldn't be able to access by ourselves. We are experiencing a learning environment within the leadership for change whānau which influences the wider Tuia learning environment that we are cultivating.

*Ki te kore te iwi, e kore koe i kiia - he tangata.*

Without the people, you are diminished, you are nobody

We see humans as an integral part of the wider system. For us, it is crucial that Tuia remains socially engaged, integrated and outward facing. As Tuia grows we wish to continue to nurture these relationships, increasing engagement and interactions from these and other communities (see image below) to form symbiotic relationships that enable community resilience.

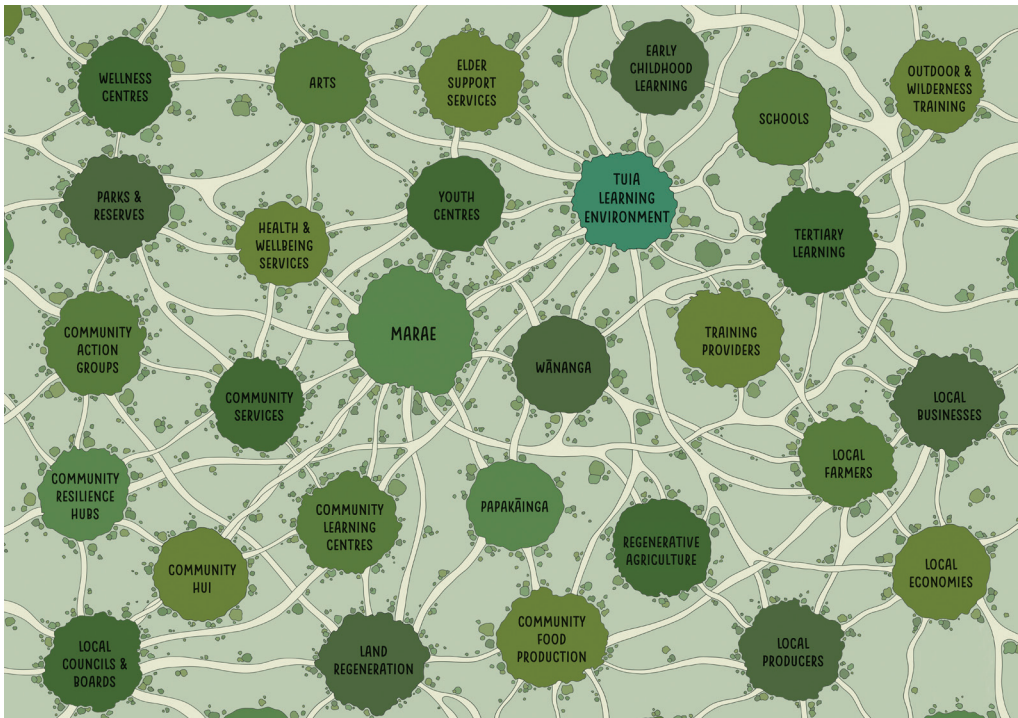


Figure 5. Community connections.

As we are writing this journal article we are preparing for a significant transition stage for Tuia. Within the next few months we wish to evolve Tuia from a six-person project team to an expanding not-for-profit organisation. This means registering Tuia as a charitable trust, solidifying our organisational structure and business model, and launching the website. To enable dissolution of our activation team and bring others on board, we are working on developing clear pathways for engagement, including processes for on-boarding and off-boarding. We are formalising a group of advisors to support Tuia and continuing to nourish partnership opportunities. Once registered as a trust we will be able to receive funding, with the immediate funding focused on acquiring land. We will be evolving from a conceptual learning environment to a rooted and expanding learning environment.

*Tungia te ururoa kia tupu whakaritorito te tupu o te harakeke*  
Set the overgrown bush alight, and the new shoots will spring up.

We hope that this story has introduced you to the Tuia Learning Environment in a way that models the creative change we wish to live. We play with metaphors because we are actively trying to re-frame the way that we see the world. The more we explore how Tuia acts like a living system the more we start to understand it as a living system; whole, vibrant and alive. To us, Tuia is not a metaphor for a living system, it is a living system. It is a whole system, part of a wider system. It is part of a deeply interconnected network of people communities and environments. By listening to the wisdom we are receiving from Te Ao Māori and the natural world, and weaving this with our unique perspectives, we are deepening our understanding of these relationships. By holding space for uncertainty, paradox and change we provide space for the emergence of something new and exciting, something we couldn't have foreseen on our own.

Like the waters who interact with the Tuia Learning Environment, you have entered this story from your mountain; your home communities and contexts. You are reading this from your base cultural foundation and what you have learned from this experience is guided by your unique way of seeing, learning and being. By engaging further with Tuia you will help to shape the environment and it will in turn shape you. We invite you to participate in this dreaming space, this learning space. We invite you to join us in dreaming together to support a flourishing, shared future.

*Ko ahau te taiao, ko te taiao, ko ahau*  
The ecosystem defines my quality of life

**Emma Morris** is a creative coordinator and dynamic educator who explores the edge between making systemic change and engaging at the flax roots level. Co-owner of the consultancy business Nature Working, she is currently the project coordinator of the Waiheke Collective. Emma is passionate about social and ecological regeneration through the lens of re-imagining ways of learning. She is activating a not-for-profit organisation, Tuia Learning Environment, and undertaking a Masters with Otago Polytechnic developing a Learning Model to vivify learning experiences and nourish the vitality of learners.

**Julie Crocker** is a conscious dance facilitator and an all-round regenerative change enthusiast. She treasures a world view of profound interconnection between all things, which feeds her WHY and purpose in life. Julie's background has been working and volunteering in grass-roots charitable and community led organisations involved with food rescue and place-making. Julie is currently studying a Graduate Diploma in Leadership for Change with Otago Polytechnic focused on facilitating transformation through movement and dance. She's also part of a team activating Tuia Learning Environment, a regenerative education environment weaving the wellbeing of inner and outer ecologies.

**Alexa Forbes** is a facilitator on the graduate programmes in sustainable practice at Otago Polytechnic, Alexa supports working with others to find innovative and collaborative solutions to issues. At Scope Media she provides mentorship and strategic governance advice. Prior to these roles, Alexa worked for many years as a communicator – as a journalist and later as director of a PR company.

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The content of this article is in the early development stages, including the name Tuia Learning Environment, and is all subject to change.

## HE AWA WHIRIA (BRAIDED RIVERS)

David Hursthouse

With gratitude to Kelli Te Maihāroa, Steve Henry, Alexa Forbes and Tuia Learning Environment for their ongoing support and mentorship

*"The seed I would like to plant in your heart is a vision of Aotearoa where all our people can live together in harmony. We must learn from each other and share the wisdom from each culture. We need the knowledge the Pākehā brings from all over the world as well as the sense of belonging and whakapapa of the Māori. The separate paths our people have trod can unite in a highway to the future that is built on the best of both. Māori and Pākehā, alone and divided, cannot build a secure and happy future for Aotearoa. We have to appreciate the best in each other and at the highest levels share our knowledge and vision. Look back to appreciate the past, but look forward to advance what is missing."*

Dame Whina Cooper

Lived experience and prior inquiry has enabled me to see that humanity faces a web of extreme socio-ecological crises. While many strategies exist for dealing with these crises, I believe that it will be exceptionally difficult to realise any of them without significant changes to the way we organise and collaborate socially.

To contribute to this shift in social collaboration, I have been involved in an inquiry that spans a Graduate Diploma in Professional Practice (GradDipProfPrac, completed March 2019), and is now continuing across a Doctorate in Professional Practice (DProfPrac). This autoethnographic exploration is deeply subjective, personal and collaborative. It loops through time, spreads across cultures, intertwines with my whakapapa, emerges from a burning fire in my heart, and is resolutely focused on our collective survival. I am sharing a glimpse of this inquiry here.

Organisational theory is deeply, oppressively colonised. Dominant modes of organisation today stem from industrial colonial worldviews that subdivide the world, do not allow for diverse cultural ways of knowing, and are models of behaviour that divorce us socio-ecological systems.

### **Dominant organisation patterns cause degenerative consequences, jeopardising the survival of the human family.**

I suggest that in peeling back the layers of colonisation together and in re-learning from the life-creating processes of the world around us, we have a beautiful opportunity to evolve our organisational patterns to have a healing and regenerative impact on socio-ecological systems.

I am exploring the weaving of Māori and Pākehā ways of knowing in Aotearoa New Zealand – pre-colonisation, colonised and decolonising. Where similarities emerge in between these ways of knowing, I am exploring what potential those similarities hold for cultural healing and decolonised organisation in Aotearoa New Zealand.

I seek to honor the organisational concepts of te ao Māori as "... a combination that spans the past, the present and the future, within which Māori strive to achieve the values, principles and ideals that exist within our culture ..." (Kent, 2011, p. 36). In doing so, I seek to express this way of knowing as the equally valid, authentic, important, contemporary and relevant ecosystem of ideas that it is.

I suggest that all patterns of social organisation have their genesis in cultural creation stories – sometimes consciously, often unconsciously. I will suggest that in allowing ourselves to hold our own stories loosely and listen openly to the stories of others, we allow ourselves to move beyond the parameters of our cultural conditioning.

At its core, this inquiry is an expression of process: of my own surrendering to different ways of knowing and the active decolonisation of my heartmind.

Theories of organisation in an academic context are, almost without fail, rooted in the Western worldview. "The Western body of knowledge has regularly been promoted globally as the singular world consciousness, being presented as all-encompassing and impartial (Abbott & Durie, 1987)." (Macfarlane et al, 2015, p. 59). The predominant discourse around organisation is framed by perception that evolved in Western conceptual spaces.

"For too long western philosophy has occupied center stage, and has maintained itself there, in part, by proposing a dichotomous relationship of the privileged western "progressive" self to the "backward" perspective of non-western, indigenous knowledge systems."

(Wilmer; 1999, p. 1)

Through the process of colonisation, nations of the West have imposed their way of knowing on many diverse cultural groups – including Māori in Aotearoa.

"[Māori] colonial experience has been one of denial. Denial of our reo, denial of our tikanga, denial of our whenua, denial of our taonga, denial of our whakapapa. Colonial forces have attempted to deny us all of those things that contribute to our notions of who we are and where we fit in the world ... Decolonisation then includes a peeling back of the layers. Layer by layer. Constantly reflecting on what we find."

(Pihama, 2001, p. 288).

Colonial ways of knowing have been so oppressive that forms of social organisation within Māori communities are forcibly shaped by colonial structures, ideas, processes and cultural norms. These Pākehā ideologies can strip Māori of identity and meaning.

"A dynamic interaction of indigenous and non-indigenous elements of governance and culture is the reality of Māori organisations and people today within society. This dynamic represents... the fullest level of Māori cultural expression of traditional concepts allowed, within social, legal, organisational and environmental constraints of what is an era of more subtle colonialism".

(Kent, 2011, p. 38).

Aotearoa New Zealand is today a society guided by deeply embedded "ethnocentric and phallocentric views" (Murphy, 2011, p. 15). The nation exists on a foundation of racist oppression, and is often moderated by patriarchy and neo-liberal capitalism.

None of that is Māori.

"Western knowledge has ... colonised the theoretical space of indigenous knowledge deeming it as inferior ... However, it is overly simplistic to think of non-scientific knowledge as inferior knowledge. Indigenous knowledge, which contains values, concepts and wisdom, has enabled longterm survival".

(Kent, 2011, p. 53).

"Science can open a fire hose of information, but it leaves us with not a drop of wisdom. We need both to survive".

(Brock, 2017, p. 55).

While the Western world is afraid to acknowledge "that science is just as arbitrary and incomplete an epistemology [way of knowing] as the modes that came before it," (Brock, 2017, p. 54) the Euro-scientific method continues to be supported by the weight of institutionalised Western society as having a "monopoly on truth" (Brock, 2017, p. 54).

"There are multitudes of ways of knowing. Each one, in its own way, gives an important perspective on 'truth'... As we seek to pick up the pieces from our present moment's epistemic fracturing, we are called to focus on connections rather than divisions, reweaving the tapestry of meaning into something more diverse – and therefore stronger – than any one way of knowing on its own."

(Brock, 2017, p. 55).

If we are to come close to the ecologically synergetic social systems that we need to survive and thrive in an uncertain future, the privileging of one way of knowing must end.

In my GradDipProfPrac I explored life-creating organisational processes and suggested that reinhabiting these patterns is not possible without breaking down the hegemony of the Western basket of knowledge. Pākehā are only just beginning to understand living concepts that have forever been a part of Māori awareness – science is only just starting to 'prove' what has been validated by indigenous knowledge for millennia. The Māori kete of knowledge can remind Pākehā of wisdom-based learning and what it means to embody kaitiakitanga.

"All indigenous peoples have a tradition of unity with the environment and the tradition is reflected in song, custom, subsistence, approaches to healing, birthing, and the rituals associated with death. The defining characteristic of indigenous peoples is therefore not necessarily premised on colonisation or sovereignty or a prior claim to settlement, but on a longstanding relationship with land, forests, waterways, oceans and the air."

(Durie, 2004, p.4).

My GradDipProfPrac inquiry expressed a number of organisational concepts that I feel are emergent in the Pākehā psyche, informed by the organisational qualities of living systems, that *might* support ecologically harmonious organisation. The concepts emerging in the Pākehā mindset include an awareness of the world as a web of interconnected systems; self-organisation and decentralisation; collaborative ecologies; the story of interbeing and much more. As this inquiry continues, I am interested in exploring ways these ideas manifest in the organisational patterns of cultures that have embodied them for many generations.

"Through engaging whakapapa, relationships cease to be viewed as simple, binary and linear; instead transforming into complex, layered and fundamentally interconnected... Inter and intra-relationships are considered vitally important within the overarching schema of fundamental interconnection that is whakapapa."

(Kent, 2011, p.65).

“Māori view the universe as process, interconnected and bound together by spirit.”

(Marsden, 1989, p. 9)

I suggest that there are emerging cultural synergies between Māori ways of knowing and the shifts in consciousness happening at the edges of Pākehā culture. For example, for Māori the metaphysical awareness of interconnection is rooted in Te Orokohanga [the creation of the world] and integrally embedded in Te Ao Māori (the Māori worldview). This manifests in a deeply engrained cultural ethos of caring, that extends to all aspects of life. In particular, this awareness of interconnection manifests in the kaitiakitanga (guardianship) of Papatūānuku (Earth Mother) and all her children. As the industrial colonial mindset struggles to respond to severe ecological degradation, ancient Māori customs may illuminate a way of interacting with the world around us that could lead to our collective survival.

These emerging cultural synergies may support shared learning and bring us all together on the same waka (voyaging canoe) journeying toward a shared regenerative future.

My approach to exploring these emerging cultural synergies is informed by the interface research work of Mason Durie: “Rather than contesting relative validities, there are an increasing number of indigenous researchers who use the interface between science and indigenous knowledge as a source of inventiveness. They have access to both systems and use the insights and methods of one to enhance the other. In this approach, the focus shifts from proving the superiority of one system over another to identifying opportunities for combining both.”

(Durie, 2004, p. 8)

Durie’s acknowledgement of the richness of interface zones reminds me of the exceptional abundance that emerges where two ecosystems meet in zones known as ecotones. For example, the ecotone at the edge of forest and prairie exhibits higher biodiversity and energy exchange than the forest alone. Durie’s interface research affirms Te Ao Māori and Te Ao Pākehā as unique and equally valid worldviews, and that the spaces of interaction between the two can be generative fields of creativity and learning.

This conceptualisation of interface research has been further affirmed for me by the work of Angus Macfarlane et al. and the He Awa Whiria framework: “He awa whiria (literally, a braided river), presents a process model that attempts to interrogate and integrate Western science and Indigenous Māori models ... The braided-rivers framework is based on the analogy of two streams of knowledge (Western science and Indigenous Māori) becoming interconnected streams by reaching a point of convergence.”

(Macfarlane et al, 2015, p. 64).

The He Awa Whiria framework allows us to “shift thinking away from a ‘one stream’ paradigm, where a mainstream dominant knowledge is considered, along with mātauranga Māori knowledge, to a ‘two stream’ approach where both knowledge systems have equal status. This approach does not exclude other cultures or worldviews as it also provides a platform for them to be considered and included.” (Arago-Kemp & Hong, 2018, p. 8).

The He Awa Whiria framework affirmed the braided rivers metaphor as the means within this research for expressing the interweaving of worldviews around the world and in Aotearoa New Zealand. “In the model, when [rivers] do converge, the space created is one of learning, not assimilating.” (Arago-Kemp & Hong, 2018, p. 8).

“Those who have usually occupied the centre space can rediscover a narrative that was rarely hitherto recognised, without having to concede anything from the knowledge systems to which they are accustomed.



And those who have traditionally occupied the margins can reclaim a space to express their knowledge systems without fear or prejudice ”

(Macfarlane et al, 2015, p. 64).

Learning more deeply of the oppression of indigenous histories and different ways of knowing has shaped this research in every way. In light of my cultural context and conditioning, I have been able to recognise the way my approach to research and writing embodies many colonial norms. Much of my psyche has been shaped and fragmented by the scientific way of knowing the world. I recognise that much of what I thought I knew of social organisation has been framed by Western theory. I have been able to begin the process of challenging my deep-seated biases around methodology and the way information could be offered to the world.

This awareness is enabling me to suspend my way of knowing. It is empowering me to listen in a different way. In doing so, I hope to nurture the evolution of cultural intelligence in myself and all those who are exposed to the processes of my inquiry.

“Cultural intelligence is more than the ability to be able to understand and interpret knowledge from within one’s own cultural worldview. It is also the ability to articulate, interpret and translate particular knowledge at the interface of other cultures and knowledge systems. Cultural intelligence includes the ability to cross the borders and boundaries of other cultures or of those that are different from your own ”

(Arago-Kemp & Hong, 2018, p. 21).

I consider the survival of the human species to be dependent on this capacity to cross the ambiguous borders of one’s own culture with authenticity, humility and a willingness to learn. Without nurturing this capacity in our processes of social organisation we may never be able to live in deep relationship with each other and the world around us.

This acceptance at a deep level allows for all rivers of knowing and being to flow freely – not to the detriment of our own rivers, but to the uplifting of them all.

“[R]esearch and the production of knowledge have been used as a colonial tool to enforce and maintain the cultural superiority of the colonisers, positing Māori as inferior... Linda Tuhiwai Smith remarks that research has been a process that has dehumanised Māori and denied the legitimacy of Māori language, culture and knowledge.” (Murphy, 2011, p. 14). “Categorisation and compartmentalisation of indigenous governance or any other indigenous field, runs real risks of tacit intellectual hegemony, despite researchers best intentions.”

(Kent, 2011, p. 35).

To avoid imposing my cultural biases and perpetuating a legacy of colonial research, I am deepening my engagement as an active participant in bicultural healing. This is not a study of Māori, rather this is an exploration of the relationships in between Māori and Pākehā in Aotearoa – a relationship that I am an active participant in. What emerges will be a story of many stories. It won’t read like this article, which still trends towards academic compliance. This article marks my departure from colonial convention. I began this departure throughout my GDPP, but anyone who reads it will still recognise it as an artifact of the ivory tower. As a participant in the movement of indigenous and radical academics seeking pedagogical justice, I am committed to pushing the edges of academia and supporting the transformation of Aotearoa’s learning landscape.

### **This marks the beginning of a weaving. Of stories.**

"Stories serve to connect the past with the future, one generation with the other, the land with the people and the people with the story."

(Smith, 1999, p. 145).

Stories are awa [rivers] that wind through time, moving meaning between human heartminds. They're the substance of perception, the enabler of learning.

### **They're the ever-changing manifestation of sapience.**

Stories are human. They are how we create meaning and share that with each other. They surround us, and inform the way our social dynamics work in different contexts. They are the foundations of our organisational patterns. Stories extend far beyond books and oral weavings around the fire. They permeate our lives, influencing our daily behaviour. We gather around stories and build communities. Cultural concepts and social norms, expressed through daily re-tellings, shape the way we interact with each other and the world around us.

Stories shift and twist through time.  
They're our expression of reality.  
They're our dreams.  
They're our wisdom.  
They're our way of knowing.

We tell them to each other. We tell them to ourselves.  
They feed our subconscious and our collective conscious.

They are the whāriki (woven mat) of human understanding.

"We need stories of sufficient power and complexity to orient people for effective action to overcome environmental problems... to reveal what the possibilities are for transforming these and to reveal to people the role that they can play in this project."

(O'Sullivan, 1999, p. 182).

To honour the significance of pūrakau, storyweaving is both methodology and communication form in this inquiry. Through complex and powerful storytelling, I will weave a story that explores the nuances of social organisation in Aotearoa New Zealand. I will weave old stories and new stories - shared by storytellers around the motu - with my own story. The stories of atua, gods, humans, dreams, flora and fauna will twist and entwine, expressing nuances of social relationships that are not as adequately expressed through academic script.

Te Ao Māori and Te Ao Pākehā are each complex entanglements of diverse people and ideas, woven through time and space. They are integrally and inextricably intertwined with each other.

## The future is shared.

My intention is that this story will speak to the hearts of all people and will shift ways of thinking, feeling, doing and being. My hope is that in some small way it will help us adapt in response to the crises we face together.

*Let us meet where the rivers braid  
To give and to receive, with honour,  
The abundance of our kete.*

**Nāku tō rourou, nau te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi**  
With your basket and my basket the people will prosper

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# PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE SHAPE SHIFTING. APPLYING AGILE DESIGN PRINCIPLES TO SELF-DETERMINED LEARNING

Ray O'Brien

## INTRODUCTION

This article describes how a learner can apply agile design principles to create a self-determined professional practice learning experience for themselves. While previous research has emphasised the need for an agile approach to learning the iterative nature of the design phase of self-determined learning is described here from the learner's perspective.

A storyboard was used to examine a sample of narrative from my own experience developing a learning agreement for a Doctor of Professional Practice research project. The storyboard is based on common elements of agile design. The use of the storyboard exposed the agile design steps that had inadvertently been used while self-determining the learning to be undertaken. The storyboard is proposed as a tool to support learners as they determine their own learning within the context of a qualification based on heutagogical principles.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This brief review of literature provides an overview of the theoretical basis of both agile design and heutagogy. It then provides an insight as to synergies between agile design and heutagogy for the 21st century learner. A significant gap in literature is identified.

## AGILE DESIGN

Agile principles were described in the Agile Manifesto (Agile Alliance, 2001). While initially articulated to inform software design, the principles have been applied to a range of contexts including learning design (Allen & Sites, 2012; Arimoto, Barbosa, & Barroca, 2015; Murthi, 2017). While the manifesto does not provide a definition of agility, it does provide values to guide the delivery of high-quality designs in an agile manner. At its core, this means rapidly and flexibly creating a response to change in design requirements at any stage in the design process (Dingsøyr, Nerur, Balijepally, & Moe, 2012; Henderson-Sellers & Serour, 2005; Highsmith & Cockburn, 2001). This has been described as lightness, leanness, nimbleness, quickness, dexterity, suppleness or alertness (Cockburn, 2006; Erickson, Lytinen, & Siau, 2005). It has been related to having minimal formal processes (Ries, 2017). Conboy defines agility as the continued readiness "to rapidly or inherently create change, proactively or reactively embrace change, and learn from change while contributing to perceived customer value (economy, quality, and simplicity), through its collective components and relationships with its environment" (2009, p. 340). This approach to creating value has been seen as more iterative than the traditional linear waterfall approach design (Balaji, 2012; Palmquist, Lapham, Miller, Chick, & Ozkaya, 2013).

The stages in each iteration of design, all tend to include elements of discovering solutions to a problem, designing and producing a prototype for testing, and then making adaptations based in the test results ('A Designer's Introduction to "Agile" Methodology', 2015; Ambler, 2001; Dam and Siang, 2019). The most common labels for the stages in interactive processes include: input/insight, analysis, synthesis, evaluation and communication or delivery (Bagnall and Koberg, 1981; Cross, 2001; Duberly, 2004; Kumar, 2003; Rengifo, 2018). These labels are adopted later in this article to describe the stages of an agile design process.

## HEUTAGOGY

While pedagogy is used as a generic term describing the study of the processes of learning, it is more accurately the study of the processes through which children learn (Holmes and Abington-Cooper, 2000). Andragogy is a more precise term for the study of processes of learning in adults, which emphasises the self-directedness of adult learning (Merriam, 2001). Heutagogy was introduced as a theory of self-determined learning by Kenyon and Hase (2001). They describe heutagogy as an extension of the continuum from pedagogy, to andragogy. In heutagogy the learner is responsible not only for how and when to learn as in andragogy, but also for what to learn. In heutagogy the learner can decide on what to include in their curriculum. It has been hailed as an approach which is highly relevant to lifelong learning, professional learning and online social learning (Agonács & Matos, 2019; Blaschke, 2012; Cochrane & Narayan, 2013; Mann, Ker, Eden-Mann, & O'Brien, 2017; Mann, Ker, Eden-Mann, & O'Brien, 2017; Narayan, Herrington, & Cochrane, 2018). Learning within a heutagogical approach is not linear: It incorporates double loop learning which is a strong link between heutagogy and agile design principles (Blaschke, 2012; Hase, 2016).

## SYNERGY BETWEEN AGILE DESIGN AND HEUTAGOGY

Nerur & Balijepally (2007), describe how design thinking has evolved to meet the requirements of changes in context. As the environment becomes less predictable and the nature of the problem becomes increasingly wicked, the nature of the learning that takes place becomes more generative, and the problem solving strategies need to be more responsive. This is where they see iterative and agile design principles well suited (Figure 1). This is also a close description of the conditions where heutagogical approaches can be most productive for 21st Century learners (Blaschke & Hase, 2016).

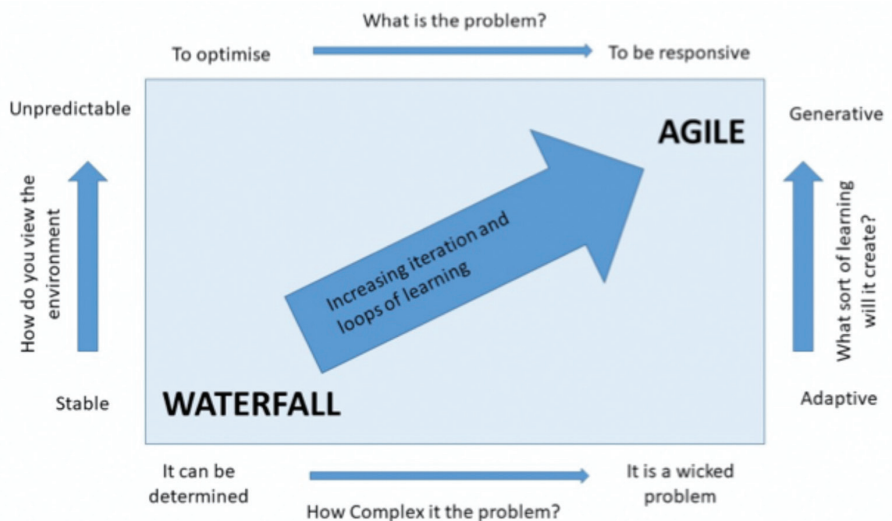


Figure 1. Relationship between type of problem and agility. Based on Nerur & Balijepally (2007).

While some research has been undertaken which informs learning design that embraces heutagogy, it has approached it from the learning designer's or institutional perspective (Mann, Ker, Eden-Mann, & O'Brien, 2017; Narayan et al., 2018). It is not clear whether previous research has explicitly explored the synergy between heutagogy and agile design principles.

There does not appear to be any literature available that describes the design process that a learner will undertake within the context of self-determined learning from the learners perspective. As heutagogy is founded on the learner having agency to determine what, when and how they learn, this is a significant gap in the literature.

### SAMPLE OF NARRATIVE

As a learner in a Doctorate of Professional Practice I have two processes to undertake in the first year. The first is a review of learning that allows me to articulate my position professionally and paradigmatically. The second process is negotiating a learning agreement. The agreement requires a detailed description of the learning and research I will undertake in the second and third years. As illustrated in Fig. 2 the learning agreement must show how my practice will be transformed from my current framework of practice to an aspirational framework.

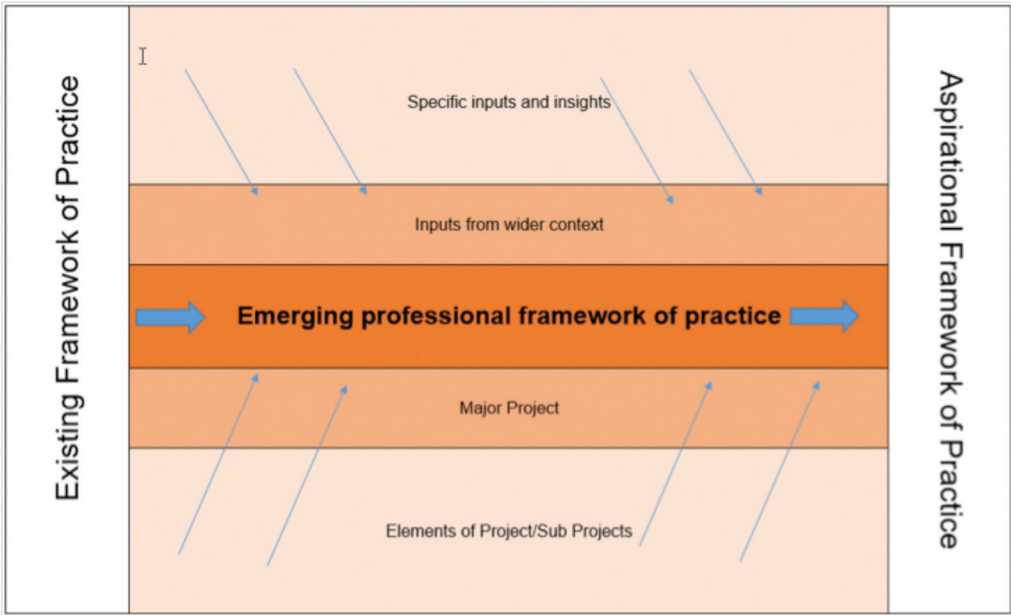


Figure 2. Doctor of Professional Practice learner's interpretation of processes.

The series of quotes below are sampled from the narrative of my learning agreement. They provide a quick fly-past account of critical stages in the design process starting from defining my current practice, a series of iterations and insights, and ending at a better defined aspirational framework of practice. While the context of my research is not directly relevant to this article, the extent and frequency with which it changes direction is significant.

"My initial aspiration to be a practice leader in Social Edupreneurship as a model for transformational education was driven by my pragmatic need to make a difference (O'Brien, 2018)."

"I critically reflected upon the significance and implications of my initial approach. The most significant limitation of the proposed framework from my perspective was that identifying as a social edupreneur could become a boundary around my practice, rather than an extension of my practice."

"As a result of this critical reflection I no longer saw the framework of Social Edupreneurship as an effective articulation of my aspirational framework of practice or professional identity. However I did still see the potential that the exercise of developing the framework of social edupreneurship could be an appropriate project through which to develop the capabilities and range of approaches that were at my disposal as a professional."

"Malcolm Gladwell describes the tension I was grappling with well:

"Our world requires that decisions be sourced and footnoted, and if we say how we feel, we must also be prepared to elaborate on why we feel that way...We need to respect the fact that it is possible to know without knowing why we know and accept that - sometimes - we're better off that way." (Gladwell, 2006, p. 52).

"... having worked across all of the stages in the [learning design ] process I do not identify more strongly with any specific stage or specialism. To varying extents, I have demonstrated capabilities across them all. Therefore the catch-all term Learning Designer is the best descriptor of my current framework of practice."

"The reflection on, and clarification of my current framework of practice prompted a comparison to the role of designer/developer in a software design context. This allowed me to see the similarities between my current practice and that of a Full-Stack software developer."

"The emergent idea based on my own experience, is that the concept of Full-stack seemed equally applicable to learning design as it is to software design. That being the case, it is also prudent to consider the extent to which the agile methods of working which full stack developers generally adopt are relevant."

"This definition [of complex adaptive systems] is directly applicable to the three complex challenges which are driving the development of this aspirational framework of practice; tension between compliance and the need for individualised future-focussed learning, an exponential rate of change in education, and the need for learning experiences to be fit-for-future-purpose, including supporting sustainable development."

"It does not appear that Complex Adaptive Systems have been used as a concept to inform learning design."

"Reflecting upon the model of a full stack software developer I realised that user experience design (Ux Design) sits at the top of the stack. It is the starting point for design. Priority is given to the question what experience should the user have to meet their needs?"

"With this insight, I propose flipping the learning design stack to show the priority learner experience should take within this framework."

"If we do not have a clear understanding of how to lead Lx design practice and culture, the learners' experience is unlikely to be recognised at the strategic level it merits."

"It is clear that we need the learner's experience to be the focal point of learning design- the Lx Design Leader can be an agile agent for change in a complex system."

"...reinforces that the strongest and most central theme in the transformation of my practice is developing my capability to embrace the complexity of the environment and tasks that a future focussed learning designer must engage with."

"The current iteration of my aspirational framework of practice is: Practitioner Research: Learning Design for Complexity of Learning, and Global Regenerative Impact."

These samples from my narrative show how my research proposal took many pivots and turns before setting on an aspirational goal. This happened in a very organic fashion without a framework or structure to guide it. This required

Input/Insight	Analysis or Evaluation	Synthesis	Communication/Delivery
This could be an experience, reflection, observation, literature, feedback, or professional insight.	This could be a comparisons, a rating against standards, a measurement of impact, monitoring of progress, a prescribed process.....	This could be a reflection that creates more understanding, the drawing of a new model, the setting of a new course, or the adaptation of a research question.	This is the doing based on the synthesis of the new insight or the communication of the synthesis to provide another insight and loop of learning.
Based on the reflections in my Review of Learning, I realised the extent to which I am motivated to make a difference and that I prefer to adopt a pragmatic lens on doing so.	I compared a traditional approach to education and learning design to the impact being made by social enterprise, the rate of change in entrepreneurship and the breadth of context in sustainability.	I put together a model for education that drew on all of the elements in the comparison- Social Edupreneurship.	I communicated this model to colleagues, presented it at a symposium and published it in a journal to test-fly the concepts and get feedback.
Reflection on the concept of Social Edupreneurship identified it as a potentially limiting structure rather than an enabling model- I was creating my own pigeon hole.	I compared the role I had envisioned as a social edupreneur and my current role and saw that the key challenges we face in education remained constant no matter what the approach.	I tried to synthesise the broader perspective and fit designing Social Edupreneurship as step within my professional development rather than the end goal.	I was able to articulate my own current framework of practice more clearly.
Having a clearer picture of my current frame work made it easier to relationships with other frameworks	I compared my framework to the professional framework of designers in the IT sector.	I synthesised concepts around the primacy of user experience and the diversity of capabilities required to be agile.	I articulated a several iterations of a possible future framework of practice. For example, Full-Stack Learner Experience designer.
With so many different elements entering each iteration of my aspirational framework of practice, I realised (with some guidance from my supervisors) that keep the size of the project within the scope of the qualification was going to be challenging. Some the learners on the course I teach had the same issue.	I stepped away from my work for 2 weeks and did some reading on complexity. I compared the process of learning design to the criteria of a Complex Adaptive System (CAS). Learning design does appear to be complex and adaptive. All of the elements I had introduced were interrelated.	I reviewed my approach to learning design and rather than a linear set of tasks and independent inputs, I introduced the language and concepts of complexity theory.	The current iteration of my aspirational framework of practice is:  Learning Design for Complexity of Learning, and Global Regenerative Impact.

Figure 3. Reflection on use of agile design.



that I had the confidence (or arrogance) to break away from a more traditional hypothesis focussed approach to designing my research. It also required my supervisors to have a level of confidence in my ability to either be successful thought this approach, or that I had the resilience to recover if it led to a dead end.

I am employed in two different transdisciplinary units. One is a learning and teaching development team which work with all schools and colleges across a tertiary education institution (Otago Polytechnic). The second is a work-based/professional practice learning faculty (Capable NZ) that delivers qualifications in several practice disciplines through a facilitation model. These roles has made me very comfortable crossing from one discipline to another, and given me access to influences across a wide spectrum of knowledge and expertise. These are luxuries that few learners are afforded, but were key to me being able to adopt an agile approach to designing my own learning within a programme based in heutagogical principles. This prompted me to reflect upon the process I had undertaken and identify a framework that could be used by other learners and supervisors to move towards a more agile process.

## REFLECTION ON PROCESS

The framework I propose is based on the common steps of an agile design process as identified in the review of literature: Input/insight, analysis or evaluation, synthesis and communication/delivery. To reflect upon the process I have unpacked the sample of the narrative provided to allow the process to be more visible. I have used the learning design strategy of creating a simple story board (Van Der Lelie, 2006). The table in Figure 3 is the storyboard for the sample of the narrative provided. Each column being a stage in the process and each row describing the process iteration by iteration. It should be noted that this is not a complete account of the learning, but merely a representative sample.

The first step is the input or insight which triggers a new iteration. This could be an experience, reflection, observation, literature, feedback, or professional insight. In this instance I refer to professional insights as insights gained from being part of a professional context such as mentoring conversations, group/network discussions, industry literature, or industry linked social media content.

The second step, analysis or evaluation, could be comparisons, a rating against standards, a measurement of impact, monitoring of progress, undertaking a prescribed process, an audit, or a self-critique.

Synthesis could be a reflection that creates more understanding, the drawing of a new model, the setting of a new course, or the adaptation of a research question. It shows the new ideas working alongside the old.

The final step in each iteration is communication or delivery. Arguably communication can be considered a type of delivery. This is the doing based on the synthesis of the new insight or the communication of the synthesis. Most importantly this is the link from one iteration to the next.

The text in Figure 3 provides a link between the sample narrative and the agile process that I followed.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the relationship between agile design and heutagogy I reflected upon my own practice and the many iterations in planning a research project. While not deliberately incorporated into the process, when examined in a storyboard four common elements of agile design were apparent. The storyboard retrospectively used in this article, may be of use in a more proactive manner to provide a guiding structure for professional practice learners and supervisors looking to engage with the benefits of a more agile design process. Figure 4 provides a basic tool which could be used for planning as it is or with adaptations to better suit the learning context.


Input/Insight	Analysis or Evaluation	Synthesis	Communication/ Delivery
This could be an experience, reflection, observation, literature, feedback, or professional insight.	This could be a comparisons, a rating against standards, a measurement of impact, monitoring of progress, a prescribed process.....	This could be a reflection that creates more understanding, the drawing of a new model, the setting of a new course, or the adaptation of a research question.	This is the doing based on the synthesis of the new insight or the communication of the synthesis to provide another insight and loop of learning.
Iteration 1			
Iteration 2			
Iteration 3			
Iteration 4			

Figure 4. Storyboard tool for agile design of professional practice learning.

While this tool has only been tested in retrospect on my own learning, the common elements of agile design within it are well established and accepted. The tool has been developed through post graduate professional practice learning, but there may be merit in further research to explore its application to other sectors. This may be particularly relevant to the New Zealand secondary school sector as their curriculum moves towards a more project based pedagogy (Ministry of Education, 2019).

**Ray O'Brien** works across several areas at Otago Polytechnic, but at the core of all of them he is a learning designer. He has been part of the team designing and implementing the Bachelor of Leadership for Change and specialises in the integration of sustainable practice into programmes across many disciplines.

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# A REFLECTION OF AN EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT PRACTICE IN THE BACHELOR OF CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME: AN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CASE STUDY IN NEW ZEALAND

Don Amila Sajeewan Samarasinghe

## INTRODUCTION

The Bachelor of Construction in Otago Polytechnic Auckland International Campus is a rapidly growing programme, with New Zealand domestic students and many other students from a variety of countries including, China, Hungary, India, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Russia, South Africa, Thailand UK and USA. It is experiencing very high levels of growth and addresses a significant need in the New Zealand construction sector. My team and I are involved in a significant initiative targeted specifically at changing traditional assessment practices to effective assessments that promote learning. The fundamental principle of our learning and teaching model is experiential learning and reflective practice. We are in the process of redesigning the courses to merge key skills and knowledge with learner capability. The project described in this paper set out to provide learning opportunities for students through effective assessment processes.

## BACKGROUND

Assessments are an integral part of the education process. The assessments designed to encourage learning promote a student-led approach to learning or assessment for learning (AfL). As suggested by the Assessment Reform Group (1995), the learning tools should be designed from teaching and learning perspectives. When the assessments are introduced, the learning goals should be shared with the students. The students should then be able to gauge these and set goals for achievement. The six principles of assessment for learning developed by Sambell, McDowell, and Montgomery (2013) show that having authentic and complex assessment tasks promotes a student-led approach to learning. In this process, the class facilitator's role is to encourage and support students to try out their learning, practice and improve, build competence and confidence through in-class formative assessments before they are summatively assessed. Subsequently, students would receive opportunities to learn through assessments rather than evaluation based on their learning. Marking on-going assessment and record-keeping are key parts of the assessment process. Some good practices of assessing and providing feedback include daily assessment, providing timely feedback to students and record-keeping for facilitators. Meaningful constructive feedback on assessments are helpful so that students can feed forward in their learning journey. Moreover, incorporation of active and collaborative discussion during the assessment feedback session would benefit both students and facilitator to sharpen their learning through collaborative discussions. Past literature showed that as a way of an effective assessment practice, sustainable assessments should be encouraged (e.g. self-assessment) during the lifelong learning process.

In sustainable assessments, it is crucial to balance formative and summative tasks so that the assessing process would support and encourage learning as opposed to just measuring student work (Nguyen & Walker, 2014). Formative use of summative tests promote students to engage in a reflective review of the work they have done and it enables them to prepare their revision effectively. When assessment feedback are provided, it is important to identify what has been done well by the student and what still needs improvement and give guidance on how the student can make that improvement. Also, opportunities for students to follow up on comments should be planned (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, & Wiliam, 2003). As a result, the feedback would become sustainable for learners when they support students to independently self-monitor their work and feed forward in students' future learning activities (Carless, Salter, Yang, & Lam, 2011). The assessment practices developed by Black, Harrison, and Lee (2007) showed that peer and self-assessment are some of the critical characteristics of sustainable assessment practices.

Peer and self-assessments are good teaching practices which also make unique contributions to the development of student learning (Carless, Salter, Yang, & Lam, 2011). However, in peer and self-assessments, assessment evaluation criteria should be made transparent to students. Concrete examples and modelling exercises should be provided by the facilitator to develop student understanding of peer and self-assessments. In addition, teaching the habits and skills of collaboration in peer-assessments (Sambell, McDowell, & Montgomery, 2013) would help students to apply peer-assessments in their experiences.

## THE ASSESSMENT

This case study is based on an innovative summative assessment conducted in the bachelor of construction programme offered at Otago Polytechnic Auckland International Campus. It primarily aimed to assess students' understanding of typical construction elements, such as: foundations, framing, fixings and envelope, and non-specific bracings used in small buildings in New Zealand. As the class facilitator, I guided and supported students to achieve the learning outcomes through a video production project based on an ongoing residential construction site visit. In addition, this assessment also aimed students to develop their capabilities such as effective communication skills, team-working skills, reflective practices, practicing health and safety and demonstrating digital competence (Lei, 2016). It is important to mention that potential ethical issues were managed throughout this assessment experience.

## PREPARATION THROUGH AN ICEBREAKING TASK

Ingalls (2018) found that teamwork activities support groups to learn and perform at a higher level as it integrates learning skills from every team member. Therefore, as an assessment preparation task, we conducted a "Spaghetti Marshmallow Challenge" group activity to build up teams and identify the strengths and weaknesses of different students. After this activity, students established their group leaders. Students' active participation in group discussions increased as they felt involved and respected after this icebreaker activity (Brookfield, 1995).

The increased participation helped to make the assessment process robust and efficient for every group member. Also, understanding the qualities of peers helped in constructive and critical peer and self-assessment process that was a part of the group assessments (Moon, 2004). Also, this icebreaking task contributed to increase the inclusiveness in the classroom. Students experienced equality through their participation. The various roles they assigned in the group, promoted the partnership between group members. Eventually, the groups worked as teams acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of their team members. Therefore, I believe this was a great opportunity for students to practice the "participation" principle of the Treaty of Waitangi (Bell, Kawharu, Taylor, & Belgrave, 2017). The skills gained such as leadership, communication and participation, from Spaghetti Marshmallow Challenge were then transferred into the main assessment.

Also students and I then worked on making links between assessment questions and the site visit. As discussed by Vassilakis (2010), clear communication enabled students to understand assessment requirements. We analysed the site in terms of its location, zone, underground building services and regulatory environment using Google Maps and GeoMaps tools. We also carefully went through architectural drawings and structural drawings to understand the types of construction systems used in the building that we were going to visit. I found that sometimes it was challenging to explain the assessment requirements as students were not able to understand how to apply assessment questions in the case study context. After analysing this issue, I found this was because many international students came from passive learning environments in which they were assessed based on examinations rather than student-centred assessments such as case study presentations. Therefore, as suggested by Elen, Clarebout, Leonard and Lowyck (2014), I discussed with my students their former passive learning style and the importance of transforming to an active learning style to suit in student-centred class environment in New Zealand. The groups consisted of students from different countries and age groups. Therefore, while preparing and organising transport for the site visit, students learnt to listen to others and respect other cultures. I believe that this experience has helped to create a cultural shift in students' thinking, learning and behaviour. This made me realise that my approach of grouping students had been influenced by a workshop that I participated on principles of co-operating learning conducted by AKO Aotearoa in 2017.

My previous experiences have taught me that conducting site visits without assigning responsibilities to students may not be successful. Often, students tend to visit and observe construction activities as opposed to reflecting on what they observed and making links between observations and their learning. However, Burt, Donaldson, Hruska, Hinch, and Richardson (2012) discussed that sufficient preparation before field visits would help to achieve relevant learning outcomes. Therefore, I created a checklist and to-do-activities for students to achieve the learning outcomes in their assessment (Lohmann, 1980), with this checklist, the mutual understandings and expectations between the facilitator and students will be improved to make the experience meaningful and positive.

## THE CONSTRUCTION SITE VISIT

Students were given copies of the architectural and structural drawings prior to visiting the site. During the site visit, they referred to the drawings and understood similarities and differences between drawings and real construction activities. I felt many students faced difficulties with reading and interpreting the drawings. Students kept asking me to interpret the meaning behind the various sections in the drawings. This indicated to me that I need to use more real construction drawings in my class activities to help students to be more familiar with reading building drawings. During this visit, students observed wall frame elements and building system installation processes. They discussed their questions with the site manager and me. As a part of the assessment activity, students recorded (written notes, audio recording and video recording) their observations and findings in order to use in their summative assessment.

I observed that students needed more self-awareness regarding safety precautions while on construction sites. This experience taught me that there was more room for me to further promote students' engagement and provide support to make stronger links between theory and practice (Faria & Chagas, 2013). For example, the health and safety requirements outlined in the Health and Safety Act 2015, should be applied for future construction site visits.

Interestingly, this learning activity was facilitated by one of my graduates. I found that having our graduates as industry representatives, greatly increased access to the industry as my graduates helped me to visit their construction sites. Also, it was very inspiring and influential for current students to help reach their goals. I felt proud and satisfied to see my graduates sharing their journey and experiences with my current students. This experience made a huge mental shift in my students to become more confident in believing that they will also manage construction sites in the future just like their seniors (McLelland, McKenna, & French, 2013). In addition, the feedback received from my graduate greatly helped me to develop my own teaching practice.

## REFLECTIVE SESSION

As suggested by Moon (2004), we performed a group reflective activity consisting of two effective learning methods called experiential learning and reflective learning. Students reflected on what they observed during the site visit and asked questions on unclear points. It was apparent that students had difficulties in reading and interpreting building drawings. They discussed that sometimes it was difficult to visualise what is on the drawings in reality. This reflection provided many opportunities for us to share our findings among group members. However, it did not give opportunities for different groups to listen to the findings of other groups. Therefore, I think it would have been better if I had asked students to share their findings with other groups as well. This would have created some meaningful critical conversations between groups that would have led them to generating the best assessment content for all groups.

Followed by the above reflective activity, students worked on creating a 30 minute group video based on the site visit experience and their knowledge. Students used the breakout rooms allocated for research activities to work on their video preparation. I remembered that I was amazed by seeing how students referred to their previous class notes to make mind maps to outline the video content. I found that I was very keen towards observing and reviewing my students' video preparation process. I found students worked well in the small breakout rooms. Students said that they found the small breakout rooms with triangular whiteboards were very resourceful for self-directed learning sessions. I participated in their group conversations and provided feedback on their work. I would say that it was very satisfying to see the passion in students during their learning and assessment preparation tasks.

The latter part of this group activity was to complete a reflective report by critically reviewing the completed group work process and outcomes based on personal experiences. Students were asked to evaluate themselves and their peers in terms of the effectiveness (contribution, responsibility, and commitment) at the site and while preparing the video. After evaluating the reflective reports, I felt that the students did not clearly understand what reflection actually meant. A majority of students had just listed what happened instead of analysing their experiences to plan actions that could be applied in the future (Jasper, Freshwater, & Rolfe, 2011). Therefore, based on my self-reflection I decided to conduct personal interviews with students as a reflective activity to understand the effectiveness of this group assessment.

## PRESENTATION OF THE ASSESSMENT

The videos prepared by students were presented in the class. Students were given 30 minutes to present their video output. At the end, I gave positive feedback as appreciation for admirable student work (Wang, Teo, & Yu, 2017) and constructive feedback to further improve their work in the future. I found that the video presentation was a great learning activity for all students. It summed up student learning experiences and reflected on applications of the New Zealand Building Code (NZBC). This activity also developed students' capabilities such as working in teams, reflecting on performances, practicing health and safety and solving problems. I am planning to facilitate this activity in the future by incorporating peer suggestions for different groups so that student insights can also be incorporated in the feedback session.

## THE WAY FORWARD

As a construction course facilitator, I believe that experiential learning and reflective practice promote effective learning. In my future teaching practices, I would like apply a combination of the experiential learning model introduced by Roberts (2006) and the pedagogical model of reflective practice for construction educators introduced by Kamardeen (2015).

According to the fourth pillar of this pedagogical model, assessments should be clear and transparent to students. The assessment methods used in construction management classes are varied and include reports, oral presentations,



computer software based projects and exams. Having a variety of clear and transparent assessments benefits all students to utilise their specific strengths in different assessments (Sambell, McDowell, & Montgomery, 2013). The marking and feedback provided by the facilitator should be fair, consistent, and transparent for the students. As encouraged by Sulton (1995), I will provide prompt feedback for students' assessments, and it will be used as a teaching tool for the class. Also, I will devote a portion of the lesson to look at draft submissions by the students. I hope that my feedback on the draft submissions would guide students towards improving their final submissions. In order to ensure the quality of the assessments, I will conduct quality checks (e.g. pre and post moderation) to ensure the assessment-alignment with the learning outcomes.

Self-reflection helps facilitator to understand the current practices of effective assessment process and identify areas for future development. However, facilitators need to understand that the implementation of effective assessments requires personal change in both students and facilitators (Moon, 2004). In other words, assessments for learning needs to engage in behaviour development through reflective practices (Black, Harrison, & Lee, 2007). As per the Emotional Intelligence theory developed by Goleman (1995), the facilitator needs to slow down the pace of teaching and involve more emotion to make meaning out of experiences (Baldris, et al., 2016). I believe critical reflection would help me to bring effective assessment processes in my future teaching roles. It is important that I discuss and show examples of reflective activities in the class. For example, it would be a good practice to incorporate weekly reflective journals in my practice. Furthermore, when reflecting, the emotions that are associated with the learning activity must be taken into account (e.g., fear; panic hesitation, calm or elation). Thereby, meaningful discussions of students' conceptions of reflection would be generated. This would initially help students to be familiar with the reflective writing style. Afterward, I should enable practice and opportunities for feedback on students' reflective writing. I will then support students with further development of reflective writing with exercises and activities. For example, I am planning to set up forums and question and answer sessions on Moodle. This would help students share their ideas on reflective practices. In this process, I will have to prepare to support some students more than others as the reflective practices may be entirely new for some students. Eventually, both students and I would engage in reflective practices naturally. I hope that this approach would benefit us to firstly self-reflect on our learning and secondly use the self-reflective outcomes for learning through thinking.

## CONCLUSION

The group video assessment based on a real construction experience was very effective due to its engaging and student-centered nature. It was primarily used as a learning tool rather than an assessment. The group work activities helped students to work in teams from the very beginning. It helped students to develop their skills and capabilities. This assessment experience also appeared to have created a cultural shift in learning which improved learning styles among students and had many positive impacts on my teaching practices. I discovered that students learn effectively and are engaged when their studies are linked with practical, experiential learning activities. It was evident that students appreciate the value of constructive feedback provided by the facilitator and their peers. The self-assessment helps to reinforce the external feedback and increase the quality of learning. As a result, my current class facilitations incorporated at least one practical, experiential learning activity (construction site visit, building surveying activity and visiting a construction expo) to make sure that my students were well engaged and made meaning from their learning.

The reflection processes embedded in my classes help students to solidify the new knowledge gained and new skills learned. Furthermore, it increases students' confidence to apply the newly acquired insights in similar and new situations. However, it is acknowledged that reflection is a challenging process to practice together with students in the class. Facilitators need to identify ways to encourage students' reflection. To begin with, the facilitator could take a few notes immediately at the end of the class about what worked or still could be improved. Even though reflection occurred as a natural phenomenon, usually, it is rarely brought up for critical discussions with students. Therefore, facilitators should review their teaching practice and improve the reflective activities in the curriculum delivery. It is suggested that rigorous, purposeful and goal oriented thinking needs to be incorporated into teaching practice so that the learning from reflections can be fed into delivery of effective assessments.

**Don Samarasinghe** is very excited and passionate about teaching and researching in the built environment, with a strong desire for developing tertiary students and unleashing their potential. He has ten years of experiential learning and reflective practice based teaching experience in New Zealand tertiary education. His qualifications include a PhD in construction management, a graduate diploma in tertiary education, and a bachelor of civil engineering degree with first class honours.

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## MAPPING TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

Steve Henry, Glenys Ker, Kelli Te Maihāroa

This is a research project being undertaken to articulate change as a result of learning. Measuring change and impact from learning programmes has long been sought-after; yet appears to be given only anecdotal attention by organisations seeking transformational change. This research is an attempt to develop tools which can map change and hence begin to articulate the impact. The authors are all based at Capable NZ, a part of Otago Polytechnic which uses learner reflection on experience as the primary new evidence for qualifications. The authors are engaging with a range of other organisations who have a desire to document and evidence transformational change as a result of their programmes.

The research is building from the previous work of Ker(2017) which was not published with regards to specific transformational change, but rather the focus was on what changed for the learner. The research seeks to develop a method for articulating change which can be used across many learning programmes and is currently being presented in the form of a map, framework or change canvas. An online survey has been completed, along with focus groups to garner learner experience.

A key theme emerging from the survey and from focus groups is that learners are finding it challenging to put into words the significance of their experiences where the learning is transformational. Asking learners for a single expression to describe their change appears to be a useful prompt. One learner expressed their change as “from zero to hero”, another “from rugby mauls to boardroom brawls”. Tying the patterns of change into existing models is being explored. This includes creating a Change Canvas – a one-pager to capture key metrics from the experience. Examples of this follow to show how the template is changing and learners are choosing to engage with it as a tool to give emphasis to their explaining what happened and why.

The draft templates will be piloted with future focus groups and fully developed by a graphic designer for the SCOPE Capable NZ 2020 publication.

<b>Change canvas enquiry questions</b>	
Title	Name
Date	

<b>Setting</b>  Where? When? What?  Assumptions in that setting Who sets the rules? What is agreed yet unspoken? Describe the culture- how open to change is it?	<b>Narrative of key moments</b>  How do you describe what has happened in a short time?	<b>Key Outcomes and Actions taken</b>  What has happened since?
<b>The changes I see in me</b>  What are they and how do you know?		
<b>What others say about the changes in me because of this</b>  Who said what?	What the old me said about this  How did you used to describe this?  What the new me says  How do you describe this after your changes?	
Image (draw or describe)  What image says so much more than words?  Metaphor  Is there a metaphor to describe what happened and how you frame your change? This may be related to the above image.  Inspired by What has motivated you?  Impacts/Behaviour change summary How have your changes impacted you and others in your behaviour?		

## Change Canvas I

Learning moment. Taking the Finders Course in 2018. Learner I

Setting	Narrative of key moments	Key Outcome and Actions taken
A course focused on finding your way to wellbeing. Initially 17 weeks, the strong Alumni community means the course has never stopped.	The moment I committed to the programme, my meditation practice dropped me deeply into a very high state of wellbeing Learnt tools to use for wellbeing Magnificent learning infrastructure in the course	Customised meditation practice developed  Arising of joy as a "default" way of being
<b>The changes I see in me</b> Increased self belief to be unique. Ease, everything is perfectly ok. Less fear: Increased compassion. Loss of constant narrative mind. Arising of joy as a "default" way of being		
<b>What others say about the changes in me because of this;</b> My wife says I am easier to live with Listen better More tolerant Calmer Less judgmental	Reflection now (May 2019)  A game changing moment in my life.	

## Change Canvas 2

Taking the Finders Course in 2018. Learner I (same learner as Canvas 1 above)

Setting	Narrative of key moments	Key Outcomes and Actions taken
<p>A course focused on finding your way to wellbeing. Initially 17 weeks, the strong Alumni community means the course has never stopped.</p> <p>Assumptions in that setting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 75% of participants report transformational change towards wellbeing</li><li>• Blended learning delivery works- online, video conference, video, reading</li><li>• People are motivated to learn</li><li>• People can afford the fee</li><li>• People have the time to invest in learning</li></ul>	<p>The moment I committed to the programme, my meditation practice dropped me deeply into a very high state of wellbeing. Learnt tools to use for wellbeing. Magnificent learning infrastructure in the course. My learning continues</p>	<p>Customised meditation practice developed</p> <p>Arising of joy as a “default” way of being</p> <p>Methods to return to high wellbeing established</p> <p>Changed professional direction into exploring where personal and professional transformation meet</p> <p>Remain connected to a remarkable community of practice</p>
<p><b>The changes I see in me</b></p> <p>Increased self-belief to be unique. Ease, everything is perfectly ok.</p> <p>Less fear: Increased compassion.</p> <p>Loss of constant narrative mind. Arising of joy as a “default” way of being</p> <p>Increased motivation</p> <p>Increased Ease</p> <p>Less concern what others think of me</p> <p>Less thinking/doing more being</p>		
<p><b>What others say about the changes in me because of this;</b></p> <p>My wife says</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I am easier to live with</li><li>• Listen better</li><li>• More tolerant</li><li>• Calmer</li><li>• Slower to move to judgement</li></ul>	<p><b>What the old me said</b></p> <p>Personal development requires my effort and discipline</p> <p>What the new me says</p> <p>Life is perfectly ok, allow it to unfold and be</p> <p>Reflection now (July 2019)</p> <p>A game changing moment in my life.</p>	
<p><b>A single sentence to summarise the learning</b> I found my way back to fundamental wellbeing</p>		

### Change Canvas 3.

Learning in the Graduate Diploma in Sustainable Practice programme 2017- 18. Learner 2

Setting	Narrative of key moments	Key Outcomes and Actions taken
<p>A learning program which builds on from prior learning and work completed in Adding Sustainable Value. Delivered online and via multiple block-course during the year with the compulsory academic requirements in place also.</p> <p>Assumptions in that setting That there would be a formal framework for learning with key linear expectations. Academic outcomes (in line with previous learning institutes) would have priority over personal transformation. There would be more corporate/ business people involved.</p>	<p>Being challenged with pre-existing paradigms of thinking; occasionally externally but exposure to a variety of situations and lifestyle forced me to evaluate my personal reactions and preconceptions.</p> <p>Understanding Ako through the old and new Grad Dip and Master's students working together.</p> <p>Being challenged in what in life is important to me and why I do what I do (or don't)</p>	<p>I am a more empathic person who I believe is curious about what it is I don't know rather than assuming I already know (perhaps through my personal experience)</p> <p>The ako concept has been profound and is something I am bringing into my business model to support new knowledge within sustainable/ regenerative practice.</p> <p>Leaving a place of comfort to back myself, my skills, experience and personal attributes</p>
<p>The changes I see in me I am braver I find it much easier to see my value I have improved mental toughness with the ability to externalise events that previously would have had a detrimental impact. I am excited to meet and learn from a wide variety of people but able to choose when to walk away. I am not intimidated at the thought of doing a MPP, rather excited. Increased authenticity</p>		
<p>What others say about the changes in me because of this;</p> <p>Increasing self belief Increased ease</p> <p>Metaphor In its simplest terms, moulting in crustaceans is the periodic shedding of the hard-outer covering, the old exoskeleton, or shell. But this concept is overly simplified, because shedding an old shell requires the prior laying down of a new soft one under the old and, subsequently, the hardening of the new one into a firm, resistant, useful outer covering. In my case the term moulting, then, implies a large amount of psychological activity both before and after the actual shedding of the old shell.</p>	<p>What the old me said I am uncomfortable with being outside my comfortable zone.</p> <p>What the new me says I appreciate the best learnings and personal reflections happen in new and sometimes uncomfortable environments – if I am to grow, I need this.</p> <p>Inspired by Varies personalities in my cohort. All culminated to growth but never in a way that felt uncontrolled; there was always a level of moderation to ensure people felt safe while 'moulting'</p> <p>Impacts/Behaviour change summary Deeper understanding of my personality and paradigms is powerful More open to change</p>	

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## A SOCIAL HISTORY OF MENTAL HEALTH

Sam O'Sullivan

### INTRODUCTION

Sam's lived experience of struggling with anxiety and professional practice as a clinical psychologist has taken him on a long-term inquiry into what wellbeing looks like. His hospital work has revealed to him the profoundly negative effect that the medicalisation of mental health has had on people because of its focus on individual biology in isolation. A medical intervention is focused on changing a biological mechanism, rather than changing the variety of social and systemic mechanisms also causing the mental health problems.

Through his experience with Tough Talk, an initiative focused on men's mental wellbeing in New Zealand, and associated qualitative research through Capable NZ's Graduate Diploma in Professional Practice (Leadership for Change), Sam has come to understand wellbeing through a social lens. He argues that our wellbeing is depleted by distress related to intangible and powerful social factors, primarily social norms and systems that are harmful for individuals and social groupings we find ourselves in.

### WHY PUT EMPHASIS ON SOCIAL FACTORS?

Most clinicians and academics in the health world would agree that mental health problems are caused by the interplay of biological, psychological, and social factors (Havelka, Lucanin, & Lucanin, 2009). Although we are seeing a burgeoning interest in the social determinants of mental health, more emphasis appears to have been put on the biological factors; evidenced by the general public's understanding of mental health as a biological illness or chemical imbalance (Choudhry et al., 2016).

It is entirely plausible that any one of the three broad factors named above exerts a stronger influence than others in a given context and time. For example, an individual with brain damage who is experiencing psychosis is likely mentally unwell primarily because of damage to their brain's biological functioning, and secondly because of psychological challenge of coping with the change within a society that views it as weakness. However, when we observed the most recent suicide statistics in the context of Aotearoa, it is clear that social factors are exerting an enormous influence on the mental health of our people and that social factors may be a far higher determinant of mental illness than previously considered :

Coroner's report (2018):	
<b>Deaths by suicide:</b>	
Māori:	23 per 100,000
European and other <sup>1</sup> :	13.94 per 100,000
Male:	475
Female	193
<b>Youth' 12 study (Clark et al., 2012):</b>	
Queer youth	1 in 5 have attempted suicide
Heterosexual youth	1 in 20 have attempted suicide

Māori are killing themselves at a higher rate than pākehā. It would be dangerous to assume that this is because Māori have biological predisposition to depression. Based on contemporary understanding, it seems highly plausible that depression in Māori communities stems from the trauma of colonisation (Doyle & Kerrie, 2011; Gracey & King, 2009), the ongoing colonisation through the Western approach to assessment and treatment (Rangihuna, Kopua, & Tipene-Leach, 2018; Zambas & Wright, 2016), and the social stressors Māori face as an acculturated group (Saldaina, 1994). Stuber, Meyer, and Link (2008) point out that there are many strong causal links between stigma, prejudice, discrimination and health. It is plausible that the biological mechanism of epigenetics is responsible for historical trauma passing through the generations (Youssef, Lockwood, and Rutten, 2018), although the root of the trauma still stems from the violent intersection of two societies which is social in nature.

It would similarly be dangerous to assume that queer youth are attempting suicide more often than heterosexual youth because there is something problematic with their biology. The evidence suggests that their mental health problems are caused by the stress from the everyday prejudice they face as a marginalised group in mainstream society, especially in schools (D'Augelli, Pilkington, & Hershberger, 2002).

The higher rate of suicide that males are experiencing in New Zealand is fascinating as it could be assumed that the inherent privileges of being a male in Aotearoa would support the wellbeing of males over females. If we look closer at the statistics, we can see that the ratio is overrepresented by Māori males (Coroner's report, 2018). If we assume that the biological make-up of males is not causing their problems, because in countries such as China the ratio of male to female suicide is more even (World Health Organisation, 2016), then there must be a social issue to account for this phenomenon.

If the devastating problems we're seeing with suicide in Aotearoa are primarily a social phenomenon, then it seems counterintuitive that our mental health interventions are rarely focused on social change. At the very least we should be educating people that their problems are not merely a fundamental, heritable and immutable part of themselves, which requires medical intervention to repair (e.g., antidepressants for depression and anxiety) (Nutt, 2008).

"Medication may improve the way people are feeling, but also masks the pain manifested in their social context and may inevitably remove motivation from people to drive social change to reduce the true source of their pain." (O'Sullivan, 2018)

## THE MEDICALISATION OF MENTAL HEALTH

It is well established that the medicalisation of mental health was driven by economics interests of pharmaceutical companies, and the efficacy of antidepressants medication is placebo at best when all the data is evaluated (Hari, 2018; PLOS Medicine Editors, 2013; Kirsch, 2010). Of course it is important to note that when results are analysed as a whole, important effects on sub-groups can be missed; antidepressants may prove more effective for people when the cause of their mental struggle is more biologically based. A placebo approach to treatment can be considered acceptable if there is little risk of harm, but the use of medication to treat mental health can be physically harmful. It is well known that pharmaceutical medications cause harmful physical side-effects and are only justified because of their efficacy (i.e. the benefit outweighs the harm).

Normal life experiences have also been unnecessarily pathologised. Let's look at the case of over-diagnosis of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The over-prescription of methylphenidate (aka Ritalin) to children will likely be one of the biggest shams of the 21st century. The US Center for Disease Control estimated that 6.4 million children aged 4 to 17 had received an ADHD diagnosis in their lives, which is about 11% of US children, a 41% increase from the previous decade (PLOS Medicine Editors, 2013).

The treatment of mental health with medication, driven by an individualistic biological understanding, can also have

psychological side-effects. Informing someone that their distress is caused primarily by biological dysfunction may leave the person feeling disempowered. It may tell them that their brain, or their very being, is not good enough. If the distress is reduced with medication then it's telling them that the change was caused by an external force (i.e., a pill), rather than supporting the development of an internal locus of control for the change. We know the latter leads to longer term mental health improvement (Karyotaki et al., 2014). The need for medication to support mental "normalcy" may also lead to people feeling helpless through the reliance of services from health professionals (Mulder, 2014).

Perhaps the most damaging consequence of this narrative is that it tells people that their distress has no meaning, which may result in people failing to use the pain signals they're receiving as information for useful change.

"Ask not what's inside your head, ask what your head's inside of" (W.M. Mace in Hari, 2018)

It should be acknowledged that the medical industry as a whole, particularly practitioners, is deeply motivated to improve people's health. This is not an attack on the medical industry, which is responsible for saving lives every day. Medication helps people with mental health struggles every day. It is of no doubt that there exists a need to explain, or label in some way, what would otherwise be widespread suffering that is challenging to communicate (Mulder, 2014). The ability to communicate problems efficiently is needed in the current system to gain access to treatment and funding for research (Mulder, 2014). The specific problem is the public's understanding of the causes of their suffering – they are often making uninformed decisions about treatment and are not participating in social or psychological solutions. The diagnostic labels can also serve as a useful, and somewhat relieving, narrative for someone to understand and explain their problems to others. To give a person in pain a story about why they are hurting is a very powerful thing to do. We need a new story.

"It's not that the way you feel isn't real, it's that it has a different cause than the one you have been told about" (Hari, 2018).

## EARLY INTERVENTION

Because intervention at the social level is slow, or even completely absent, people's mental health problems often get to the point where a medical intervention is appropriate because they're not in a state where they can adapt to society and create meaningful changes in their lives and challenge the status quo.

By the time someone gets to primary and secondary health care providers, clinicians are generally faced with a person in crisis where it's difficult to treat social and psychological causes (Bracewell-Worrall, 2018). These providers, such as community mental health teams, are often overwhelmed and only able to focus on the greatest need; moderate to severe presentations (Bracewell-Worrall, 2018). They're certainly not intervening at an early stage of the development of a mental health problem, which we've come to understand as critically important time to intervene (Catania et al., 2011).

At times of crisis and acute mental health presentations medication becomes one of the only feasible approaches, especially in many sterile hospital environments which have not been found to facilitate mental wellbeing (Lawson et al., 2002). We need education in communities to prevent people getting to acute states of mental crisis where they require hospitalization.

Countries like Finland are demonstrating the efficacy of an approach to mental health that focuses on tackling social issues through policy change, making dialogue therapies a first line treatment, and educating their people with mental health skills and literacy (Lehtinen & Taipale 2001). Aotearoa is behind in this regard and the state of our nations mental health discussed in the recent Mental Health and Addiction review only evidences the need for change (Paterson et al., 2018).

The way many of us view professionalism in the mental health field may also be systematically disempowering communities to support people at an early stage of their struggles. When a person expresses or shows signs of a mental health challenge, people supporting them often think "I don't know what I'm doing. I need a professional" (O'Sullivan, 2017). This may be an unintended extension of reasonable public health education, driven by the medical industry, wherein people are discouraged from treating illness or injury without first consulting a medical practitioner (see Ministry of Health guidelines, 2018).

An effect appears to occur where people think that involving a mental health professional alone will remedy someone's mental health problem, or at least relieve them from a sense of responsibility (Kirsch, 2009). It's vitally important that people who know and love the person who is suffering are involved in intervention (Dirk et al., 2017). A professional practitioner may be an ideal conduit to facilitate community and wider social intervention, however because western approaches have primarily focused on treating individuals, the majority of practitioners lack the time, mandate, and expertise to do this.

We know that the efficacy of therapy can be largely attributed to the quality of the therapeutic relationship (Martin, Garske, & Davis, 2000), yet we attempt to seek out distant strangers who are completely removed from the community to be therapists. In fact, the Code of Ethics for Psychologists in Aotearoa (2002) cautions practitioners away from "dual relationships", which can make them anxious about working with people they know personally. We are becoming increasingly isolated in western society (Hari, 2018). We are socially and systemically repressing non-professional and professional healers who we collectively know and trust in the midst of our communities.

Professional titles are a useful heuristic for determining the quality of knowledge (Esgate et al., 2005), which unfortunately carries the implication that people without titles are not as knowledgeable. It may be the case that unprofessional people in communities are more knowledgeable, but simply lack a professional vocabulary. They also may have more time and local understanding. Marketing has taught us how important it is to communicate knowledge in familiar language (Luna et al., 2003), yet we're stuck on valuing the importance of complex language termed by scientists and people with an interest in selling expensive therapies.

This can be damaging as people who are struggling are not turning to the people around them for support at early stages of their struggles, which means they are instead seeking professionals with long waitlists (Bracewell-Worrall, 2018) or are opting for sometimes unnecessary medical intervention because of the ease of access (Paterson et al., 2018). Ultimately we're not preventing the social and psychological nature of mental health problems at an early stage of their development.

## MENTAL HEALTH AS A SOCIAL PROBLEM?

Hugh Norris (2018) asked: "what do you think is the most important unit to consider in the mental health system?" He believes we overlook the power of our social groupings and put too much emphasis on the individual. The model of illness discussed puts the emphasis on the individual as needing treatment and tends to disregard social influences (Mulder, 2014).

Another view of mental health is that we're experiencing a wide-spread social problem. Let's consider a hypothetical example – the mental health of a woman in the 1950s who by choice, or through societal pressure, works unpaid within the home. She may have been told that she possessed everything a woman could need – a nice husband, a beautiful house, and healthy children. However, she was presenting to her doctor as depressed and didn't understand why. The doctor's typical response at the time would have been that there was something broken within her, which makes sense given the social norms and understanding of mental health at the time. It is now agreed by most people that the social norms of that time were the only thing broken; she may have been feeling distressed because of the way she was conditioned to live, which was preventing her from living a meaningful life.

Many of us can likely relate to the woman in the 1950s – feeling distressed within ourselves, but not always sure why as we look through the lens of our own conditioning and understanding. A solution may lie in breaking down conditioning and reshaping our social norms in a way that allows people to fully express themselves and be understood.

We now know that wider social beliefs and systems are often implicated in the etiology of mental health problems (Matthews et al., 2015). Depression and anxiety may be at least partially caused by the way we are living, which tells a very different narrative – the mental health struggles of an individual is something we are collectively responsible for. This is a much less stigmatizing way to view mental health compared to an illness that affects some people at random or as a product of an individual's choices (Hari, 2018). As we increasingly accept a social view of mental health it is fast becoming a political challenge to change the way society works in order to improve health.

“It is no measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society” (Jiddu Krishnamurti)

## CASE STUDY: TOUGH TALK

Tough Talk is a small organisation founded by the author and focused on the mental wellbeing of men in Aotearoa New Zealand, which offers free content to the public: a documentary series and resources/tools for wellbeing (Fig. 1).

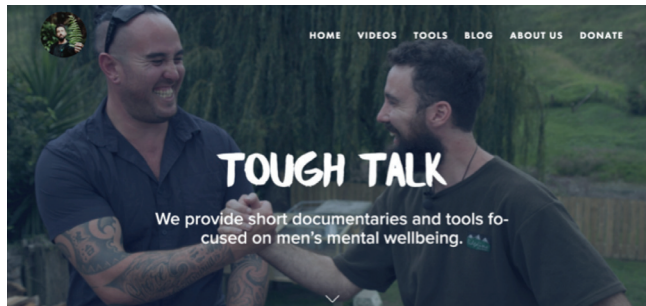


Figure. 1: Tough Team website.  
Tough talk can be accessed at <https://toughtalk.nz/>

After observing the disproportionately high rates of male suicide in New Zealand, Sam sought to investigate the social causes of this phenomenon. Extensive qualitative research by the author and two years of traveling, specifically to talk to New Zealanders about the phenomenon, suggests that the roots of this issue resides in the gender identity that has traditionally been ascribed to males: masculinity. It is not claimed that there's anything inherently toxic about masculinity as a whole and it's crucial to realise that every person, regardless of their sex, can identify with masculinity and femininity. The problem seems to lie in certain traits that have been adopted as social norms for masculinity, particularly by males. Namely, not showing vulnerable emotions such as sadness; expressing anger and violence as a sign of strength; not asking for help; an assumption that a male in a heterosexual relationship must provide; pushing for sex; viewing success as out-competing rivals, making lots of money, having an attractive partner based on social norms etc.

These traits can lead to mental health problems through a variety of pathways. For example, Jim loses his job as a builder after injuring his back, which means he can no longer provide for his family in the way that he is expected to. He feels sad and fearful about the future, but expresses his feelings as anger towards his family because it's the only way he knows how to feel. His partner leaves him. He feels like a complete failure as a man and assumes she left him because he can no longer work. He doesn't tell anyone about his intense distress, starts drinking, spirals into worsening mental health, and eventually comes to feel is only open is suicide, even though there were many intervention points where Jim's pathway could have been changed.

Another pathway for Jim may have involved medical intervention. For example, imagine that he sought out his General Practitioner at the time when he was starting to take out his emotions on his family. After completing a tick list he is told he has moderate depression and is offered antidepressants. Jim worries that he has something wrong with his brain, so begins taking the pills. He starts to feel better after a few weeks, but begins putting on weight and losing his libido. His wife feels less attracted to him, but he doesn't seem to notice. Jim doesn't feel any motivation to find a new job or meaningful occupation. Eventually he starts to feel depressed again and this time his wife leaves him. He ups his medication and lives alone in an apartment on the benefit watching television.

Tough Talks seeks to challenge problematic aspects of the social norm of masculinity and reshape the construct within our collective psyche by normalising men being vulnerable. If men feel confident to voice their internal suffering then they will be able to seek help.

The documentary series shows a diverse range of Kiwi men telling their stories of facing challenges and getting through them because they learnt that it was ok to show vulnerable emotions.



"Talk about it as much as you can. Get it out there, be a man. Don't be a sookie - you know like 'harden up', that's being a sookie. Be a man and talk about it and feel your feelings" (Adam Sharplin, Hunter).

"It wasn't a go with the flow soft man and it wasn't this macho tough guy. It was finding the space in between. Where I can be dependable, I can be solid, I can be funny. And also be gentle and delicate as well" (Matiu te Huki, Musician).



"Challenge your behaviours. Break the cycle, don't perpetuate the cycle. Have the courage to change" (Michael Walker, ex Navy)



"It was either suicide or look for help, those were my two options, and I went looking for help" (Matt Brown, Barber)



Tough Talk reshapes the way we view toughness through their realisations that it takes incredible strength to talk about our hidden fears and suffering. It showcases the internal tools that have worked for people personally and for supporting others. Often Kiwi males are incredibly motivated by helping others - by teaching tools to help others they receive the benefits too. Tough Talk has been telling a new story of being a man - a story where people still embody positive qualities of masculinity like courage, while empowering and equipping communities with tools to support the people around them. It exemplifies an intervention that is reshaping a specific social norm that is problematic.

In this new story Jim still loses his job, but he talks to his family and mates about how he is feeling. They support and encourage him to take up wood carving and explore playing the guitar. It takes him a while to come to terms with the change, he goes through a rough patch at one point and has a few reckless nights drinking, but he always lets others know how he is feeling. He learns to accept what happened. His family love having him around more and his relationship with his partner deepens. He realises how lucky he was to have a supportive family and starts to help the people around him with the tools and wisdom he had been learning.

## CONCLUSION

The way that we are perceiving mental health is changing from a phenomenon manifested within the biology of individuals, to a social phenomena present in the relationships and understanding within and between groups of individuals. Our interventions need to catch up with this understanding, especially if we are to intervene early enough to improve our success rates. Medication may improve the way people are feeling, but also masks the pain manifested in their social context and may inevitably remove motivation from people to drive social change to reduce the true source of their pain. As we grasp this new perception of mental health, there are profound implications for the ways we can intervene. The solutions may lie in reweaving our social fabric - our policies, economy, organisational systems, and shared beliefs about who we are and our purpose on this planet.

Please note: The information here is not designed to replace individual medical advice from your health professional – please do not stop or reduce medication without consulting with them first.

**Sam O'Sullivan** is a Clinical Psychologist, facilitator, mindfulness practitioner, and positive activist. He founded Tough Talk, a campaign focused on men's mental wellbeing, and is an integral part of Tuia Learning Environment. He is focused on changing the way many people think about wellbeing from an individualistic experience to a phenomenon that exists in the relationships between people and the environment. Sam is involved in developing new technology to support people's access to wellbeing support and speaks at various events around Aotearoa about the importance of breaking down our conditioning so we can all collaborate towards a flourishing future.

I 'European and other' includes, but is not limited to: New Zealand European, European, Middle Eastern, Latin American, African and 'not elsewhere defined'.



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# THE VALUE OF PROFESSIONAL CONVERSATION AS ILLUSTRATED BY A DISCUSSION ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

James Harrison and Perseville Mendoza

## INTRODUCTION

The recognition of shared professional conversation has become a natural part of the facilitation practiced by James with his Master of Professional Practice students at Otago Polytechnic. This recognition resulted from two experiences. First, it came about by accident as he sought clarity from students on how their developing models of practice were becoming more coherent and providing the answers to the research problems they were addressing. Second, the subsequent sharing of his developing thinking for his own PhD with a professional colleague personally opened up many useful avenues of thinking, and James realised that the process not only helped his collegial relationship with Perseville, but also enhanced and staircased their comprehension of their respective fields of interest.

This paper attempts to explore the concept of professional conversation, as well as articulate its value as an important method of experiential learning and reflective practice. This is done by demonstrating how a conversation concerning professional development shows itself to be an exercise in reflective staircasing, whilst exhibiting an examination of our respective current models of learning. In comparing our models, we establish a foundation for further development. Much of what Perseville emphasises in this paper is borne out of the many conversations with James as facilitator, supporting the idea that professional conversation has a significant place in professional development.

The first part of the paper looks at two models which provided useful insight into the professional conversation process. These are an adaption of the Johari window concept and the experiential learning process. The second part proceeds with a comparison of our learning models and what we can draw from them professionally and personally. This is done by presenting our respective models, and then proceeding to specific areas in our conversation. The last part of the paper offers some conclusions, based around our reflections on the experience of engaging in a professional conversation.

## SOME GUIDING MODELS

Professional conversation and collegiality have long been fundamental to professional colleagues in many fields (Andrews & Lewis, 2007; Hord, 1997). Not only do they form the guiding principles of many professional bodies, they have formed an important pathway for more experienced professionals to mentor their new colleagues in the formation of their professional practice (Andrews & Lewis, 2007; Schwillie, 2008). References to this kind of process are many and varied and range from the Socratic approach to learning, to reviews of research by professional colleagues and its application to discourse (Grimshaw, 1989; Werth, 1981). However the perspective and process in which the professional conversation can be undertaken is less well developed and this is what is focussed on here.

The Johari Window model of perception used here provides an interesting perspective on the benefit for such sharing. Note it combines the initial Johari Window (Saxena, 2015) concept of Duft, with a later model of cognition called the Dunning Kruger effect (Kruger & Dunning, 1999).

The coloured slices shown in figure 1 represent:

- What a person knows s/he knows (blue, person 1; yellow, person 2)
- What a person knows s/he does not know (red, person 1; pale blue, person 2)
- What a person does not know s/he knows (green, person 1; brown person 2)
- The remainder of the picture is what the person does not know that s/he does not know.

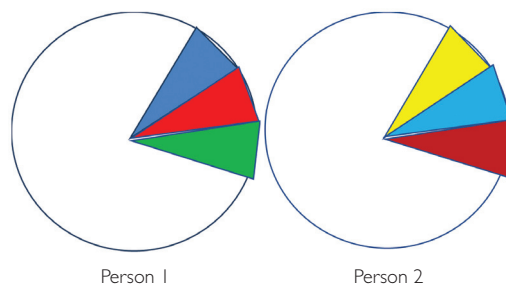


Figure 1. Representation of Johari window perceptions of two people.

For each person, these proportions in terms of the whole picture are roughly the same, and as the picture shows, the proportion stays the same if one person knows more than another.

As our individual knowledge grows, the proportion of what we do not know of which we are not aware grows in the same proportion, i.e. the more we know the less we know.

But when two people share with each other, there will be some things that one person knows that another does not know they do not know, and vice versa. Consequently, to share is to become aware of one's own lack of knowledge or to gain a perspective on one's own knowledge that one did not have before. The impact of this multiplies across a collegial group or community of practice in one field.

The model of experiential learning I (James) use is derived from an adaption of Dewey's model. Dewey's model of reflective thought and action is based on the Darwinian biological theory of adaption and evolution that arises from an organism finding that its habitual behaviour no longer works. He (Dewey, 1997) considers that there are two types of experience.

- Primary experience which remains largely unconscious and unknown unless it starts to create problems as described above;
- Secondary experience which is where the problem is reflected upon and the consequences used to create learning.

Elkjaer; (Illeris, 2009) describes Dewey's definition of experience to mean more like culture, in the sense that it is an ongoing interaction between a subject and their world. It is also linked to the future as well as the past. It can affect both subject and world. At the same time, it can be emotional and spiritual in nature as much as it might be an occurrence.

The area of learning addressed by the experiential learning process can be many things, including other models of practice, phenomena, and any form of change which is neither explained nor expected.

In terms of a professional conversation, the significance of the use of a cyclical iterative model of action and reflection on the object of discussion provides a relevant structure in which to situate and explore the respective perspectives of each participant's contribution. Each contribution is evidence that provides a new perception for the other and the ways in their perspective on the topic differs from one's own. Depending on the nature of the differences identified as well as the significance and the length of conversation, there may be opportunities to

undertake several iterations of one's experiential cycle to explore and adjust one's respective understanding or to identify components that require further research. Each conversational contribution creates a cycle of practice that effectively staircases one's own understanding to potentially an enhanced outcome.

## OUR MODELS OF DEVELOPMENT AS THE BASIS OF OUR PROFESSIONAL CONVERSATION

It should be noted that a key component of a professional conversation is the model of development that each participant uses in their field of expertise. The models described below are useful to compare because they have recently been derived by each author in their own postgraduate study and have led to findings that not only are seen as relevant to professional development, but to our own practice as facilitators with others. In our conversation, we consciously sought to reflect on our learning models for the purpose of staircasing our own understanding of professional development. Each of our models are described to provide the context for our professional conversation concerning their comparison.

### James Harrison

The model of developmental practice described here arises from my PhD study which is currently being written up. However, some of the findings have previously been presented at international conferences in recent years and readers are referred to these papers for a more detailed description of their compilation: see Harrison (2017), and Harrison & Soltani (2018).

The model of developmental practice shown in Figure 2 bears close comparison to the model of experiential learning already described earlier when it was realised that the processes of problem solving, experiential learning and research shared very similar characteristics with each other (see Figure 3).

The concept of capability arises from the capability concept derived from the UK manifesto of Capability defined by the Royal Society of Arts and later work by Stephenson & Yorke (1998). This defines capability as the ability to apply one's competence in new or more complex contexts. This led to my identification that capability could be defined as a cyclical iterative process.

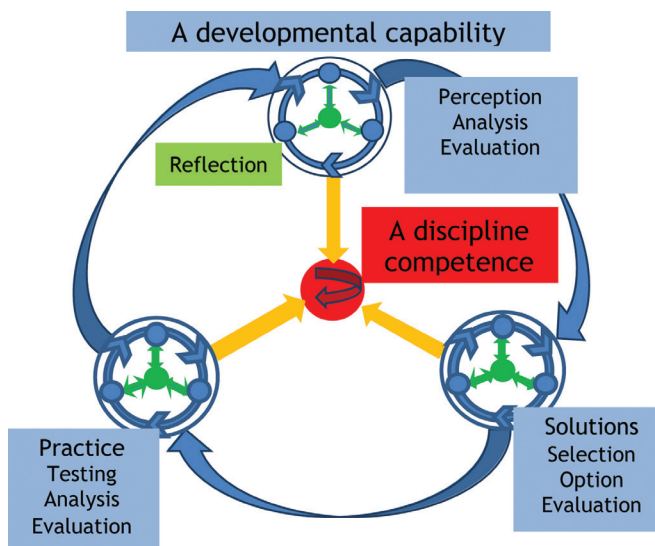


Figure 2. A model of developmental practice.

The capability process begins with an identification stage in which something is identified that needs attention. This arises from ongoing application of discipline competence where an anomaly is detected between what is happening and the current practice of discipline competence. This could be a problem, something that needs to be researched or something that needs to be understood and could involve one or more of the capability development processes shown in Figure 2.

Based on what is identified, the next stage is to determine what needs to be done to resolve the matter identified using or developing the models that form part of the discipline competence. These can either be process or theoretical models. Note that every stage of the capability process is informing and adding to the level or scope of disciplinary competence. What follows is then a practical stage of applying and working with the models to test their suitability, examine the findings arising and evaluating whether the matter is resolved or needs further work. This informs and adjusts the model of disciplinary competence at every stage of the development capability cycle.

If the matter needs further work, then another cycle of practice is undertaken. Importantly, all the above occurs in specific discipline contexts and should be understood and evaluated accordingly.

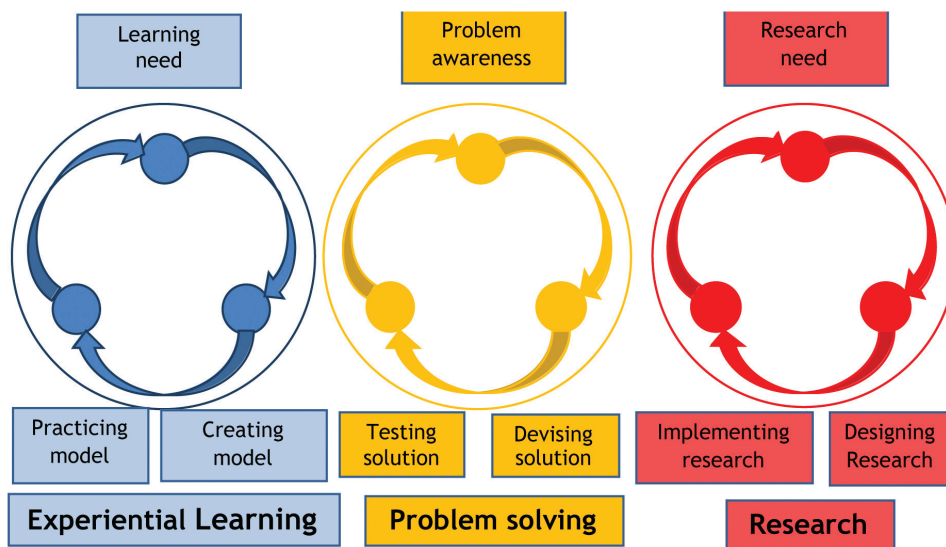


Figure 3. The similarity between experiential learning, problem solving and research developmental capabilities.

Note that all of the stages of these developmental capabilities are making use of other processes or techniques which are cyclical, self-referential and iterative. At the same time, the main capability stages themselves may need to be adapted or improved to meet the needs of the issue being dealt with.

The significance of the iterative nature of this model is the ability for the discipline competence and developmental capability to grow with every new need or problem identified. Where an individual moves into another discipline field, the existing discipline competence is a starting point for a new pathway of development and progression. Hence, vocational practice using these developmental capability processes is being built upon and added to for the whole of one's life (see Figure 4).

The development of the discipline competence and the developmental capabilities can be undertaken simultaneously from the outset and throughout an education or training programme. The model lends itself to the application of problem based and project-based development processes in a progressive way culminating in independent demonstration and self-assessment of full integrated discipline competence and development capability practice as a summative programme outcome.

The significance of the developmental practice model shown in Figure 4 is that it not only reflects growth in capability and discipline competence, but it also shows a pathway through time and different disciplines in which an individual recognises where they have come from and where they are going. It can be considered a total quality management process for human performance and development.

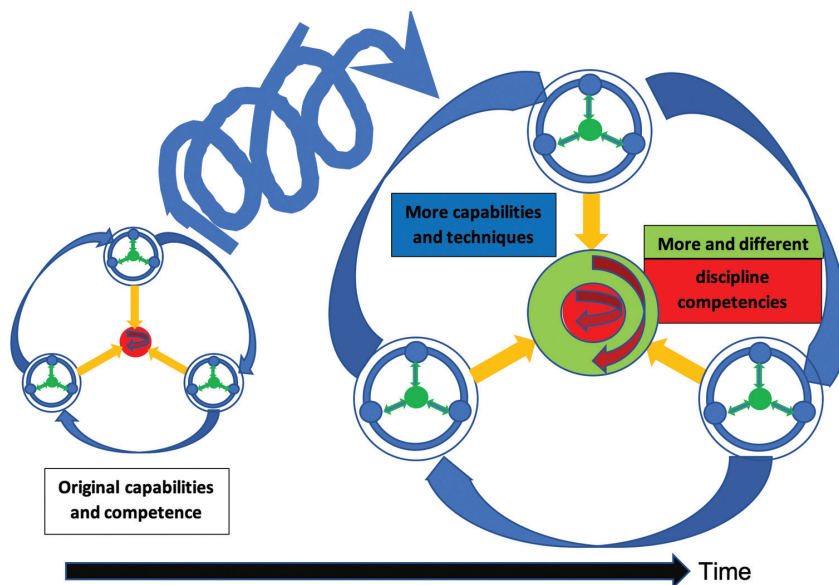


Figure 4. A model of developmental practice showing growth of competence and developmental capability through time and different contexts.

More importantly, the current state of professional practice and performance defined by competence is but a temporary state of output in the continuous lifelong development of capability. Much of contemporary performance and qualification definition is defined in terms of the former rather than the latter. This lack of comprehension and understanding of professional growth hinders both individuals and society at large in terms of individuals being able to adapt to new fields and disciplines seamlessly, and gives rise to capability barriers first articulated by Sen (1993).

### Perseville Mendoza

The project of identifying and articulating my own learning process, and thereafter, illustrating it as a model of learning, came about in the pursuit of my Master of Professional Practice (MProfPrac). Though initially a project on critical thinking, the research evolved into a project on critical learning considering the strong relationship between learning and problem-solving.

The development of my model of learning is based on reflections involving several experiences both as student and teacher; specifically in learning martial arts and music, as well as learning and teaching philosophy. The experience of home-schooling my children also contributed to the views that I have about learning and teaching. From these reflections, I drew up a basic personal learning model, whereby the process of learning is driven by an underlying practice of reflection all throughout. After much reflection borne out of conversations with my facilitator, I have come to the realisation that whether in martial arts, music, or philosophy, my learning has been informed by an engagement with a problem, followed by an attempt to resolve and understand both the problem and the solution, and then a refinement of the solution that should be applicable to other similar scenarios (Figure 6).

This model is not particularly complex nor ground-breaking. Yet, its distinctive characteristic is found in the thinking process itself, whereby each stage is comprised of both convergent and divergent modes of thinking. The model attempts to articulate possible combinations of these two modalities in order to express the fundamental relationship between critical thinking and reflection, and how such a combination leads to critical learning.

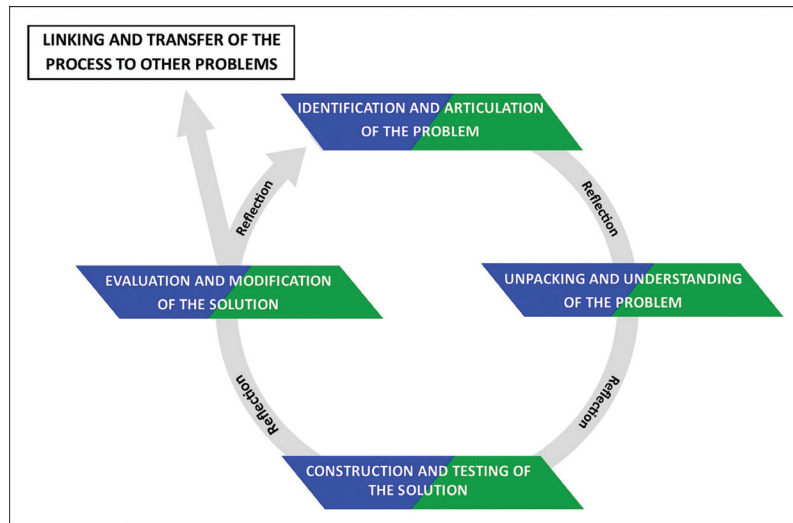


Figure 5. A Learning/Problem-solving model.

In the process of visualising this relationship, I matched the two processes in order to see how the entire combined process would possibly come together. I ended up with a diagram where the two processes may be performed simultaneously:

The idea behind these thinking modalities is that on one hand, analysis allows a learner to exercise focused thinking, thereby helping a learner to see conceptual foundations. Reflection, on the other hand, because it is not necessarily bound to and by strict logical relations, allows for a broader, more creative perspective on thought and conceptual linkages. It is a mode of thinking that looks at alternatives and possibilities. Learning thus becomes possible at the level of reflection. Yet critical thinking plays an important role in giving a learner a grasp of the abstract concepts. By having a process that places these modalities side-by-side, I believe that a particular process of critical learning may be identified, and a transferable method may ultimately be employed towards an enhancement of thinking and learning capabilities.

Figure 6, therefore, is a pictorial representation of how these thinking modalities operate within a learning/problem-solving process. Note how the stages of identification and articulation, unpacking and understanding, construction and testing, and evaluation and modification are all paired in accordance with the convergent-divergent modes.

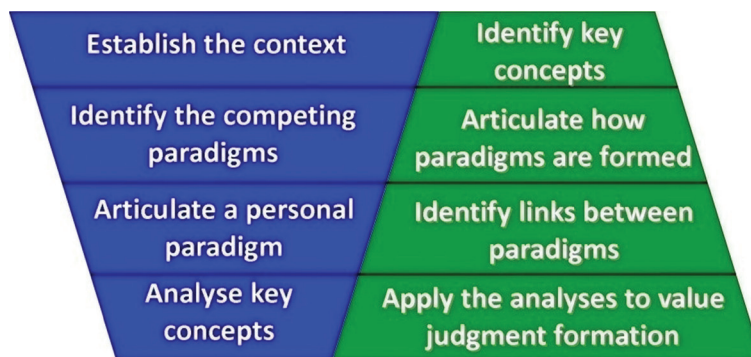


Figure 6. Pictorial representation of convergent-divergent processes.

Drawing on seemingly unrelated experiences as an academic, a musician, and as a martial artist, the role and importance of problem/dilemma-scenarios in learning slowly became more apparent. In both academia and martial arts for example, any and all types of information or “knowledge” become relevant only in the context of the problematic situations that they address. By turning this framework into a learning principle, the learning process becomes more defined and focused, theoretically leading to a more efficient model of learning and education. Works, such as those of Adair (2007), Mak, Mak, & Mak (2009), and Bell (2014), point to the centrality of problem-scenarios in learning. For instance, it is a problem-scenario that paves the way for the scientific method in the first place, and if research follows the same process as scientific inquiry in particular and learning in general, then these are all driven by problem-based learning. It becomes apparent that learning is about meaning-making, and the path to making sense of the world is paved by problems, or more specifically, finding solutions to problems. When we are served with any type of information, it becomes relevant only when it answers the question, Why do I need to know x? But notice that this question is simply another way of asking, What is x a solution to? Therefore, learning happens when our experiences make sense or are meaningful, and they become meaningful when they are solutions or answers to problem-scenarios. Interestingly enough, Mak et al. (2009) offer a shorter version of the scientific method in this form: Observation, Hypothesis, and Experiment, which essentially corresponds to the fundamental learning cycle of Kolb (1984). This implies that, true enough, the scientific method is essentially framed by the same process as that of learning.

It is argued here that such significance can only be acquired in the context of problem-solving. In other words, any research is to be interpreted in terms of how it is a solution to something. Raw data or information is out there, true enough, but for such information to gain meaning to a researcher, it must fit into and help make sense of something larger. Quite simply, it is the sense of a gap in one’s construction of reality that pushes learning forward whether in everyday life, in the scientific method, or in research.

## KEY OBSERVATIONS FROM THIS MODEL-COMPARING EXERCISE

The models were similar in that both found linkages between the processes of learning and the processes of problem solving. The processes were cyclical, reflecting the seemingly natural tendency to learn in terms of cycles. They could be repeated iteratively to improve the results because it appears that self-assessment is built into the process. A significant subprocess of reflection formed an integral part of every stage of the process cycle. In sum, what learning entails in any context is that it is about process.

One difference between the two models lies in the scope of what these respective models are trying to represent. Whereas James’ model of professional practice is necessarily more advanced and highly developed in terms of representing a universal pattern of professional development, Perseville’s model is located in the micro-process of learning that is applicable to the level of disciplinary/professional, as well as personal, learning. It is more akin to what James identifies as sub processes in his model of professional practice and development.

The primary focus of Perseville’s model of learning is problem solving stemming from a combination of convergent and divergent thinking. What is interesting is that the function of his convergent-divergent thinking modes is analogous to James’ model’s incorporation of the “global” (what could be viewed as a universal pattern of development) and “local” (sub processes) dimensions of professional development. This is noteworthy, because in seeking to draw up pictorial representations of professional development and learning, we separately came up with analogous perspectives incorporated into our models. The implication of this congruence is the apparent universal nature of learning as cyclical and iterative, despite the differing language that was used in those respective models.

Another point of contrast is that James’ model included the concept of a research process as a problem without an immediate answer, as well as reflection integrating both convergent and divergent processes. Convergent reflection was seen as a conscious process of open questioning, whereas Perseville went further and defined this as a form of critical thinking. In divergent thinking, James made use of the concept of linking useful ideas together from intuition



and “aha” moments of awareness, whereas Perseville used divergent modes of thinking. This is a good example of where such differences have led onto further useful reflection and expansion of the respective perspectives concerning an understanding of their purpose and the sub processes which led to that.

Out of these observations, the conversation focused on two key perspectives that pertain to the value and practice of our learning processes, and how the latter translates into our professional practice in the academe. The following section presents those perspectives according to the flow of the dialogue, with the aim of demonstrating the power of engaging in a professional conversation as it leads to powerful insights and reflections.

## VALUING AND PRACTISING OUR LEARNING PROCESSES

In terms of valuing and practising our learning practices, we both found that their application in our facilitation or tutoring roles encouraged us to not simply observe their effect on our students, but also to reflect on their benefit to ourselves and the ways by which we might improve our own use of these processes.

### James

I emphasised that my role as a facilitator meant that I was trying to build on the student’s concept of their own stage of development and that the focus of my process was to get them to develop their own model of practice and development, and that their realisation of their own successful practice was more important than the extent to which it used my ideas as it built their confidence and learning autonomy.

A useful technique I often share with my students is to make use of analogies and metaphors which have more general applicability than simply talking specifics. One example I often make use of in developing a research concept or identifying their future professional practice is the metaphor of painting a picture. That is, they start by envisaging the subject or purpose of the picture and then identify through a developmental process, the players and the context as well as the process by which it is to be realised. At each stage of the process they are focused on a particular subset of the big picture. But each part of the picture is being worked on all the time, each having their own sub cycle of activity and then the whole picture being reviewed frequently to assess which part needed more attention.

### Perseville

In our conversation, I had related how talking about the value of being aware of our learning process reminded me of a recent mountain biking episode that I had with my eldest son. Whilst my son is still relatively new to the sport, he is nevertheless advanced enough to provide me with instruction. Armed with an awareness of my learning process, I tested out how I might go about learning a technical skill such as mountain biking. I found that, as with most areas of epistemological inquiry, learning happens at a quicker rate when framed within a problem-solving context. In this instance, the confirmation came from my son who was ecstatic at the rate that I was learning the necessary skills to navigate through the bike trail. Yet it is important to remember that consistency is a factor in determining whether the learner actually “learnt” something or not.

From this experience, I shared with James how an awareness of my learning process allows for a congruence between the professional and the personal in terms of learning and professional development. My profession in the academe involves engaging others in a process of learning, which I also could test and apply onto myself, in a variety of areas. From my perspective, this awareness could serve as a foundation for a method of learning that starts with an identification of a gap in our perception of the world, and then seeking avenues that could serve as solutions because they fill in those perceptual gaps in our constructivist view of reality.

## WHAT AND HOW WE WISH TO DEVELOP OUR STUDENTS

### James

The importance of a student being able to develop their own learning and practice capability cannot be underestimated. This is primarily for identifying a coherent process for themselves, but then making use of the process leading to useful outcomes that others recognise and acknowledge. This in turn provides the motivation to continue to develop further.

### Perseville

I had mentioned how my model of learning is framed by problem-solving. What this means is that for me, learning is initiated by a motivation to get a better picture of the world. I think it is no accident that James' technique of using the metaphor of painting a picture is an effective approach, because it is consistent with problem-solving. This problem-solving-as-learning framework gives new insight into what a problem-based approach to learning implies. Rather than simply referring to the practice of using problems for its own sake, it is about using the experience of problem-scenarios to initiate the search for solutions that may complete the picture of the world. This is a powerful approach because it is experiential learning, that is, it stems from and appeals to the learner's experience.

In tutorials, I usually pose problem-scenarios to help learners tease out key concepts on their own, with varying degrees of guidance from me as the facilitator of the discussion. However, I also seek to help them develop the ability to ask the key questions themselves, in order to propel or initiate a learning process. What this implies is that if learning is problem-solving, then to have the ability to pose a problem is tantamount to being aware of one's learning process. In this sense, to be capable of learning is to have a grasp of the process itself.

## JOINT CONCLUSIONS ARISING FROM THE PROFESSIONAL CONVERSATION

There are several ideas and conclusions stemming from our conversation that we find worth pursuing in the future. First, both models represented a state of our own development and understanding with the discipline, and each offered something of equal validity to others working with their models. In this field, a constructivist epistemological perspective was an aid to our exploration, our development and a contribution to the community of practice in learning and facilitation. No one model has the complete answer. Each provides insights and opportunities for further enhancement for individuals and groups operating in a social space of practice. The efficacy of these models lay not with their outcomes but in the processes which could be continually improved over a lifetime of practice.

Second, the recognition of the need for a universality of problem solving in the same way as research provides a rich area of further research and development. It appears that the lack of universality in the description of problem solving methods means that its recognition of transferability is not currently the same as it is for research and as a result its significance as a developmental capability is not yet as recognisable. The idea of a shared language of learning is the notion of a universal language of problem-solving, whereby "language" is understood as a metaphor for the process of problem-solving. Looking at James' model, perhaps its value can be seen in terms of how it is universally applicable as a model of professional development. Linking the latter idea to problem-solving as meaning-making in a professional setting, James' model sets the stage for the universality of process itself. In an academic context, research is also arguably problem-solving in the sense that it is about meaning-making, therefore paving the way for the view that these are all essentially the same process.

Third, Perseville's cultural background in Eastern learning offers an interesting field of exploration to identify other contributions to enhance models of personal and collective development. It becomes meaningful to explore the possibility of a shared language of learning, whilst comparing and contrasting some Eastern and Western frameworks.

Fourth, the ethics of developing human potential and capability, especially from Amartya Sen's perspective (Sen, 1993), is also worth exploring especially with regard to language as a contextual limitation. Considering that academic institutions are primarily aimed at developing learner capability, what happens when these institutions unintentionally become the source of limitations through the nature of language being used? What ought to be the nature of upskilling in its fundamental sense, if not the tying in of the academic with real world problems?

Fifth, and perhaps one central conclusion that can be derived from this exercise, is that the value of professional conversations lies in the process by which this dialogue is engaged in. Its collaborative nature, as well as the comparing and contrasting of approaches, employs feedback in a most effective form. The result is a better picture of reality that stems from the confirmation of one another's ideas and perspectives. Yet such an exposure to the ideas of others also allows for the potential refinement of one's own views, which goes to the heart of the learning. In both our cases, recognised professional discussions of this nature helped illuminate areas of our models that were worth further investigation. Moreover, as our own profession was that of helping others to learn, we were very aware that being conscious of using conceptual models like this with our students offered significant and ongoing opportunities of self-improvement. Recognising the importance of professional conversations, therefore, gives this practice an important place in professional development.

**James Harrison** BSc Hons, MBA has enjoyed an extensive set of careers in industry, the civil service, and Higher Education both here and the United Kingdom. This has included responsibility for the professional development of several hundred scientists, engineers and business professionals within a capital electronics company of GEC Marconi, one of four civil servants leading the UK vocational qualification changes in the late 20th century, deriving qualifications for the NZ Electronic Industry and delivering senior academic roles in the NZ tertiary sector. He has for the past 4 years supported mature domestic and international students undertaking bachelor and master's work based learning qualifications at Capable NZ. He is currently completing a part time doctorate researching professional development at Victoria University Melbourne.

**Perseville Mendoza** earned his PhD, MA, and BA degrees in Philosophy from the University of the Philippines where he is an assistant professor. He completed a Master of Professional Practice from Otago Polytechnic, researching the relationship between critical learning and problem-solving. As an academic for the past 19 years, he has taught philosophy from the undergraduate to the postgraduate levels. Currently, he handles applied ethics papers at the AUT City Campus, New Zealand.

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## TRANSFORMATION, A JOURNEY IN ADULT EDUCATION

Michael Sarten and Cushla Donnelly

### INTRODUCTION

#### You don't know what you don't know

It is not sufficient to have an experience in order to learn. Without reflecting upon an experience it may be forgotten, or its learning potential lost. It is from the feelings and thoughts emerging from reflection that generalisations or concepts can be generated. It is generalisations that allow new situations to be tackled effectively (Gibbs, 1988, p. 9).

I, Michael Sarten first enrolled in tertiary study when I was 50 years old. Cushla Donnelly became my facilitator and academic mentor; following a career change. I had been working in government as a leader, in a dynamic role for a long period of time. I had become heavily institutionalised and indoctrinated into the ways of an organisation that relied on conditioned learning and linear thinking to achieve organisational goals. Upon leaving the role I wandered around in the private sector unsure of what I had to offer and what would likely be offered to me. I started to look for work that I thought suited me, there were many job applications and a lot of silence in reply. At this point, I didn't know what I didn't know.

In order to move forward, I recognised that I needed to upskill, I needed to change in *form nature or appearance*, to transform. I wanted to reach higher places in my career but against all the advice I was given as a much younger man I had never sought higher education. In one of my later roles I briefly worked with a member of the Capable NZ team who suggested that I upskill, which would open doors and provide better employment opportunities for me. I began my journey into knowing what I don't know.

It was recommended to me to enrol in the Graduate Diploma in Professional Practice, Occupational Health and Safety (GradDipProfPrac in Occupational Health and Safety) at Capable NZ, and following that, to validate my management and leadership practice, I chose to enrol in a Bachelor of Applied Management (BAppMgt). Having not previously studied at this level of academia, I was not sure if you could teach an old dog new tricks. I had never written at this level before either and had learnt many bad habits over time. When I first started my facilitator must have been horrified at my lack of polish but with infinite patience and review in a way that I was able to understand the polish started to be applied. Furthermore, I did not realise at the time that my desire to gain further skills and qualifications was the start of my learning, my personal and professional practice would be stretched and changed through deep critical reflection.

While studying my diploma I secured a leadership role with a large New Zealand company, based on evidence of my applied technical skills in health and safety and project management. However, it was while engaged in my BAppMgt that the transformation in my leadership skills has been recognised and rewarded by my employer. I believe that this recognition has come as a result of my reflecting on my historical leadership and management style and realising that I needed to make changes to my leadership practice in order to move forward in my career. At present I am earmarked for a role in the senior leadership team on a large project, a significant promotion in my field.

My period of study was carried out extramurally, potentially a solitary way to study with no other opinion or counsel to rely upon. However, Capable NZ programmes provide each learner with a facilitator that provides personal and specific guidance and support related to each programme of study. The facilitator role became crucial, keeping me on track during my thirst for knowledge, providing balance during the replication of the learning, and encouraging the enquiry in the investigation of that knowledge all of this supporting me to transform as a person.

### **Mentorship.**

I had never had a mentor/facilitator before, I had always found my own way in the world; good or bad. Finding the ideal mentor is like finding the second scull in a rowing team, it takes patience, foresight and intuition. There is no perfect fit but on this occasion, the fit with my Capable NZ facilitator/academic mentor was spot on.

Carreau in her 2016 article at the website *Entrepreneur Asia Pacific* sums up the choosing of a mentor/facilitator very well, and the main point that Carreau identifies is that they should complement your style. Your mentor/facilitator should also display honesty and lateral thinking, they should provide you not with the answer but insight for you to find your answer; they should challenge you. Your mentor/facilitator need not have travelled the same path as you but they should be able to relate their life experiences to the path you are about to travel.

I found all this in spades with my facilitator during my two programmes of study. In the graduate diploma, I quickly saw that while we had not walked the same path our life experiences were complementary. I think that to have had the same life experiences would not be beneficial and that the learner would likely follow the mentor/facilitator too closely and not seek their own path.

The success of my relationship with my facilitator/mentor encouraged me to seek their company through a second programme of study, the BAppMgt, which I have completed. I have now enrolled in a third Capable NZ programme, the Master of Professional Practice (MProfPrac) with the same person filling the role of mentor, while I have additional support with a new facilitator:

*"The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves".*

Steven Spielberg (Cyrus 2016)

### **Knowing what I don't know.**

Having previously held leadership positions in my past employment, I was seeking employment in roles where I believed my leadership qualities were suitable. What I didn't recognise or understand was that I had no depth of knowledge as to what leadership and management meant. I had a style but had no idea of the many styles that were practiced in the role of leadership and what it meant to be a leader or manager in today's business world.

The graduate diploma in health and safety allowed me to explore my own ideas in a field that I was currently engaged in. The professional practice design and work based application of this programme provided me with insight into my chosen profession; not just learning but an applied research project that explored my profession in detail. This qualification was a great opportunity to open the door on knowing what I didn't know.

The BAppMgt, my second Capable NZ qualification was a revelation, allowing me to really explore knowing what I didn't know. It was heavily reflective, not something I am good at, due to having developed my technical skills and learned through being exposed to conditioned based learning all of my life. The BAppMgt required me to review my previous experiences and apply them to research to create a well rounded, reasoned outcome to my topics. During this course I was able to identify and explore my previous and current leadership and management qualities as well as researching new ways of doing things, which combined, have turned out to be useful in my current role and roles that I continue to seek.

My BAppMgt revealed to me who I was, I had my 'Napoleon moment' (McManus 2013). At the time I was reflecting on who I was at the start of my study, and during reflection on personality traits, I found that I closely resembled the character traits of Napoleon Bonaparte's personality and in some of my previous leadership experience I had carried out my role in a very similar manner to him. I had the traits, both good and bad of Napoleon's charismatic leadership style. Recognising and understanding my leadership style I was able to reflect on my past failures and successes; I am more aware of my leadership approach and professional practice, and how it may be received by others. My research has enabled me to recognise leadership character traits both good and bad in myself and others, allowing me to achieve greater success and deal with issues prior to them being realised. While comparing myself to Napoleon was amusing it did allow me to identify my charismatic leadership traits.

During my study, I opened a door on many other types of leadership and management both good, bad, past, present and future. In his '9 Qualities of a Servant Leader' review, Pritchard (2013) highlighted for me the value of serving before you lead, allowing me to acknowledge my servant leadership, to have served before I have lead. My transformational style, where I am able to motivate, inspire, train and lead a team to be strong and successful while still maintaining the goals of the organisation has been described by Burns (1978). These were both traits that I had previously displayed but had no knowledge of why or what it meant in exhibiting these traits.

In my research into the principles of management I was introduced to 'The Principles of Scientific Management' a monograph by Frederick Winslow Taylor (1919). Taylor's 'principles of management' had a profound effect on me. I have used his process of 'fitting a person to a position' not allowing a position to fit a person, on a number of occasions in my current role. In his writing, Taylor identified a number of other principles, such as 'initiative and incentive' where workers give their best initiative and in turn, they receive some special incentive from their employers. These are just some of the principles identified by Taylor many of which I have discussed with my other managers and encouraged them to adopt.

I also reviewed the future of management looking at the writing of Spacey (2016) identifying two styles to I see as the future of management, 'management by optimism' and the Japanese style of 'Genchi Genbutsu' (actual place, actual thing). The blending of these styles I see as the way forward in management, both of which I adopt and use every day in my role.

*"The man who moves a mountain begins by carrying away small stones"*

Chinese proverb (Truth inside of you. 2018)

## Knowing what I know.

My study has all been carried out while working on a large roading project as a health and safety manager. My role is challenging daily to keep staff safe and encourage management to balance promoting safety in the workplace while also delivering a quality product on time and making a profit.

The topic of my graduate diploma's professional project was 'The Psychology of Accidents/Incidents', highly pertinent every day in my work. My research has given me the ability to predict factors that would likely lead to an on-site incident or issue allowing me to anticipate and remedy issues prior to realisation of the matter. My proactive approach is directly in line with the view of our recently appointed chief executive and is a view that I have shared with the management team on the project.

The BAppMgt further opened my mind to the intricacies of leadership and management. In my study, I covered topics such as *Influencing without Authority*, *Change Management*, *Sustainable Practice* and the *Treaty of Waitangi*.

'Influencing without authority' has allowed me to cement my place in the leadership team through knowledge and use of the Cohen-Bradford model (2017) of 'Influence without Authority' recently leading a forum, our health and

safety strategic management group. I have lead the forum in the past but on this occasion challenged our leaders to lift their game in the safety space in an effort to improve our current level of safety using the various tools that I had gleaned from my studies.

During my study in *change Management* I reviewed the models as identified by Mulholland (2017) to identify the various methods and behaviours that would assist in the management of change allowing me to predict and counter behaviours that may be adverse in making necessary changes in my workplace. The writing of Lawrence (1969) and his citation of a study by Coch and French (1948) revealed that there are two critical considerations in change management to be considered: technical change and social change; with social change being the greatest hurdle to any implemented change process. To counter this resistance Coch and French proved that communication and participation were the two best tools to overcome this hurdle, both of which I actively use in my role now when it is necessary to carry out a change process.

Both Lawrence and Mulholland exposed me to new thinking. Lawrence introduced me to the theory of two parts to change; technical and social. I was aware of the technical change factor; but I had not previously considered the social change factor was more relevant to the worker than a technical change. Mulholland reviewed a number of authors in his article, authors such as Lewin, McKinsey, Kotter and Bridge and others. Mulholland's review coupled with the research by Coch and French inspired me to create my own model for the implementation of future change.

## Upon Reflection

I recently reviewed both portfolios from my two previous courses of study, the transformation from the first to the second was revealing. The lift in my language was eye-opening, the depth of my research and ability to link that research to discussion to create logical argument has also changed. I had been through the process of knowing what I didn't know.

Both programmes of study have given me tools that I didn't know existed, changing my knowing from what I didn't know to *knowing what I know*. However, I am not satisfied just with what I know now, academic study has opened my curiosity up to worlds that I didn't know existed and piqued my interest to continue asking why and evolving my knowing.

Learning can be a result of conditioning, or reflection allowing cognitive growth. Conditioning or instrumental/operant conditioning of behaviour is best described as learning through repetition, this is a basic human behaviour; ie; that fire is hot, learning our mathematical times table by rote or learning the alphabet. These were learning systems that I had been exposed to all my life. During my time with Capable NZ I have been asked to reflect in my learning, this was a process that I failed to comprehend at first. Then my facilitator introduced me to a paper written by Evelyn Boyd and Ann Fales 'Reflective Learning; Key to learning from experience' published in the Journal of Humanistic Psychology (1983).

Boyd and Fales, (1983, p. 100), describe the process of reflection as "... the core difference between whether a person repeats the same experience several times, becoming highly proficient at one behaviour or learns from experience in such a way that he or she is cognitively or affectively changed". In the past I would have repeated the same experience to become efficient at one behaviour; I would have had a narrow field of view. I have now learned to reflect on experience in such a way that my field of view is much broader; I consider other opinions and points of view, I look to previous experience to identify milestones in my journey that allow me to identify potential future outcomes. Upon reflection, I have been changed both cognitively and emotionally.

Bolton (2010) in 'Reflective Practice' (p. 4) wrote: "Reflection is a state of mind, an ongoing constituent of practice, not a technique or curriculum requirement." Bolton further states "Reflective practice can enable enquiry into; what you know but do not know that you know, and what you do not know and want to know...." Reflection allows us to draw from our



life experience and blend it with our research and learning to mould our conclusions into well balanced reasoned answers. It challenges our conscious to open up to alternative thinking look deep into ourselves and couple this with the answers that we seek to provide, unbiased, non-prejudiced, depth to our desired outcomes. Within my new MProfPrac learning, I continue to explore reflection in order to stretch and expand my capacity for learning and professional growth.

As identified by Boyd and Fales (1983) a learner can repeat an experience many times and become proficient in that task, that is conditioned learning. Or they may learn from their life experiences through reflection. Reflection promotes cognitive change, allowing the expansion of knowledge.

Throughout my learning journey, I have acknowledged that I need experiences, and as those experiences have grown so has my cognitive response changed. I can now draw from a deeper pool to attain greater knowledge. Cognitive change has become self-perpetuating once I opened myself to the concept.

My work within the graduate diploma in occupational health and safety meant undertaking a project-based piece of work in the workplace, where significant new learning occurred including academic and research capabilities for critique. New learning exposed me to the psychology in decision making processes used by staff and factors that expose our workforce to incidents in the workplace, allowing me to potentially identify latent conditions in staff and the workplace to prevent these incidents.

I then chose to enrol in the BAppMgt as a way to positively impact my management and leadership practice and influence change within my working environment. The challenge for me within this qualification was to find a way to gather my learning, using a reflective process cycle. The BAppMgt provided significant new learning for me; I had previously been a leader for some time and although I had developed a style I had no knowledge of what the construction of my style was. Undertaking this qualification gave my practice substance, and the things I did instinctively a name and theory. In turn my management and leadership style has developed and grown and allows me to provide significant value in my workplace.

Enrolling in my third qualification with Capable NZ, the MProfPrac, is extending my cognitive capabilities, to add further levels of learning including new models and ideas that are my own.

Conditioned learning has been a central theme of my learning historically. However, through integrating reflective practice into my study and my work, I have been challenged to cognitively change both personally and professionally as I complete each stage of my learning. I am motivated to seek deeper enquiry in my ongoing learning journey to achieve higher levels of academic growth and qualifications.

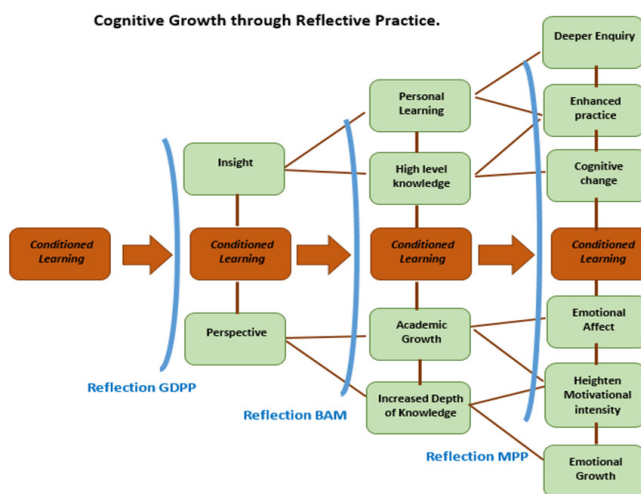


Figure 1. This model is my journey in cognitive growth through reflection, at each stage of my learning I have been cognitively changed. In the past I would simply have relied on my conditioned learning where I have repeated an action until it became autonomic response, this did not challenge or grow me.

## The Transformation

The Oxford Living Dictionary (Lexico.n.d) defines transformation as “A marked change in form, nature, or appearance”. My study has changed my form, nature and funnily enough my appearance.

My marked changes include changes in my form, my ability to seek alternative perspective on challenges, to look for depth in argument and to research to provide latitude in my final decisions in my work role. My nature has changed to allow me to foresee issues and bring them to the fore prior to them being realised, I have developed the confidence to raise issues from an informed position. My study has allowed me to take a position at the management table with substance. My appearance has changed in that I present a confident and learned person to the company, my role adds value. My desire to continually learn, improve and develop my personal and professional practice supports my future advancement within the company.

Costley, Elliot and Gibbs (2010) in their book 'Doing Work Based Research - Approaches to Enquiry for Insider-Researchers' state “Work rather than discipline knowledge has become the content and context that shapes learning that results in new skills or insights in the activity of work”. My personal and professional experiences are the essence of my learning, so I have content and context, my study through Capable NZ acknowledges this, but allows me to dive deeply into other people's shared knowledge in these fields and build a deeper understanding of the meaning of what I do. This is the enlightenment of knowing what I know, the transformation of me in my chosen career.

## In Summary

My current study is the third time that I have chosen Capable NZ as my academic learning institution. Why did I do this? Is it personal, or is it personnel? It is both. The style of study has suited me, I like the solitary study concept, I enjoy learning at my own pace, identifying the authors and topics that form the basis of my research. I am able to digest the information and carry out my research at my own speed without the pressure to keep up with my peers. Studying through Capable NZ has also allowed me to continue in my present employment which is important to me at this stage in my life.

Capable NZ paired me with a facilitator who complements my learning style very well. My facilitator has been with me for more than two years now, they have been through many life changes and challenges with me. They have been more than an educator they have been a life coach at the same time. I have changed cognitively and emotionally through my process of learning. As Spielberg says “... mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image ...” Cyrus (2016), and Carreau (2016) states that a mentor allows you to find your own answers. My Capable NZ mentor has challenged me but allowed me to find my own way to give my learning and reflections substance ultimately achieving the qualifications and seeking higher learnings.

*“Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world,  
today I am wise so I am changing myself”.*

Rumi 1207-1273 (Juma.n.d)

Although voiced by Michael, this article is a collaboration between learner and mentor

**Cushla Donnelly** works as a facilitator and academic mentor in Otago Polytechnic, Capable NZ work-based learning and professional practice qualifications at undergraduate and postgraduate level. She supports learners to articulate their skills and knowledge gained from their work-based learning experiences. In 2018 Cushla completed her Master Professional Practice (Capable NZ), where she created a model for developing effective self-assessment practice in self-leading teams.

**Michael Sarten** attained a Post Graduate Diploma in Professional Practice in Occupational Health and Safety, and a Bachelor of Applied Management from Capable NZ, and is currently working towards a Master of Professional Practice. After 28 years of varied front line policing including a role specialising in explosive entry, Michael started a second career as a health and safety professional. He is currently supporting a large Wellington roading project for Fletcher Infrastructure, as Health and Safety Manager. He is an avid boatie, and lives on the sunny Kapiti Coast.

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## BANDING TOGETHER A WORK IN PROGRESS FORUM FOR LEARNERS, ALUMNI AND STAFF

Steve Henry

I am a facilitator for Otago Polytechnic's Capable NZ work-based learning programmes. During 2019 I hosted six ninety-minute forums to determine whether there would be learner, alumni and staff interest in collaborating to share experiences, solve common problems and build collegiality in Capable's Master of Professional Practice (MProfPrac) programme.

The MProfPrac is an academic qualification but its purpose is to transform real practice – it is a vehicle for identifying new learning in workplaces and making that new learning happen in very practical and observable ways. An *'in work, for work, about work'* mantra is frequently recited. Our learners work independently, supported by a facilitator and an academic mentor. For many, their only visits to the polytechnic are for final assessment, and graduation. Isolation, and lack of peer-to-peer contact is a commonly-observed shortcoming of this programme. Learners (and staff) are scattered around New Zealand. The programme of on-line forums described here is an approach to addressing that issue.

Current MProfPrac learners (about 100), and all 250 past learners (our alumni), were invited to attend. Forums were held in May, June and July, with further forums scheduled for August, September and October, with the last forum consisting of a 60 minute discussion of the value of the forum, and its possible future.

The forums were capped at 15 current learners and 5 alumni. They were oversubscribed, and a wait list was generated. Twelve of the 20 booked for the first forum logged-in on the day. Invitations to all wait-listed participants were invited to the second forum, and again 12 logged-in, half for the first time. In those first two forums, 25% of participants were alumni and 75% were current learners.

To date, feedback has been positive. Several participants have written to Steve Henry to share the value of the forum for them. One learner summed the value up as:

"I found the connection with other forum-members grew as we went through; not just the commonalities but the differences too. I can return to my new DRAFT for my MProfPrac review of learning with a new insight into why I struggled with the first DRAFT."

The forum conversations were structured so each person could introduce themselves; explain why they chose to enroll in the MProfPrac; describe their chosen focus of learning; and state where their learning was proving most valuable to them. This short agenda enabled rich conversations during the 90-minute events. Alumni present said that while they came along as an act of service, they were delighted to receive unexpected value from the conversations, as they initiated further reflection into their own learning.

All participants were invited to complete a survey with the option of an interview and a conversation with the learner's facilitator and academic mentor; testing for learning benefits.

As the facilitator of the forums, it has been magical to witness unexpected learning initiated by others from whom the learner would never expect to gain insight into their own practice. This is the magic of groups when people are willing to bring themselves and say out loud what is often kept as a thought narrative. Speaking the work out loud appears to change this. As to the future of the forums, the initial evidence suggests there would be value in such an event becoming a part of the learning landscape.

A complete analysis of the results and recommendations for the future will be published in a 2020 edition of *Scope* (full journal title to be determined).

**Steve Henry** is a facilitator at Capable NZ where he co-ordinates research and works across several programmes at Bachelor's and Master's level. He is based in Kaiteriteri, in the North of Te Wai Pounamu (the South Island) of Aotearoa | New Zealand. Steve is a Doctorate in Professional Practice candidate.