



# scope

*Contemporary Research Topics*

**flexible learning 2**

November 2007-2017

# SCOPE

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**flexible learning 2:  
Capable**

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**Scope: Contemporary Research Topics (Flexible Learning)** is peer-reviewed and published annually by Otago Polytechnic/Te Kura Matatini ki Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand.

The focus of *Scope: Contemporary Research Topics (Flexible Learning)* is on a key issue facing higher education institutions moving into a work-based, professional practice, holistic assessment approach – how best to provide this different sort of education - one that recognises different ways of learning, the role of work integrated learning, and truly addressing lifelong learning.

**An online version of the journal is available** at <http://www.thescope.org/>

ISSN 1178-4180 (Print); ISSN 1179-4199 (Online)

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### **Special Issue: Capable**

This issue of *Scope: Contemporary Research Topics (Flexible Learning)* takes the theme of “Capable”. Capability is used in education as the basis for frameworks that describe not just the skills a person has (referred to as competencies), but the application of these in challenging situations (“capabilities”). Hence a learner might be competent in the calculation of excess staffing requirements, and be capable in negotiating the ethical and personal issues in the application of this analysis. The theme is also derived from the name of Capable New Zealand, the work-based learning and professional practice school of Otago Polytechnic. Capable New Zealand is a leader in the assessment of prior learning, work-based learning and enquiry, and the design and delivery of profession-based masters-level and doctorate-level qualifications. This academic journal publishes relevant research to record the work and academic achievements of our staff, graduates, and learners.

### **Goals**

1. Provide a peer-reviewed journal that publishes contemporary research about work-based learning and professional practice
2. Support and publish occasional book- and monograph-scale special projects in the journal's areas of interest.
3. Be Capable New Zealand's publication of record, providing a platform for learner projects and narratives, contemporary issues in work-based and professional learning and enquiry, work place activities and post-graduation activities, maintain and support an alumni of graduates, recording the application of their enquiry and learning to workplaces, communities and the broader economy.

**Submissions for Scope: Contemporary Research Topics (Flexible Learning)** are invited from academics, educators, professional practitioners, and industry. Submissions should be sent in hardcopy and electronic format by 30 April for review and potential inclusion in the annual issue to Samuel Mann (Editor) at Otago Polytechnic/Te Kura Matatini Ki Otago, Private Bag 1910, Dunedin, New Zealand and [samuel.mann@op.ac.nz](mailto:samuel.mann@op.ac.nz) with a copy to [scopedifference@op.ac.nz](mailto:scopedifference@op.ac.nz). Please consult the information for contributors below and hardcopy or online versions for examples. Peer review forms will be sent to all submitters in due course, with details concerning the possible reworking of documents where relevant. All submitters will be allowed up to two subsequent resubmissions of documents for peer approval. All final decisions concerning publication of submissions will reside with the Editors. Opinions published are those of the authors and not necessarily subscribed to by the Editors or Otago Polytechnic.

**Formats include:** theoretical frameworks of professional practice; case studies of professional practice; and perspectives.

Case Studies of professional practice provide reporting of a particular learner's journey. Articles can be written in the first person. Submissions for the Case Studies section should capture a sense of narrative, capturing the learner's journey and include the background and history where necessary to clearly outline both the problems and the solutions intended to address them. Perspectives aim to immerse the reader in new points of view from educators who are working on bold approaches to professional practice and learning. These perspectives may take the form of personal accounts of frameworks of professional practice and could describe the context of approach, the genesis of the professional practice, challenges faced in implementing and completion of the professional practice framework, and a discussion of the overall success of the professional practice framework including an effort to explain how this particular framework could be applicable on a larger scale. Perspectives may also take the form of editorials, reports on successful or promising approaches, or visions of how the future of Professional Practice and Learning might look.

Other types of articles may also be considered, though it is recommended that authors first submit a brief proposal to [scopedifference@op.ac.nz](mailto:scopedifference@op.ac.nz). All research published in *Scope: Flexible Learning* must have been considered under appropriate ethical review processes. Reference styles appropriate to the authors discipline are accepted.

Articles should be written in an engaging, literary style that is accessible to non-experts. Ideally, authors will begin by posing a series of intriguing questions, creating a pleasing narrative tension that pulls the reader along to the conclusion.

High standards of writing, proofreading and adherence to consistency through the Author (Date) referencing style are expected. A short biography of no more than 50 words; as well as title; details concerning institutional position and affiliation (where relevant); and contact information (postal, email and telephone number) 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 texts to indicate where they would be preferred; while high resolution images should be sent separately. Enquiries about future submission can be directed to [scopedifference@op.ac.nz](mailto:scopedifference@op.ac.nz).

**Printing:** Dunedin Print Ltd.

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# MASTER OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE (M.PROF.PRAC.) – GRADUATE CASE STUDIES

**Ed Bezett, Gavin Dawson and Margie Murray,  
with Malcolm Macpherson**

These case studies are products of the Master of Professional Practice (MProfPrac) curriculum: a deeply self-reflective review of learning (course one, 30 credits); the development of a learning agreement, with a literature review, statement of methodology, ethics approval, Maori (Treaty of Waitangi) considerations, and process reflection (course two, 30 credits); and a work-based project report and presentation (course three, 120 credits). Most graduates complete the three courses in about 18 months, working with capable NZ facilitators and academic mentors, and with professional workplace support. There is an expectation that candidates for this qualification will add significant new knowledge to their workplace, organisation and industry sector.

Why select these three cases? Apart from the common involvement of the junior author (Macpherson) as academic mentor, they coincided with significant inflection points in the lives of each graduate. For Bezett, it was his project management role in a major ski field development, and his emergence as a role-modelling leader; for Dawson it was a transition from a governance practitioner to an advisor and mediator (and author of a practical guide book, and at the time of writing this material, a local government officer with governance support responsibilities); and for Murray it was about generational change in her family business, making explicit a range of hard-won implicit skills, and a recognition that she had insights to offer her profession and New Zealand SMEs in general.

These three studies traverse three quite different takes on the transformational nature of the mid life, mid career, deeply reflective reframing that commonly occurs with Capable NZ's bachelor and masters candidates. They also illustrate how the attributes of the qualification's graduate profile – the generic description of what a candidate brings to assessment – can be expressed in quite different fashions. Bezett's project report was about function and process, supported by an array of spreadsheets and outcome analysis – a very 'concrete' piece of work, undertaken in a challenging alpine environment. Dawson's report was output focussed, predicated on the need for a practical guide to good governance, and his evidence centred on a description of the process, and the artefact itself – a published guidebook. Murray's portfolio of evidence was a composite of the enquiry process – the thematic analysis behind the how of making sense of primary interview data – and enquiry outputs – a package of advice to business owners with succession planning interests.

These studies also foreshadow a rich opportunity to systematically explore the nature of work-based learning as constituted and evidenced at Capable NZ, drawing from a growing collection of assessment material, from diverse candidates, across a wide range of work experiences and life contexts. It is an editorial intention that future editions of *Scope – Professional Practice* include original findings drawn from that pool of knowledge.

## STRATEGIC REVIEW OF THE REMARKABLES DEVELOPMENT PROJECT 2013 – 2015

Ed Bezett and Malcolm Macpherson

### THE GRADUATE

Ed Bezett, General Manager Operations at The Remarkables Ski field, Queenstown, New Zealand

### WORKPLACE, WORK ENVIRONMENT

The Remarkables Ski Area (RE) is located on the north end of The Remarkables range, in the Rastus Burn Basin approximately 28 km east of Queenstown. It was opened by the Mt Cook Group Ltd in 1985. The company objective was to develop an area within 45 minutes travelling time of Queenstown which is at sufficiently high altitude to eliminate (as far as possible) the lack of snow.

In 2002 the Coronet Peak, Remarkables and Mt Hutt ski operations were sold to what is now NZSki Ltd, a Queenstown consortium led by local businessman John Davies. The medium-term goals for RE in 2010 were 250,000 visitors by 2018, yield increase to \$84 per person, and \$21 m of annual revenue. In the long term the goal is to fully develop the consented ski area and to develop a new area to the southeast known as The Doolans.

NZSki is a seasonal business, with 36 permanent staff, increasing to more than 1,000 in the winter; delivering over 100 individual product offerings, including lessons and lesson packages, equipment and clothing rentals, chairlift rides, food and facilities, ticketing, safety, and transport services. Marketing is on site and online, in conjunction with Tourism New Zealand and the New Zealand Ski Tourism Marketing Network (Ski TMN, a grouping of mountain and snow sports resorts), primarily for customers in New Zealand and Australia, but also recently further afield via the Mountain Collective, a northern hemisphere collaboration.

NZ has 16 commercially operating ski areas, with 1.4 million annual visitors. NZSki is the biggest single operator, commanding on average 38% of the national market and 53% of the very competitive Southern Lakes market. However the ski market in NZ has been stagnant for the last 10 years, with most of the limited growth at The Remarkables coming from the local population growth and a slowly growing Australian market. This is a worldwide trend.

Against this background, Bezett reports that in 2013, following “a lot of in-house talk and discussion ... about developing The Remarkables”, an initial project meeting was held to give effect to a number of years of design and concept work on possible trail, snow making, lift, earthworks and facilities construction.

At the same time resource consent was applied for to build a considerable amount of new snow making infrastructure and carry out substantial earthworks to support the installation of the new lift.

Ed had been working on consenting, snowmaking infrastructure design and budgeting as well as earthworks design and pricing, and had managed the design and installation of \$10 million worth of snow making equipment, and,

he said "... could reasonably say I was one of NZ's leading snowmaking system designers and installers." He was General Manager Operations at The Remarkables before and during the development project that followed. His experience during that period constitutes the substance of his work-based enquiry. He was responsible for overseeing earthworks, infrastructure design and installation that supported the bigger development projects of a chairlift and a new base building, undertaken by outside contractors.

## PERSONAL PROFILE

Bezett is from a farming background, who by his account "stumbled into the ski industry by accident", and who says "even after 25 years in the industry, some days when I'm standing on top of a snowy ridge in the sun, or driving a groomer in 50cm of new snow I still think 'how did I end up here?'"

Travelling a lot when younger, Ed struggled to settle into any sort of career: "I used to have annual arguments with my mother about getting a fulltime job. The role I am in now was my first fulltime job, so I was nearly 40 when I finally got a real job. I had already worked 11 ski seasons prior to that, snow making and grooming.

"I have changed over time from being a doer to being an enabler, and that is where I see myself now," he says, "we have very good staff at NZSki and I see one of my roles as making it as easy as possible for them to do their job. This is one of my strengths and I seem to be able to get great engagement out of my staff.

"I have also developed my critical thinking skills over time and am now seeing the big picture of NZSki and am strategically thinking all the time about how we can get there.

"I have also made some mistakes on the way and am always determined to learn from them. I am now a team builder who has got great results from developing staff."

He has a bachelor's degree from Capable NZ, and a range of in-work occupational qualifications: he is a Senior Assessor Mentor; a role appointed to by Skills Active, the Industry Training Organisation; in 2011 he was Leader of the Year (for work mentoring staff, at the time the only manager carrying out that type of training); every year since every Remarkables leader of the year has been a direct report or coached by Ed.

## LEARNING GOALS

In his course two learning agreement, Ed specified opportunities for professional development focusing on: interviewing and researching methods; academic and business writing; understanding financial management, business development and operations; strategic reviewing and strategic planning frameworks; and the application of project management models. His overarching goal was to reflect on and draw insights from his first experience of leading a strategic review, and to develop critical perspectives towards business operations and business processes.

## PROJECT REPORT AND PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE

Brought to assessment was an extensive portfolio, including:

- financial review of the development project, with financial modelling, comparing the start point of the project with its conclusion conclude, and a comparison with the actual performance of the 2016 winter season
- a comprehensive review on the project management of the development
- an explanation of stakeholder involvement and how relationships with stakeholders were managed

- An examination of how the project affected staff, from fulltime management through to seasonal winter staff
- How the project was governed, what executive input was required, and the outcomes
- A review of how NZSki lived up to its organisational mission statement, and its vision and values statements through the development period

In attached appendices were details of the ski area (history, facilities, operating model and performance), a critical review of project management learnings, cost control system examples, a summary of Ed's project management experience at NZSki, a literature review and the PowerPoint presentation that supported his oral assessment presentation.

A financial review package (also an appendix) covered the 2013 pre-project base line, the budget for the 2013 season, the projected spend during the project and projected performance to 2020. There were also spreadsheets on: return on assets, return on equity, payback period, rate of return, and a net present value analysis; actuals for the 2015 winter season (there were questions about the influence of the first stage of the project on performance for that season. Visitor numbers and yield were up, but so were costs, particularly labour); the budget for the 2016 season (the first season after project completion); and the actuals for the 2016 season.



Figure 1. A summary of Ed Bezett's professional development, from completion of a bachelor of applied management in 2012, to a competent, capable, future-focussed leader in 2017

## PROJECT OUTCOMES, REFLECTIONS ON PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Building part of his final oral presentation on Horwath's (2014) three disciplines of advanced strategic thinking – coalesce, compete and champion – Ed used the development of the ski field access road under his management to illustrate how he planned the future vision, built a new crew with a leader and 15 staff, and raised the bar on service levels.

Leading others to think and act strategically to execute themselves, his self-managing team "... could run itself, set its own strategic goals and improve and innovate on the way it does things." Evidence of success included a road user increase of over 40%; and those that "did not like our road" dropped from 24% to 13%.

Figure 1 maps Ed's professional development. At the time of his assessment (mid 2017) NZSki's Coronet Peak field was going through a change in leadership, to be modelled on the structure at The Remarkables. Ed had been asked to spend 80% of his time over the 2017 winter helping to set up that model, including leadership of the team, recruiting and training the snowmaking and grooming team, building operational leadership skills, and developing the ability to move staff and other resource between Coronet Peak and The Remarkables to ensure the highest quality piste on both ski areas.

Also within his mandate were technical skills development at Coronet Peak and across NZSki for future seasons, identifying candidates to assume greater leadership responsibility at both Coronet Peak and The Remarkables, developing or recruiting a suitable candidate to assume the Slopes Manager role at Coronet Peak, develop a programme for NZSki to be the preferred employer for grooming and snowmaking staff, and identify and encourage opportunities to build communication and synergies between Coronet Peak and The Remarkables slopes teams

Leadership mentoring and development tasks included continue to deliver the staff leadership programme and mentoring across both Coronet Peak and The Remarkables, mentoring and development of grooming and snowmaking Head of Department, and continued support and growth of his operational team at The Remarkables..

**Ed Bezett.** Ed graduated with a Master of Professional Practice (Distinction) from Otago Polytechnic in 2017. Ed has been a Manager at New Zealand Ski since 2002.

**Malcolm McPherson.** Malcolm is a facilitator, academic mentor and assessor for CAPABLE NZ, specialising in business excellence. His PhD from the University of Canterbury was on the Environmental Geology of the Avon-Heathcote Estuary. Malcolm is a past Mayor of Central Otago District (three terms), a past member of the Southern District Health Board (four terms), and the Otago Polytechnic Council (2005-2013). He is an elected member (and past chair) of the Central Lakes Trust, a \$300m community funder in Central Otago and Queenstown-Lakes, and chairs several other community organisations, including the Alexandra Men's Shed and the board of Central Stories Museum and Art Gallery. He is chairman of Central Otago Premium Fruit Ltd – an export brand owner intermediating in direct-to-consumer social media marketing in China – and a director of Centennial Health (2013) Ltd. He is a US-qualified Baldrige examiner, and has coached and consulted internationally and written widely on organisational excellence.

## REFERENCES:

Horwath, R. (2014). *The Three Disciplines of Advanced Strategic Thinking*. Brisbane, Australia: John Wiley and Sons.

# GOVERNANCE: A DRIVER FOR DEVELOPING AND GROWING ORGANISATIONS.

Gavin Dawson and Malcolm Macpherson

## INTRODUCTION

This case study reviews the Master of Professional Practice (MPP) experience of Gavin Dawson. Firstly, the case study describes the course structure that Dawson worked through with his academic mentor. Secondly, the MPP project background, aims, rationale, and deliverables will be discussed. Thirdly, the impacts of the MPP programme will be described. Finally, the opportunities for further graduate studies that Dawson has been able to undertake as a result of the MPP programme will be highlighted.

## PROJECT BACKGROUND, RATIONALE, AND DELIVERABLES

Prior to Dawson commencing the programme, he had 12 years experience in governance, policy, and administrative roles for the public, private, and not-for-profit (NFP) sectors in New Zealand, Australia, and China. The roles he undertook over this time varied from NFP national and regional level board directorships and trusteeships, central government governance advisory and contract management roles, and policy writing and co-ordination roles for New Zealand and multi-national companies.

Dawson also has a Bachelor of Applied Management in Strategic Management (Otago Polytechnic/Capable NZ); a certificate of Arts in Politics, Communications, and Linguistics (Massey University); and certificates in Project Management and International Human Resource Management (Auckland University of Technology).

Throughout his professional experience he developed a passion for governance systems, procedures, and secretariat. His passion for these areas developed overtime, as he experienced or observed issues or problems in governance that could have been avoided or mitigated through more pro-active and robust approaches.

Dawson felt that there was a need for a range of major improvements across the entire governance sector. Firstly, he observed a greater need for the accountability of the decisions or inaction that governance allow. Secondly, he observed major skill gaps among a number of NFP governance entities in the areas of strategic planning, policy, risk management, objective decision making, and a lack of knowledge of the legal expectations and obligations of governance entities. Thirdly, there was a lack of plain English and accessible resources for guidance and information. Finally, there was a need to focus on how those responsible for the governance of a system fail to govern, due to vital skill gaps, poor governance practice, and not taking responsibility for their decisions or actions.

The final approved research project was designed to encourage high levels of critical self- reflection on Dawson's governance knowledge and practice, undertake research, and develop his knowledge of the opportunities for improvement noted above, and to produce an accessible and relevant governance practice guidance manual titled Governance: A Driver for Developing and Growing Organisations.

Throughout his project Dawson collaborated with Te Roroa Learning Assistance and Development (TLAD), an adult education and community development charitable trust working in the Kaipara Region, New Zealand. TLAD operates and delivers its services on a Treaty of Waitangi partnership model that combined Maori cultural and worldviews, with mainstream western approaches in its business as usual activities and services.

He was the chairperson of the board of trustees for TLAD, and saw the MPP research project as an opportunity to advance a number of community development projects that involved governance training. TLAD provided a strong and engaged network of community education and development specialists, and Maori cultural, governance, and Treaty of Waitangi settlement advisers.

## IMPACTS OF THE MPP PROGRAMME

- At the completion of his project, Dawson identified a number of impacts that resulted in a change and/or development in his governance practice and knowledge base, including:
- More clarity on what governance broadly involves, the principles that underpin good governance, and internal and external attitudes toward governance
- Strong emphasis on the threats to the development and maintenance of good governance in New Zealand, and a sense of urgency to make sure that governance is taken seriously and good governance is promoted
- An enhanced commitment to good governance and a desire to see governance used to its full potential, with good governance practice linked to organisational development
- His enquiry challenged and developed his previously held attitudes to governance, and strengthened his skills, experience, and qualifications
- Confirmation that governance should be pro-active and engaging, and not just a rubber stamp

Successful completion of his MPP increased Dawson's standing as a governance and policy professional. The research confirmed his belief that the attitudes and expectations of younger generations do put pressure on existing governance systems and governors, but that these new attitudes and expectations need to be reviewed and a realistic view of them established from a system wide perspective. The project highlighted the need for governance entities to remind all stakeholders that they each have a part to play in their governance system. However, limits and processes do apply and these must be respected and followed. His previous way of thinking, that governance failure was purely the fault of governors, was challenged, and he wrote " ... the more I researched topics and incidents of a failure to govern, the more I realised that stakeholders must also shoulder some responsibility, as they provide the checks and balances, and accountability mechanisms."

## FURTHER GRADUATE STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

The MPP programme provides graduates with strong framework that they can continue to use in their professional and academic life. In November 2016, Dawson graduated with an MPP (with distinction) and believes that it has provided him with the necessary skills for further graduate research.

At the time of publication he was undertaking a Postgraduate Diploma of Law at the University of Waikato - Faculty of Law, where he is studying the law of charities, and writing a dissertation on charitable entities and a failure to govern. He intends to proceed through to a doctorate level on the research topic after completing this qualification.

**Gavin Dawson** has a career in government administration working for the Waikato District Council and Te Roroa Learning Assistance and Development.

**Malcolm McPherson** is a facilitator, academic mentor and assessor for CAPABLE NZ, specialising in business excellence. His PhD from the University of Canterbury was on the Environmental Geology of the Avon-Heathcote Estuary. Malcolm is a past Mayor of Central Otago District (three terms), a past member of the Southern District Health Board (four terms), and the Otago Polytechnic Council (2005-2013). He is an elected member (and past chair) of the Central Lakes Trust, a \$300m community funder in Central Otago and Queenstown-Lakes, and chairs several other community organisations, including the Alexandra Men's Shed and the board of Central Stories Museum and Art Gallery. He is chairman of Central Otago Premium Fruit Ltd – an export brand owner intermediating in direct-to-consumer social media marketing in China – and a director of Centennial Health (2013) Ltd. He is a US-qualified Baldrige examiner, and has coached and consulted internationally and written widely on organisational excellence.

# BARRIERS TO SUCCESSION PLANNING FOR SMES WITHIN NZ

Margie Murray and Malcolm Macpherson

## PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT

Margie Murray opened her course one review of learning by noting that for her, asking what have I learned? and how did or how do I learn? could be summed up by the statement that "reflection doesn't come easily for me". Her practical, get on with it world-view was task-focussed and forward-looking. Embarking on a MPP, grounded in deep reflection, offered a lifetime first opportunity to review and test implicit assumptions and values.

Four themes informed her analysis: leadership, respect, team work and mentoring. A BSc graduate in psychology, with a BA in anthropology, Murray's early career in business administration, and her emergent competencies as a leader of people, provided the key insights and skills brought to her current role as practice manager in her family-owned veterinary practice.

In course one, with her proposed enquiry in mind, Murray methodically interrogated her professional journey, picking examples to illustrate her four themes, and applying them to a framework of practice that encompassed intellectual curiosity, observation, innate knowledge and negotiating skills. Looking forward, she modelled an enquiry that would begin to answer the central questions about succession planning, while providing her with opportunities as an advisor in that specialist subject area.

## METHODOLOGY

Small to medium enterprises (SMEs) comprise 97% of New Zealand businesses, and while 80% of owners will leave their businesses over the next 10 years, less than half have succession plans or exit strategies in place. The central questions for this enquiry were: why are business owners so unprepared; and what are the barriers to effective succession planning?

Thirteen participants from six different industry sectors were interviewed, grouped into two age groups (35 to 50 years, and 50 years and older). A form of qualitative thematic analysis was used to sort responses into nine barriers to succession planning, characterised as: finances/business knowledge; gender/age; family; how to exit; letting go/moving on; communication; time; mentoring; and staff. The relative importance of the nine factors varied across the industries sampled, but regardless of the industry sector or generation, three key factors stood out as common barriers: staff; letting go/moving on; and business knowledge.

## PROJECT OUTPUTS

As a brief synopsis of her project outputs, the three key barriers to succession planning are outlined below. In her report for assessment, Murray reported in full on all nine factors, and then discussed each, calling on relevant instances from the literature to inform her analysis.

(1) Staff factors. All participants referred to the difficulty of attracting, obtaining and retaining the right people within their business, and considered 'having the right staff' as critical to developing a succession plan (Figure 1).

identified having the right staff as a barrier, while staff relationships, attracting staff, self motivation, work hard and staff training were only identified by one participant

Seven identified feeling responsible for staff, characterising the issues of meeting payroll, and continuity of work load, and six referred to team/work environment, the concept of belonging to an entity and staff being recognised for their input, as an important factor when considering succession planning. Business owners believe that not having the right staff inhibits business growth and development, resulting in the opinion that the lack of the right staff impedes the development of succession plans.

(2) Letting go/moving on. Being able to 'let go' of the business is seen by 11 participants as a significant barrier (Figure 2). Nine participants stated that losing control of their business poses an issue. Opportunities to develop or establish other opportunities, and loss of mana, were viewed as barriers by 7 participants.

The younger generation see their current business as an opportunity to something else in the future, comparatively the 50 plus generation are often trapped by a belief that 'they are the business and the business is them'. To enable business owners to move on or let go control of their business they need to develop other interest's outside their business. Five participants also referred to a work-life balance concept but were unable to provide clarity over the meaning of this concept for themselves.

3) Finance/business knowledge. Four related themes were grouped under this barrier: business knowledge, equity, financial expectations and risk (Figure 3)

Eleven of the 13 participants described business knowledge as a significant barrier. Ten participants gave equity and financial expectations equal value. Following closely by risk. Six out of 13 participants identified fair vs equal share of equity as a barrier. Five participants consider the business value and work hard concepts are additional barriers.

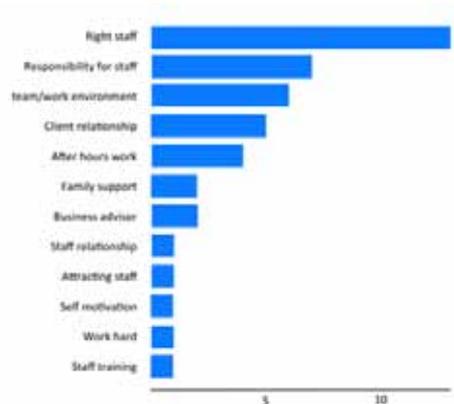


Figure 1. Staff-related barriers to succession planning, all participants. Thirteen participants (horizontal axis)

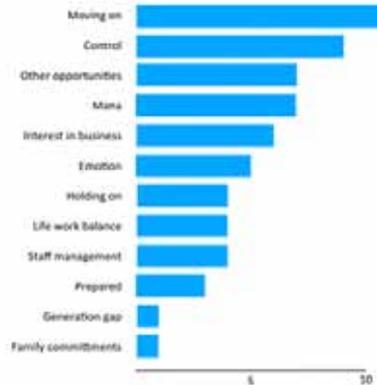


Figure 2. Letting go/moving on-related barriers to succession planning, all participants

## SUCCESS FACTORS

Drawing together her key insights, Murray prescribed the following success factors:

### Start with life planning

Succession planning isn't planning an end; it is about planning new beginnings. Before embarking on a succession plan, owners might like to consider developing a life plan – a vision for their future: what they want, where they want to go, what is important to them, and their goals and aspirations; and how they are going to get there, with timelines and goal setting; making each goal SMART, through achievable and incremental steps.

### Involve everyone

From the life plan a business succession plan can be developed, with the key people in the business fully involved, as it will inevitably affect them.

### Take advice

Engage with industry-specialist business advisors, accountants and lawyers, skilled in succession topics.

### It's a journey, not a destination

Implementing the plan is often the most difficult step. Participants should keep in mind that it is a process that has to be worked through, a journey to new beginnings and not an end, and like any life-changing process it will be difficult, emotional and rewarding at times.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

The MPP is as much about the candidate as a professional as it is about their work-based enquiry. Assessors look for transformation – of professional identity, of frameworks of practice, of capability and competency – that benefit the graduate and their work life and work place. In her report for assessment, Murray evidenced an "intrepid journey ... fraught with uncertainty, self-doubt and at times confusion" that she looks back on as "simply amazing and worthwhile."

Critiquing her enquiry outputs, Murray made two points: first, that while her data do clearly reveal the dominant factors that mitigate against successful succession planning, there is no 'one size fits all' solution – that workable succession plans are situational, multifactorial, and ideally involve all of the key participants; and second, that lifestyle decisions provide essential decision-making context.

Reviewing her emergent professional practice, Murray identified aspects of intellectual curiosity, intuitive learning, structured data-based decision-making, negotiating skills, the relevance of respect (mana), and appetite for risk (and debt), that have changed during and as a result of her learning experience.

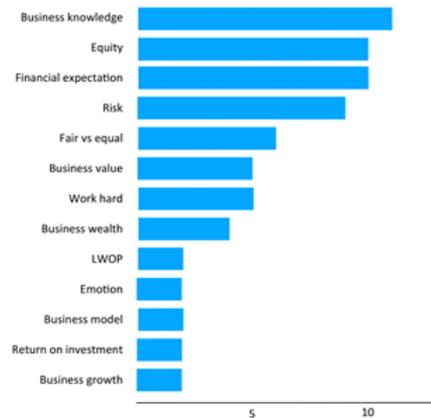


Figure 3. Finance-related barriers to succession planning, all participants.

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## THE POWER OF METAPHOR AND ANALOGY IN LEARNING

James Harrison

As I develop my capabilities as facilitator in a Master of Professional Practice programme at Otago Polytechnic, I find that there are a range of processes that are really helpful to my postgraduate students to use in developing and undertaking their work based learning research projects. The difference between this master's programme and many others is that it is focussed on process as opposed to content. These processes can include problem solving, research as well as learning.

In each of these processes an important stage is that of working with models and many students are unfamiliar with the concept of modelling and its associated processes. The purpose of this thought piece is to discuss the contribution of metaphors and analogies to the modelling process. The reason for this is that many of them are very tentative about using their own thinking to determine how they might undertake an independent piece of research as they are still bound by simple answers or answers that may be readily found. And they are hesitant to trust their own ideas and experience.

In practice, what a metaphor can do is provide a simple explanation of something that is a lot more complicated.

Metaphors in learning have been seen as significant for some time (Duit, 1991). They have the capacity to allow an unknown domain to be explored using a simple perspective drawn from a completely different field. Unlike an analogy which bears closer reference between two fields, a metaphor brings an unknown quality to its application in new applications. In particular, they have been seen as useful aides to modelling or theorising ideas in the experiential learning process (Gowin, 1983). Partially this is due to them providing links to existing schemata of the mind in generic ways and this allows a wider range of new schemata to be considered (Rumelhart & Norman, 1981). This supports the process of constructivistic learning as described by von Glaserfeld (Glaserfeld, 1996)

Metaphor and analogy are both similar and different. Again Duit (1991) distinguishes them in the following ways:

Analogy is more definitive in the sense that the likenesses between two domains may be directly compared in terms of the analogic structure used. For example, electric current may be likened to the flow of water and whilst pipes control where the water goes, so electric wires control where the electric current goes.

Metaphor is more ephemeral and whilst there may be propositional links, these are less tangible in either form or process. For example, the ocean is its own universe, implies that the ocean is very different from land, has many aspects which are unknown and some of it is as difficult to find out about as the universe.

Returning to postgraduate study and the requirement to produce a valid piece of research, one of the metaphors I find particularly useful is that of painting a picture. The value in this metaphor is that it is not threatening and comes from a time of our lives when painting and play were synonymous.

The new task before them is no longer such a mystery and as a painting was an adventure, so is undertaking some research. And so by using a metaphor the mystery of the new can be explored using a familiar pattern.

By getting them to think about the act of creating a painting and linking that to their study, they can start to see the analogy this metaphor provides:

Most importantly, the painting has boundaries, therefore analogously the research or study is going to have boundaries in terms of scope and time to undertake.

Next the picture is going to have a composition, which reflects the content that is going to be involved and the relative significance of the parts and their contribution to the whole.

They also understand that they are the painter and responsible for producing a picture that conveys a message and that their engagement with both the parts and the whole of the picture will help them produce something which is a coherent whole. Furthermore that the completed picture is representation or model of their understanding of the situation and that no two paintings of even the same scene will be the same. Also that their composition and parts will emerge as the work proceeds and their understanding of what they are trying to achieve becomes clearer. Moreover, that their solution is a unique product of their own prior learning and experience which they bring to the work rather than it being something that they have had to start afresh with.

By getting students to envisage an end point and a journey at the beginning of their masters project, they can see how this develops and changes as they progress through their project

The metaphor of making a painting thus provides a framework which enables a student to see their end outcome in a general way, but also allows them to see that this can be changed along the way as they learn more about what they are doing.

My view of this metaphor is it makes them conscious of exploring ideas in an experiential learning process and with the support of peers and facilitators, develops their comprehension of their independent learning capability and the validity of their solutions.

More generally, the use of metaphors and analogies provides facilitators with a mechanism which helps their students to link their current research work with their past experiences and learnings.

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# LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE: EXPLORING PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY GROWTH THROUGH WORK BASED LEARNING PROCESSES

Heather Carpenter and Glenys Ker

## ABSTRACT

Giddens (1991) tell us self-identity is not a distinctive trait possessed by the individual, but the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of his or her biography; a reflexive project, portraying not what we are but what we make of ourselves (Giddens, 1991). Autobiography is at the heart of self-identity, as self-identity presumes a narrative where the self is made explicit. In examining the relationship between identity, the work based learning approach used in Capable NZ (Otago Polytechnic) and the growth of professional identity in the learners, we call on a range of perspectives. This paper outlines this process and demonstrates outcomes for the 161 learners studied and our initial analysis of the data is presented here. In the process of facilitating learning which asks for identity exploration, reflection and autobiography, we find powerful examples of the strengthening of identity, the construction and growth of professional identity, and new visions of self. We can use these to illustrate these findings and inform us on the effects of our work in this educative process.

## INTRODUCTION

There is much evidence to suggest learning by experience is a powerful educational technique (Kolb, 1984, Boud, Keogh & Walker, 1985, Andresen, Boud & Cohen, 1995, Moon 1999). Peter Jarvis and Stella Parker (2007) note that ... 'learning is regarded as a phenomenon that takes place everywhere, every day of human life... it is in reality a 'major part of the incidentality of everyday life and of being human' (p.xiv). Vaill (1996) contrasts the commonplace institutionalized view of learning with learning as a way of being, which refers to the whole person, to something that goes on the whole time and extends into all aspects of a person's life. These views argue for the validity of learning that takes place outside formal education structures, and emphasises the seamless nature of its occurrence. Blustein (2014) agrees that work and non-work experiences are seamlessly experienced in the natural course of people's lives and this should be captured in scholarship and practice about working: "The optimal discourse would be one that examines the lived experience of working which is conveyed in the language of people talking about their lives" (p.8).

In academic qualifications at Capable NZ, reviews of learning undertaken in portfolio processes examine all the multiple roles of learner in work and non-work experiences— even that of the child, as most reviews begin with the early life influences. Experiences are examined, analysed, reflected on and interwoven into the current map of the learner's life. Concepts of career and work are revisited, the whole self is examined. These are the lived experiences in the language of the learner; with all the inherent influences of culture, faith, values, and learnings interwoven. Through the process of writing and reflection, the work and life journey of the learner becomes a source of understanding, a narrative of learning from all of life's sources, and part of a transformational path towards a revised understanding of self. Within this new identity the learner derives new understanding of the meaning

of their current work, gaining new perspectives of the depth and possibilities of who they are and what they do and why. In this process past work, however menial, takes on new meaning and value for its contribution to the present, community contribution is highlighted equally with paid work and a further nuance is that current work deepens in meaning as learners see new possibilities. Identity growth is one outcome, along with a new vision of the professional self, the professional identity.

Over time, the observations of our facilitators have indicated that professional identity is transformed during the course of the learners study, and this study extends this perception to explore in greater depth what the learners have experienced. This study explores the responses of 161 learners to their undergraduate work based learning process at Capable NZ. This paper first examines frameworks from the literature of identity, and professional identity. It then outlines the study and the Capable APL process, and considers the outcomes for the learners. The authors take a transdisciplinary approach, it locates this paper in the context of reflective learning, outlines this process and suggests outcomes for the learners in terms of professional identity development, career confidence, as well as the skills of continuous learning. These outcomes are exploratory and point to further research in these areas.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Identity

As noted in the abstract, Giddens' work is fundamental to understanding identity. Giddens (1991) describes the self as a reflexive project, portraying not what we are but what we make of ourselves. Reflexivity is the characteristic of the self that allows one to know both what one is doing and why one is doing it (Giddens, 1991). Autobiography is at the heart of self-identity, as self-identity presumes a narrative where the self is made explicit, and there is a capacity for the person to "keep a particular narrative going" (p.54).

In the 21st century environment of change with an interplay between the local and the global worlds, we believe there is a greater need for reflexivity. In a context of change, reflexive self-identity plays an important role in connecting the past and present of career actors and providing a narrative of unity and coherence in their lives (Weick, 1995). Trede (2012) points out that 'self-identity is developed with experience, who we are is our past' (p.161).

Our particular focus is on the interplay between identity and career: Career and identity are strongly interwoven (Cochran, 1990), with career being described as a movement through "a series of situations which bestow identity on us" (Watson, 1980, p.47). We know that career refers to more than objective pathways or movements, it involves self-identity, and reflects individuals' sense of self - who they are, who they might wish to become, encapsulating their hopes and dreams as well as their fears and frustrations (Young & Collins, 2000). Occupations are a source of identity for people of all ages; and in a changing careers environment, identity is the feature of the self that will develop (or be threatened) in response to changing and challenging situations. Hall (2002) describes identity growth as a meta competency with two essential elements:

One is the ability to seek and take in feedback information about one's self, to learn about one's strengths and deficiencies. The other element of self-identity is self-awareness, the extent to which one has a clear understanding of one's own values, goals, needs, interests, abilities and purpose. Thus, identity growth is not just knowing yourself but knowing how to learn more about yourself. (p.33)

This metacompetency forms the key foundation for effective career behaviours in a changing environment; it also underpins the work that is done in Capable NZ learning portfolios which asks for awareness of those very same elements of self-knowledge. We believe that this focus is crucial for developing professional identity, as outlined next.

## PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

Professional identity has been defined as one's professional self-concept based on attributes, beliefs, values, motives, and experiences. This definition assumes professional identity forms over time through a person receiving insights and feedback from a range of varied experiences (Ibarra, 1999; Schein, 1978).

Professional identity development involves the acquisition of new role behaviours and new views of the self. It is a systematic way of evaluating, identifying and organising the perception of self (Erikson, 1968); it can be framed within the context of social identity, or be concerned with group interactions in the workplace and relates to how people compare and differentiate themselves from other professional groups. It is understood to be dynamic and able to change through processes such as the ability to increase levels of self-awareness (Hall, 2002). Additionally, Trede (2012) explains the importance of identity for professional practice when she notes that the starting point for understanding self and others, and how a person is situated within a practice or profession, is the exploration and understanding of how one views the world. Self-becoming, as she calls it, leads to '*self-assurance, self-confidence and fosters intention and cohesion for professional identity development*' (p 162). These concepts of identity and professional identity are important to understand because they relate directly to the aims of personal and professional development that underpin work-based learning and professional practice qualifications.

## LEARNING AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Opportunities for personal reflection are critical to assist learners to extract the lessons of their learning environment (Hall & Mirvis, 2014).

This is best demonstrated in the following quote by Hall & Mirvis (2014) who note that

one of the great ironies of most adult learning experiences is that they entail the investment of considerable resources (time, effort, and money) and much learning does in fact occur - but it is often not retained because the learner does not do the final work of 'getting up on the balcony' and reflecting on the experience and formally culling out the wisdom and lessons that he or she has gained (p.214).

Established Work Based Learning programmes have long included active reflection within the core modules; this usually involves purposeful reflection on work or study activities. However, in the process of portfolio work, reflection is the mechanism for gathering and integrating the past and present experience, life and work activities and skill acquisition of the learner. Our focus now turns to explaining how we are going to explore the concepts discussed in this literature review, via our exploratory study.

## THE RESEARCH STUDY

Because the facilitators within Capable NZ had already gained many insights about this topic while working with learners, we decided to design a questionnaire based on these initial insights. The survey included questions on a range of areas, these were both open and closed. We asked all learners from year 2006 to year 2014 who had completed undergraduate study (BAppMgt and the BSS) at Capable NZ to complete the survey. The survey was administered via email to 423 learners of which 161 responded.

These 161 graduates provided survey responses (a response rate of 38%) on their learning experience after completing the Capable NZ learning portfolio process to attain an undergraduate degree. Survey results were followed up with interviews of ten learners and examination of some portfolios. Our initial analysis of results of the surveys are presented in this paper.

By examining the personal narratives of graduates, we anticipated that we would gain further understanding about the construction of the new views of self, or professional identity and the learning that has taken place; as well as note other outcomes for future exploration.

Before presenting our findings, it is important to fully explain what the process is for work-based learning qualifications in Capable NZ. Work based learning qualifications typically involve the creation of a review of learning portfolio; and this reflective process draws the learner into significant identity exploration. Specifically the Accreditation of Prior Learning process at Capable NZ is an independent learning pathway that supports learners to meet the requirements needed for a qualification; in the case of the learners researched for this study for an undergraduate degree. Through facilitation and guided task sheets learners are supported to identify the learning experiences they have had that are relevant to the targeted qualification, to make explicit the learning from these experiences. and to make meaning of this learning in terms of a 'theory or model of practice. This model symbolises how they go about their professional practice and why, and what informs them in their practice. During this journey, the role of the facilitator is essentially one of supporting and guiding the learner to reflect deeply on their experiences.

The learning and reflection process is referenced to the graduate profile, the profile for any major/specialization being pursued, the path of study and the NZQA level descriptors and degree descriptors. From life experience, work, projects, training and formal education the learner unpacks and scopes their integrated experience, drawing out the underpinning knowledge, skills, philosophy, values, and beliefs which impact on their work; highlighting those which is their work at graduate levels. Learners use critical reflection and self-assessment to undertake what is both a personal journey of self-awareness and professional development.

As part of the process the learner structures at least two or three case studies (working roles) which illustrate a range of knowledge and skills relevant to the qualification they are pursuing. As they progress they reflect and respond to a number of questions: what was my role, what capabilities and skills did I use, what did I learn, how did I learn it, how do I relate this learning to training or literature in this field, how does this learning inform my work or current practice then and today?

## FINDINGS

The sample ranged in age from 28 to 86 years of age and were at various stages of their career. Those who had finished their 'paid working life' were in voluntary/community support roles – 'giving back' to others. The 161 responses provided illuminating data on the process for those graduates, and the personal and professional outcomes for them in terms of their identity.

People tend to approach Capable NZ learning with an intent to improve their career prospects. Most are mature learners, who have significant skills and knowledge from a range of experiences in the workplace. They may have undertaken extensive training (in-house or external), will often have completed some or part qualifications, and hold senior positions in a range of contexts.

They describe themselves in a range of ways: 'I left school and got a job because I needed to support my family', or, because 'school just didn't do it for me', or 'I didn't learn 'that way', or 'I had done some study but I didn't see the relevance of it to the work I wanted to be in'. Many learners stated they were looking for validation of what they already knew. Some said they just 'took a chance and hoped for the best' that they would gain some recognition of what they had done prior. Some believed they had the skills and knowledge due to extensive experience, however had no idea how to pull that together to meet a qualification.

We now turn to examining the different stages of learners' typical reflections. The reflective work is done within a guided narrative with a number of stages: it begins with exploring early influences .

## EXPLORING THE EARLY INFLUENCES

Learners are asked to ‘unpack your early influences, beliefs, values, views of self in the context of growing up – what are some of the things that spring to mind when you take yourself back there? What was important to you? Why? What did you believe? Who were role models and why?’

An example from a learner demonstrates their reflection on early influences:

*On reflection, these values and learnings have probably shaped my world view, I guess they subconsciously continue to influence me, and underpin why I make the decisions I do, in my personal and professional life.*

More often than not, identifying with values and personal moral principles remains tacit and non-conscious (Nystrom, 2001). In this portfolio process, as illustrated by this quote, learners are asked to deliberately reflect on early experience, and made explicit their underlying beliefs and values. Their work is connected to family memories and values, embracing the personal realm, and taking stock of personal learning experiences. These experiences encompass family past and present, location, contexts and significant people who have been providers of learning.

## UNPACKING WORK AND COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES

In the next phase of reflection, learners are asked about those areas of life ‘where you have worked in and learnt about, made a difference to, had key learning and developed capabilities’... what was your role, what did you do, how did you learn, what was profound (great learning – good and bad), what came naturally and why? Where did this happen and who or what did you learn from– workplace, community, the sports field, lived events? In the words of one learner:

*I explored my values and my view of the world. I identified threads that have been entwined throughout my working life, my experiences and my drivers. It was only through writing ... that I discovered that coaching and educating were so important in what I do. My desire to change things, to step up and to influence was uncovered. My desire for a fair society that respects both the planet and those within it was teased out. .... I explored my skills. With my prior learning assessment earlier this year I have extended the range of what I thought I could do. I am now peering over the opportunity and learning horizon.*

This illustrative quote shows the depth of understanding learners are able to achieve in this process as they identify their threads of career and highlight key skills and drivers of their achievements.

Both the Christchurch earthquake of 2011 and the Brixton riots of 1981 have featured in Capable learners’ portfolios as profound learning events. Experience in sports at elite as well as community levels feature in leadership and learning experiences. In the work of portfolios, informal knowledge which may be often undervalued and ignored is investigated. Informal knowledge consists of one’s underlying beliefs and values, and the ‘tacit’ knowledge that is generated for a particular context or events. Work experiences are also unpacked identifying the skills and attributes developed over time. Knowledge and skills gained formally and informally enjoy equal value and respect in the contribution to a learner’s progress.

## CONNECTING TO KNOWLEDGE, DEVELOPING AND INTEGRATING NEW LEARNING

At this stage, learners are encouraged to think about and give voice to how work and knowledge and informal learning has impacted on them, and the connections they have made through theories and models. They are also required to consider new learning, that is relevant for their future career development, and builds on what they already know in their field of study/work/career. In deciding what to learn they identify the new knowledge and

skills that will improve their understandings and insights in their current role or aspirational future roles, considering questions such as 'what would make you a better professional? what is necessary for you to grow and develop? Theory for new learning is chosen for the relevant interests and requirements of the learner, and negotiated with the facilitator to meet both the personal interests, and professional needs of the learner, and the academic requirements of the graduate profile.

**Learner:**

*What did I learn? I learned that I knew a lot more than I thought I did, which has helped me understand my own employability – it helped me to be able to clearly articulate who I am and what I can do and why. I learned that once you have experienced work it is not hard to then engage with theory – what is hard is to engage with theory when you don't have a base to practice on (how silly is that) – being able to reflect on and understand my practice, then apply it to theories was a transformational process ... now that is learning.*

As the quote shows, the learner who discovers the integration of learning of theory and practice is learning how to learn. As Moon, (1999) comments, in this process there is a meta competency at work, the learner is learning to learn by experience.

**Another learner noted:**

*I've discovered through the reflective process that while I understand human resource processes very well, my knowledge goes much further. I'm an advocate, a manager, a business person, a communicator and most significantly an educator. By combining all of these skill sets I'm able to be effective as a leader. I also know that I could learn and develop more in all those areas. Two of those areas are of significant interest for me in my own career development, they are areas I'd like to strive towards mastery in. As I progressed through the APL process I discovered that I could write, reflect and research in a critical way.*

In the process of acquiring new knowledge, learners identify, analyse more deeply and synthesise their existing knowledge; and as they identify areas for future effort, many exhibit the desire for ongoing learning.

## **PRODUCING A MODEL OR FRAMEWORK OF PRACTICE**

The final stage of the process is pulling it all together, connecting and interweaving the themes of the learners' personal and professional life: are they congruent? do they fit? are you what you have always been (notwithstanding life and experiences and gaining more knowledge), what are the threads that form the rich fabric of your life and practice?

The process of developing a model or framework of practice assists the learner to draw on the core of their identity, as they deliberately integrate their values and strategies for work. One learner's experience is as follows:

*I was amazed to realise that my work incorporated many areas of specialised work – social services, career practice, management and leadership – I am not just a career practitioner, I am many things. Therefore my model of practice is more than having an understanding of career practice, it is demonstrating my knowledge and skill in management, my beliefs about leadership and my understanding of the social services environment. I can be defined by having a multi-faceted interconnected and integrated approach to a range of contexts.*

The quote reflects the complex insights available to learners as they reflect on and construct a current model of practice.

### Trede (2012) comments:

'Every professional has a professional identity-the question is how conscious and purposefully chosen it is. It is impossible to imagine a professional without a professional identity. It is possible that there are professionals who cannot articulate their professional values and commitments, therefore cannot purposefully draw on the core of their identity (p159).

This resonates strongly with the rationale for the Model of Practice, the final stage of the process. In doing this Model, the learners, as professionals, are consciously examining, reviewing, and explaining their professional self and their future self, and learn to articulate and purposefully draw on who they are.

According to Reisetter, et al. (2004), professional identity is the view of self as a professional plus competence as a professional, resulting in congruence between personal worldview and professional view. Integration culminates in envisioning oneself as part of the professional community.

At the end of the learning journey we hear learners indicate in a range of ways a new professional identity: they have increased in their self-confidence and self-efficacy, and they have integrated their new self -awareness into their working roles and lives. They may reference the 'new me' and the 'old me'. They have new scripts for their lives which may change and evolve, but the reflective skills and analytical process of discovery remain with the learner; to rewrite again in the future.

### Learner:

*'so I just trusted the process and found it to be an enlightening journey of self-discovery, self-awareness and huge transformational change in understanding of self and work'.*

Finally, the overall production of the portfolio brings its own specific learnings and rewards, including a heightened awareness of the connectivity of our life and work. Blustein (2014) notes that the many roles that we inhabit in life may intersect with others in both organised and random ways, thus creating a rich tapestry of life experiences (p.8) A portfolio for many learners is a visual record and analysis of this tapestry which provides tangible evidence of the 'new me' that they take forward into their future.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Through this portfolio process learners are asked to deliberately reflect on experience and make explicit their underlying beliefs and values, and they synthesise both their formal and informal knowledge bases. The learners believe they can now articulate who they are, what they do, what they know and why they know it. Our findings suggest that professional identity does indeed grow and develop over the course of the learner's journey through Capable NZ's work-based learning approach.

In particular we found the process of facilitated portfolios contains all the factors that facilitate identity growth in the individual, as it heightens self-awareness, involves a rigorous self-assessment process, demands critical analysis, and is intensively reflective. Reflecting on learning achievements can empower the learner to make intelligent decisions about how to move ahead with their learning needs. We see evidence of an increased sense of self – a sense of inner knowing- a strong *who I am, an internal compass* (Hall, 2002) which impacts on the learner's ability to choose paths in keeping with their values and purpose, and adapt and thrive in the new and different work environments.

Our findings build on the work done previously by scholars in this area. For example, Trede's study (2012) explores the skills that are built when there is a purposeful development of professional identity in the curriculum. She notes that discourse about professionalism will enhance students' observations skills of the workplace and our study also showed this to be the case.

Brookfield (2012) takes this further with the observation that sharing, questioning and resolving of observations and experiences with others acts to shape the professional values that underpin professional identities. In the Capable process these conversations may occur between facilitator and learner. A further process mirrors the Capable learning process – the asking of inquisitive questions – a powerful tool for growth and other possibilities (Peavey & Hutchinson, 1992). These questions facilitate deeper thinking and assist the learner to connect their underlying thinking to what they are doing. Trede (2012) concludes that an unquestioned practice will breed an unquestioned identity, conversely, one can argue that the self-questioning processes and reflexive practice deliberately taught in this Capable process will encourage a questioned practice and professional identity. Thus our study also highlights the important role that facilitators have in being able to draw out learners reflections....

**Learner:**

*"I think it was transformative. I think I have an increased self-awareness personally and professionally ...the transformative part of it for me was that I can recognize that my personality and my skills are unique to my way of being and I have an ability now to use them appropriately in the right context. I think that's the transformative nature of the qualification."*

While there is more analysis to do on our data, our initial findings are encouraging, suggesting that professional identity can indeed grow and develop over the course of study using Capable NZ's work based learning processes.

There is however more work to be done to look at the outcomes for learners in term of their increased professional identity over time. Further exploration could focus on a range of areas, such as the personal professional realm, facilitation processes, and exploring the contribution of this learning mode to a continuous lifelong learning approach.

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**Glenys Ker** is the Programme Leader of the undergrad qualifications on offer through CAPABLE NZ and works as a facilitator of learning, an academic mentor, and assessor. Glenys also runs her own business, Career Fit, specializing in work/life coaching and all aspects of career planning. Glenys works with elite athletes, people in transition (redundancies, career change, back to work and personal development) and organisations. She supports and coaches people in personal effectiveness, work/life balance, 360 reviews and professional development planning. She is the local Chairperson for the Otago/Southland Career Development Association of NZ. Her recent research is in adult learning and independent learning pathways and professional practice qualifications.

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## AN MPP JOURNEY OF INSPIRATION, PERSPIRATION AND APPLICATION

Alan Dowman, James Harrison and Behnam Soltani

### INTRODUCTION

This case study arises from a reflective interview to discuss a Master of Professional Practice (MPP) journey with three participants; Alan Dowman, an MPP student, his academic mentor, James Harrison and a research observer, Dr Behnam Soltani, who specialises in situated learning and social learning practices.

The Master of Professional Practice offered by Otago Polytechnic provides a student with a process based learning approach that assists their development in their field of professional practice with learning being derived from an action based research project. Each student can be supported by up to three people; a facilitator who monitors the overall journey of the student and provides generic and pastoral support; an academic mentor who provides specific academic advice concerning the structure and ethics of the research approach and an industrial or work based mentor, who is familiar with the project work within an organisation or industry sector and can facilitate the process within this context.

The following description captures some perspectives of this multiple experience together with a reflective session shared between the student and his academic mentor which was observed and commented on by Dr Soltani..

### ALAN DOWMAN, THE STUDENT

#### OUTLINE OF MY MPP JOURNEY

My Masters journey began in 2015 with my desire to achieve a significant academic qualification, coupled with the aspiration to crystallise and codify my key learnings, insights and historical processes of product development into a practical, logical Inno-ventive system which could reduce the innovation development timeframe from 18 months to 3 months, and increase the probability of success.

My personal motivation to earn a Master's was to balance my work history, including my practical business experience, tacit knowledge and innovation successes, with a formal recognised qualification.

By taking my historic automotive engineering trade qualifications and my international commercial experience into consideration, the Capable NZ programme provided me with the platform to achieve my Masters of Professional Practice, with Distinction. I chose the specialist area of International Business, with a key focus on innovative new product development.

## BACKGROUND

My 25 plus year career has been based around complex problem solving and evolving ideas in business which has created a number of new commercial opportunities, and many exciting new jobs and careers for enterprising young students and professionals.

All through my career I have achieved significant success in the development and commercialisation of innovative products and services, and led both start-ups and established business units. Two of these achieved sales revenue of over 30 million dollars each, within 5 year timeframes.

During my career, I have evolved into a practical, effective enabler; a business team builder and innovation leader. I became a specialist in bringing disciplined, yet simple and effective processes into complex projects, and honed skills based on strategic positioning of products for the highest probability of success.

## MY MASTER OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE PROJECT

My two key strategic goals for my MPP work based learning project were to:

- Take my historical somewhat disjointed processes, my latest insights, and create a new effective product development system, which I branded: the Inno-ventive FTRP Methodologies © (fast track rapid progress).
- Develop a practical system to guide a new entrepreneur; or an experienced practitioner; to create, develop, rapidly prototype, and prepare a product or service for international launch in the current rapidly evolving, dynamic and competitive market.

My initial perspective was that I would create an accelerated process in a traditional market, however an early discovery during the first stages of the project was the final methodology would actually be an accelerated process in a new market environment.

This new market is co-created with the new product. It was an emergent process throughout my MPP, and I did have to work very hard to stay grounded in the absolute reality of the priorities of today, and the future.

Many governing factors were included in my assessment analysis, including the exponential rate of technology change and the effects of having (for the first time in history) four generations in the active workforce. I established the need for a universal language in process methodologies to be the interpreter for these different minds and communication types.

During the MPP, I became very pro-active at reviewing my own original process and priority hypothesis. I was able to constructively and deliberately delve deeper; reflect and synthesise, and then repeat the exercise over a period of many months. The clarity gained at these times added significantly to the Inno-ventive methodologies which assisted me to 'make the complex simple' and be more effective.

When I approached my peers to review portions of my project, I was humbled when the feedback was so positive. As a result of one of these meetings, I was asked to be guest speaker at a regional development innovation skills workshop for young entrepreneurs and business start-ups.

Other innovation centred speaking, workshop and seminar opportunities were also presented to me. Its great fun to speak about what you love, with people who need it, and who are keen to learn.

## PERSONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Historically I always felt I was too busy to do a Masters degree. I always have done short courses whenever possible on relevant subjects. However, when I commenced the Capable NZ programme, I found everything I targeted to study could be directly applied to the business, projects and situations I was directly involved in. At times, it was a case of learn in the afternoon, reflect on application, and apply it the next morning.

During my MPP journey, I discovered immense value in the reflection phases. When my academic mentor, James challenged why and how I had come to a particular philosophy or direction, I was forced to go back and review the processes I was carrying out naturally and automatically.

This personal review was a difficult process. It was during the reflection stage of this when I realised I had operated on an urgent output result paradigm for most of my early career. This meant that I would seek broad options for a problem, adapt it to be fit for purpose, then implement it, and get on to the next problem.

This is one way of achieving traction in a project or emerging business. However, James forced me to review the fundamental reasons of why I had to operate like that. The result of operating in this manner is you create a series of independent silos of information, which was compounded as I had operated across a range of highly technical and specialised industries.

As a result of identifying what had occurred to create these independent silos of information, it allowed me to reflect in each silo area, synthesise the key insights into the essence of what could then be applied to a vast range of industries. This allowed a greater clarity of thought and perspective.

As I moved through this phase, I found that I overcame the creative tension holding me to an advanced operational level mindset and I moved to a strategic level focus. This was a significant moment in my MPP project, and in my own professional development.

The Capable NZ programme and its talented personnel enabled me to achieve these two key life goals. In particular Glenys Ker for her insightful decision to assign James Harrison as my academic mentor. James's direct experience in commercial business, coupled with his academic expertise allowed us to develop a constructive, effective working relationship very quickly.

True growth of an individual can only occur when there is an amount of challenge and reward. James had the commercial and academic experience and expertise to force me, and guide me, to go well beyond my comfort zone and forced me to address the key areas that I didn't know could be applied. One reward is the fresh perspective and ability to view new contexts quickly.

In summary, I have found the Capable NZ Master of Professional Practice programme to be challenging, extremely rewarding and beneficial in all aspects of professional life, and in many aspects of my personal life. There is now a greater degree of sustainability in all areas of my business processes, and in my personal sustainability focus. These have become very value based, with a focus on the long term rather than the short or immediate term. Cause and effect are now explored to a greater level of depth and in a broader sense than I would have carried out prior to the research component of my MPP journey.

One new area of insight is how the Inno-ventive FTRP Methodologies can be applied in many different industries and sectors. Education is one sector that I did not consider during the development, however there are now many opportunities emerging in this area.

In 2016, I formed a new business ([www.inno-ventive.com](http://www.inno-ventive.com)) based on the Inno-ventive FTRP Methodologies and my new value based sustainability model. The exciting new areas of application within tertiary education are being

actively investigated, as well as the continuing focus on commercial business, entrepreneurs, innovation teams, senior executive and company directors development.

My personal strategic goal is to continue my personal and professional development and learning in the form of a Doctorate of Professional Practice (DPP) with Capable NZ.

## JAMES HARRISON, THE ACADEMIC MENTOR

### CONTEXT

The purpose of this section is to identify that the MPP academic mentor is also on a learning journey with their student and how the interactions between them challenged and enhanced the interactions within a shared learning space in a manner that was initially identified by Lave and Wenger (1991).

I joined Capable NZ as a facilitator and academic mentor in mid 2015 and Alan was an early Master of Professional Practice student I was assigned responsibility for. What I brought to this role, which is true of most of the Capable academic staff, was significant life and career experience in other domains. In my case, this ranged over five careers spanning 50 years comprising research engineering, human resource development and leadership in a large UK high technology company, project leadership of national vocational and qualification projects in the UK civil service, consulting leadership in organisational change and qualification projects in NZ and senior academic leadership roles in the NZ tertiary education sector.

### STUDENT ALIGNMENT

A significant part of the success of the Master of Professional Practice (MPP) programme arises from the diversity of professional experience of the leadership and capabilities of the facilitation team offered by Capable NZ. In addition, the Capable management process recognises that the student learning journey is a very personal one and that it is very important to provide an academic and professional match between student and facilitators that works.

In Alan's and my case, the relationship between was effectively established by the insight and wisdom of our Capable leader, Glenys Ker, at the time who recognised our shared values, our similar histories and the fact I was pursuing PhD studies. This provided a basis for easy confirmation of a formal relationship which has since built to become a lifelong friendship.

Some references concerning facilitation and the development of my model of facilitation

The origins of modern student centred learning was derived from the person centred psychotherapy practices of Karl Rogers in the middle of last century. In order to support student centred learning effectively, teachers started to provide facilitation processes to enhance learning outcomes. Some of the factors which were identified as enhancing its effectiveness (Motschnig-Pitrik & Holzinger, 2002) included:

- An authentic and real relationship between student and facilitator that enables the development of high level of trust in all communications between them
- A genuine acceptance of the student, their background and their existing learning and approaches to learning
- An empathetic and understanding approach to listening, interpreting and supporting their student's situation, processes and learning achievements.
- The facilitator is able to assist the students to identify their motivation for the area of learning by helping them recognise their learning needs and interests.

- The facilitator encourages the use of a wide range of resources that suit where the learner starts from and wants to progress to
- The facilitator embraces a humanistic philosophy by believing in and creating an environment which suits and encourages learners to explore and develop their interests

These factors also are shared by Malcolm Knowles in his concept of androgogy as cited by (Pratt, 1993) and how the design of androgogical processes should be undertaken with adult learners. Facilitators are likely to be more useful if they also belong to the Community of Practice a learner may be seeking to join

Boud (1994) places the role of facilitation in the context of learning from experience and that all learning stems from prior experience. It is important that facilitators understand how to get learners to connect to that prior experience and build on it using learning processes that involve noticing, modelling, practice and reflection in what Boud describes as the learning milieu or context. Facilitators can help draw attention to processes and their resultant impact by drawing a learner's attention to it and leaving them to make sense of it based on their praxis.

Another area of interaction between a Capable facilitator and their student involves some coaching. This is to support students on a new pracademic journey involving research, critical analysis and reflection and recognising how their own models can be evolved from a range and combination of academic models.

A brief appraisal of contemporary literature on coaching indicates that its modern interpretation and practice is very similar to if not indistinguishable from facilitation. Whitmore (2010) stresses the relationship between coach and those they are coaching as supportive, the style of communication as being open and equal, and that the focus is on enhancing future performance and not dwelling on past mistakes. He quotes Gallwey (2000), who defines coaching as unlocking people's potential to maximise their own performance. Coaching is no longer about instruction. The key role of a coach is to help the supported person to become aware in the broadest sense of what they are trying to achieve and to enable them to take increasing responsibility for their development. An interesting perspective on the psychology associated with successful coaching is provided by Seligman (2007) who proposed that the theory and practice of positive psychology provides a good way of assessing the practice of coaching as well as a range of evidence based measurements of its outcomes.

In her work on Understanding Sport Coaching, Cassidy, Jones and Potrac (2008), refer to the social dimensions of the coaching discourse and the work of Bourdieu (1997). They contrast the traditional coaching approach of scientific functionalism and its inherent inequality between coach and athlete with the need for a more holistic approach of a professional cadre based on shared humanistic values. The latter helps to capture the subtlety and richness of the social space within a community of practice and to acknowledge the variety of identities that are involved.

The above sources and my developing practice as a Capable facilitator and mentor have provided the following clues to my professional practice and an emerging model of coaching and facilitation:

- Our style of coaching is to be a catalyst for our students to become independent learners and to optimise their personal performance
- The coaching we undertake with our students is an experiential learning process for both coach and student in both common and diverse areas of capability development
- The relationship is enhanced when the coach has sufficient prior knowledge and experience in a given domain, that they are able to provide shortcuts to more rapid acquisition of both knowledge and practice
- There is a clear moral and ethical responsibility as a professional to ensure an appropriate relationship is fostered with each student so that they are encouraged to become part of a pracademic community of practice in which courage, integrity, perseverance, reflection and intellectual humility all play their part

- That narrative, storytelling, metaphor and analogy all have a role in helping to define the shared social space and identities involved and to keep revisiting the purpose of the student's Capable journey in terms of the whole and its parts
- The need for the Capable professionals to share their experiences with each other and to continually evolve our community of practice through our personal research and development

## LEARNINGS FROM OUR JOINT PROCESS

A major part of Alan's project was to develop a new model of rapid product or service development that might be sustainable in today's environment. This has coincided with my research in my PhD for a framework that can underpin my study of professional learning. At the same time, prior work from my own MBA into human resource accounting and subsequently into Intellectual Capital provided mutually interesting areas of conversation to investigate current business paradigms and how such paradigms were and would be affecting business conditions in future. I am particularly conscious from both domains of business and education that we are seeking models of practice that are relevant in environments of accelerating change and where one can find underpinning axioms that are relatively stable. And this brings me back to what professionals do and how implicitly their functional capabilities remain stable. So from my description of a coach and facilitator above, the goal and strategy of our work with students is unchanging but our specific approaches change to suit the needs of every student.

The facilitation process was not simply confined to the process and generic outputs of work needed but also to the contents that needed to be considered. One specific insight in Alan's model of practice concerned the fact that markets in future would not so much be discovered but co-created so the mutual symbiosis between market needs and their suppliers would be achieved in partnership.

Another insight that has become more apparent recently is the realisation that the set of circular phases in Alan's model of practice of creating a product or service was illustrative first to a process of problem solving but analogous second to a learning process of a kind that I realised was fitting my PhD study. Thus more widely that a discussion looking at models in one field could analogously be used in another.

The combination of the above examples led still further to the insight that the focussed discussions we were engaged in were staircasing our personal as well as mutual understandings in a range of research and other developmental activities. This amplification process is now seen by me as a significant component of all my interactions with my student projects and their understanding of the relative significances of their components and their contribution to their whole learning journey.

## AN EXCITING FUTURE

I am very pleased to have supported Alan to a new place where he sees an ongoing learning path ahead of him. This includes taking the work undertaken in his masters on into PhD studies as well as enabling him to operate strategically both nationally and internationally in his field of pracademic expertise. This includes ongoing personal links as well as professional links with our polytechnic's work and other areas of mutual interest.

The personal nature of all Capable's programmes is building a uniquely connected community of pracademics who are likely to be closely aligned and supportive in the development of the Polytechnic's future.

## DR BEHNAM SOLTANI, AN OBSERVER

### CONTEXT

Dr Behnam Soltani is a researcher with Otago Polytechnic and shares the same staff space as James Harrison on the campus. Due to his own research background into the principles and practice of social learning, he was aware of the types of social and learning interactions taking place between James Harrison and a number of his MPP students. Given his interest and experience in this field, it was felt that his perspective on the relationship and successful conclusion of Alan Dowman's journey with a distinction pass grade in his MPP programme would be useful to this case study.

### OBSERVATIONS

It was very interesting as an independent researcher to observe a discussion between Alan and James to reflect on the MPP journey they had made together during the past 18 months.

What seems to be salient about their interactions are:

- The scope and depth of personal and professional respect that existed between the two of them.
- How the prior experience of both of them had merged and mingled during the MPP process to become a joint community of practice.
- How their interactions were staircasing their respective personal development in creative and significant ways.

James and Alan's narratives could be understood through what Lave and Wenger (1991) referred to as a community of practice perspective (CoP hereafter). Eckert & McConnell-Ginet (1992) defined a CoP as follows:

An aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavour. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations - in short, practices - emerge in the course of this mutual endeavour. As a social construct, a CoP is different from the traditional community, primarily because it is defined simultaneously by its membership and by the practice in which that membership engages.

The concept of a CoP starts with membership of a newcomer in a community. This could be through marriage, immigration, moving to a new company, or starting a new program at a tertiary institute. This process involves learning. Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999) state that we learn to function effectively and appropriately in a CoP as befits our membership status. This is a process in which the new member takes a peripheral role first but little by little and if he/she chooses, he/she moves to become the core member of that community.

### CONCLUSION

To sum up, James and Alan's relationship are understood through the membership of both Alan and James in the Capable NZ program. Both Alan and James belonged to Capable NZ community of practice, one as a candidate in a Master's program and the other as a facilitator. They both relied on their industry background and their current academic exercise to establish rapport early on in the process. They both had a shared interest and mutually engaged in an act of learning and reflection throughout their MPP program particularly through staircasing each other's learning. In this relationship, James socialized Alan into the practices of the MPP program where he could meet the expectations of a Master's degree in Professional Practice. Likewise, James learned from his own interactions with Alan and advanced his own thinking towards creating a model of learning for his own PhD studies.

**Alan Dowman** has a Master of Professional Practice – International Business with Distinction from Otago Polytechnic. He is also CEO of Inno-Ventive.

**James Harrison** BSc Hons, MBA has enjoyed an extensive set of careers in industry, the civil service, and Tertiary Education both here and the United Kingdom. This has included responsibility for the professional development for more than 2000 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 the NZ qualifications for the NZ Electronic Industry and delivering senior academic roles in the NZ tertiary sector. He is currently undertaking a part time PHD in Experiential Learning at Victoria University, Melbourne and acting as a facilitator and academic mentor in the Masters in Professional Practice programme at Capable NZ, part of Otago Polytechnic.

**Behnam Soltani** is a Lecturer at the Otago Polytechnic Auckland International Campus. He has a PhD in Applied Linguistics.

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# HEATH TE AU, BACHELOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES

## Heath Te Au with Trish Franklin and Phoebe Eden-Mann

This learner profile explores Heath's life, and his experiences within Capable NZ. Heath's early childhood that was marked with fear and mistrust, but also moments of unconditional love. These early childhood experiences would undoubtedly influence many future life decisions. In a home that was immersed in a culture of violence, there was also glimpses of positivity and love; Heath's Grandfather, for instance, was quite a character, and was an extremely positive role model, who taught Heath to question everything, which is a lesson that still resonates today. Although there was much harm done at the hands of Heath's Father, through him, he did give the connection to the people of this land. Heath's Great Uncle George Te Au, was Kaumātua of Murihiku and Te Rauaroaha, he was highly regarded Kāi Tahu rangatira, and it is because of this, that the name Heath shares still holds a lot of his mana.

High school wasn't a pleasant experience, and upon leaving, Heath began a job at the local aluminium and glazing window firm. As a young 15 year old, Heath had to adapt to hard work, and living in the working man's world. 5 o'clock meant tools down, glasses up. For the first time, Heath felt accepted and part of a group. Before long, Rodgermomics took its toll, and the firm was closed. The team Heath was part of got moved to the Clyde Dam site, which is where a life altering event would take place. Heath was involved in an accident with a concrete cutter. This near fatal incident was to be the catalyst for many decisions later in life. Heath's first experience with the opiate drug, Morphine was a result of this accident. Soon after this, Heath left his job, realising that although they were being paid good money, it was due to the highly dangerous nature of the work. Work that Heath no longer felt comfortable doing.

Heath soon moved to Invercargill with his first real love interest. It was here that he began playing music with people that he had met through her. He was a natural on drums, and this led to joining a band, and then a better band, and then a reasonably professional touring band. This lifestyle suited Heath, the travel, the excitement, and especially the drug taking rock 'n' roll culture. The stage life empowered Heath, he wasn't hiding in the shadows. In a relatively short period of time, Heath's relationship ended, and he became involved with a group that ended up with a needle in his arm; Heath's past experience with Morphine had come back to haunt him. During the early 90's, he was part of the resident band at Sammy's night club in Dunedin, was involved with many local musicians, and was a part of various studio recordings, and performing projects. The world of the original music that was the 'Dunedin Sound' was quickly adapted to, and Heath was soon heavily immersed; there was a darker drug scene that was lurking in the shadows, one that was as attractive to Heath as the music. Soon he was in recording studios, touring, travelling, and making records; Heath was living his dream.

Due to increasing drug use, productivity was slow from about 1997-onwards. Contact with very concerned friends decreased, as a full on opiate habit took control. To fund this habit, Heath began to see off his vast collection of musical instruments. Many of these instruments were his touring, gigging, and recording companions, and were sold in exchange for whatever drugs were available. Concern from family and friends was only growing.

Before long, rehab came in the form of a court order, and three days before graduation, the Police arrested Heath for outstanding drug related possession charges. The courts were not as lenient this time, and after a three month stay in Dunedin Prison, he was sentenced to a six month rehab in the Bay of Plenty. Final day of rehab was April 1st, 2000 (an irony that is not lost on Heath). After arriving back in Dunedin, Heath's first priority was getting his name

down for Methadone; he wasn't quite ready to stop, but didn't want to continue appearing in front of a judge. It was during this time that it became apparent that Heath's band, Cloudboy, had returned to Germany to pursue their dreams; in Heath's own words, "It wasn't them being demanding. It wasn't people expecting too much, no one was in my face. It was me. They had left to follow their dream because I had left them long before. When I think about what my addiction has cost me, at the top of the list is the trust I took from my friends. For this I am truly sorry and words like this do it no justice at all".

Whilst on methadone, Heath completed treatment for the Hepatitis C Virus. It was unsurprising that Heath had contracted Hep C from the intravenous drug scene. Following successful treatment, Heath was offered a support role at the local needle exchange to help other people going through Hep C treatment. This role was a turning point for Heath, and was the main motivator in the decision to come off methadone. "Getting rid of Hep C gave me a reason to live, helping other IV addicts find this empowerment gave me a reason to fight". Christmas, 2008, was when Heath stopped methadone, and he is now nine years sober. Those three months of withdrawal were brutal, and Heath earned every moment of his sobriety. By throwing himself into his role as a Hep C advocate and educator, Heath began to slowly feel more human again. Funding was secured from the Ministry of Health for the Hepatitis C Resource Centre, and he even had an employee!

It was around this time that Heath received news that he was to be a Father; and on July 20th, 2010, Lulu, was born. Life would never be the same, it wasn't just about Heath "It was all about her".

Part of Heath's role at the Hep C Resource Centre was going out to the Otago Corrections Facility, and talking to the inmates about blood borne viruses, and blood safety. In 2012, he was offered a position at the Drug Treatment Unit, as a programme facilitator and addictions counsellor. During this time, Heath was also studying towards a degree in social services. Heath has been at the Drug Treatment Centre since 2012, and loves working with clients, considering it to be a true privilege. This year, Heath aims to achieve his goal in obtaining his qualification. He has surprised himself in what he has achieved in life with study and working commitments.

Heath sees himself as a work in progress and is proud of himself for not falling into old patterns from years gone by:

*I used to run. I'm now standing still. Learning to accept the benefits of remaining grounded, and to accept the things I cannot change".*

Heath's experience with Capable NZ is best said by him "My first interaction at Capable NZ was with Trish Franklin, who as it turned out would walk me through the entire process until my graduation. Trish was an absolute treasure. We had regular meetings that were relaxed and constructive. This was probably the most helpful time during my entire study path. Constructive reflections and feedback on material I had previously sent and an objective view of ideas to help meld it all into a single body of work. I'd spent a few years studying upstairs by this point, but the concept of having everything in my portfolio blend into each other I did not truly understand until I met Trish. I cannot express enough the positive result this has had on how I now approach programme and parole report writing.

*For me this was the true measure of my time with Capable NZ: A higher professional standard that in all actuality I probably now take for granted.*

With the completion of my degree through Capable NZ, a postgraduate study path in Health Sciences at the University of Otago presented itself. And that ability to write flowing and succinct reports served me well, especially within the high-stress moment of a 400 level written exam.

*Would I recommend Capable NZ? Absolutely, I have and I do. In my opinion Capable NZ is the professional standard in applied qualifications."*

Heath Te Au BSS(dist.), PGCertHSc(ADCO)

## REFLECTION AS A LENS FOR A LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

Andy Thompson with Samuel Mann

### INTRODUCTION

This paper is a reflection on my application of a methodology for learning and research I (first author) undertook for a Master in Professional Practice (MPP;Thompson 2017).

My research methodology is described as a hybrid of auto-ethnographic and qualitative. For me this means a reflective process provided a lens through which to view the research I was undertaking. It provided a bridge between a formal survey “project” and the work-based experience and reflection evidence that combine to form the basis for the findings and recommendations. In this way, a triangulation of the different sources of information provided a validation for each other:

The MPP is one of Capable NZ’s suite of Professional Practice post-graduate qualifications. It provides an integrated learning and research pathway for experienced practitioners. The goal is an advanced professional framework of practice, articulated in a “practitioner thesis” where the defensible argument is that professional framework of practice. The process starts with a review of learning that leads to stating the learner’s aspirational framework of practice (eg: “to become a thought leader in values driven software development”). This is paired with an organisational practice goal (for example “to create a culture of values driven software development”). The main work then becomes the professional development thread, interwoven through reflective practice to the work-based professional practice change (usually formally described as “autoethnographic action research”). Learners are supported by academic and professional mentors. The graduate profiles for both the MPP is written in terms of higher levels of thinking in a post-disciplinary sense, rather than for specific disciplines.

As the MPP is future focused and is not guided by any particular disciplines’ extant body of knowledge, learners are required to create new research, employing an autoethnographic approach to research (Otago Polytechnic 2017). Autoethnography is an established research method based on the researcher engaging in “autobiographies that self-consciously explore the interplay of the introspective, personally engaged self with cultural descriptions mediated through language, history, and ethnographic explanation” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 742). Autoethnographies are increasingly being seen as a valuable learning and teaching tool (Golkowska 2015). Autoethnography allows learners to collect, analyse and interpret self-narratives and this approach “provides an accessible and engaging introduction to research, since it fuses the roles of the researcher and subject into one” (Golkowska 2015. p. 369).

Within the framing of autoethnography, the methodology of undertaking the practice development project must suit the context. Hence the reflective-based practices of autoethnography act as a shell for the specific work-based research methods. In this case, the framing can be considered as a series of nested processes as demonstrated below:

## Development of Andy as Leader

### Development of Learning and Leading Model

Qualitative survey of learners on outdoor leadership programme.

This means a matryoshka doll approach to research but with different research methods in each layer. These layers are, of course, not independent, and work-based learning has to deal with the vagaries and complexities of the work environment, so there must be a “relative pragmatism” (Portwood 2007) to the research methodology.

In the remainder of this paper we examine three examples of how this nested research process worked in practice. Some background on my journey and research questions are given for context. This paper doesn't present detailed survey/interview methodology or overall results of this research but rather focusses on the relationship between the qualitative and ethnographic approaches.

### WHO IS ANDY?

Because the MPP is about the development and articulation of a personal professional framework of practice, the perspective of the learner/researcher is paramount. Hence the practitioner thesis includes a substantial personal self-reflection and review of learning. I summarise this here to give context for the reflective aspects of the case studies that follow.

I have worked in the outdoor education industry since 1987. In this time, I have completed my Post Graduate Diploma in Outdoor Education. I hold New Zealand Outdoor Instructors Association (N.Z.O.I.A.) qualifications at level 2 in Alpine, Rock, White Water Kayak, Sea Kayak, and Bush and assess at a national level. I have chaired two national qualification and tourism associations and contributed to varied tertiary groups for a targeted review of qualifications and internal committees. I presently work for the Otago Polytechnic as a Principal Lecturer; Programme Coordinator; Outdoor Education Facilitator; running a two-year Diploma in Outdoor Leadership and Management (DOLM), Level 5. I am involved with developing leadership programmes for the Otago Polytechnic and sit as a staff representative on the Leadership Council.

What interests me is being able to develop people's emotional and cultural intelligence, their personal resilience and helping people grow their potential. I believe this is a vital part of leadership development. I continually reflect on my teaching career and reflect my effectiveness and the validity of leadership training. Often throughout this time, there are days where reflection and analysis of performance are completed. However, moreover, it is forced when you have not done very well. When your day has been fantastic, a sigh of relief exhales, and you move on. I am interested in how we prepare learners for future authentic leadership that enables them to make decisions based on values and ethics that benefits the greater good, especially when their days do not always go so well or suffer the 'school of knocks'.

What attracted me to study via the MPP was the professional practice study. Work-based study suited me as fundamentally I wanted to challenge myself not only with my teaching and education background, but I also wanted to gain a deeper understanding of my teaching pedagogy.

### WHAT WAS MY PROJECT?

While not the focus of this paper, it is useful to understand the context for this research. The MPP research endeavoured to investigate what works for the learner's personal leadership development in a tertiary education setting. I wanted to explore the application of leadership skills learned within leadership training into participants' professional and personal lives. The purpose of the study was to comprehend a learner's perspective on leadership

training. Also the influence and effectiveness of leadership training and create or enhance a framework which facilitators could use to aid participants in transferring the leadership learning. As a facilitator, I also hoped to inform my facilitation of personal leadership training to improve its effectiveness at Otago Polytechnic.

Personal leadership development occurs in an array of complex and intricate ways and what works for learners is not a 'one size fits all' answer. Leadership evolution is moving fast, and if humans are to co-exist in this world, we need to emerge our thinking to keep up the nuances of leadership in the 21st century. To be a great leader, it takes a constant consciousness of developing emotional and cultural intelligence within the confines of the surrounding social structures (Van Heerden 2010, Fredrickson 2013, Sinek 2014).

Leadership research is wide ranging. Personal leadership development is one aspect and has been around since humans first existed, and indigenous cultures have continually found leadership styles to suit their cultures (Sveiby, 2009). However, there is little research starting the initial view from a learner's perspective, asking what works for learners? Then considering what synergies, key components and relationships between facilitator and learner at a tertiary level are key to successful personal leadership development.

This research provided scope to explore a perspective from the learner and enabled me to listen to what the learners saw as the key things of leadership, what worked to help them explore this topic and how they utilised their learning into their personal and professional lives.

## CASE STUDIES

The goal of the MPP research, then, was to investigate personal leadership development from a learner's perspective and looks at a model that will help both facilitator and learner in their leadership relationships. The methodology capitalises on the intellectual capital as a professional outdoor facilitator, instructor and guide (Costley, 2001) by applying the principles of work-based learning.

In the following sections we present and discuss three case studies that illustrate the relationship between the survey and the reflection. The research was approved by Otago Polytechnic Ethics Committee with consent for use of quotes in the thesis and subsequent publications. Individuals' names are not real.

### CASE STUDY I

In this first case study we present a section from the practitioner thesis that considers preconceived leadership perspectives.

During the interviews, the participants discussed what they had done before coming onto the leadership training programmes. The participants identified and acknowledged that they came with some level of preconceived ideas about leadership. For example, Katrina says,

*"I googled, and I read about leadership but what I was understanding was not true or not what I thought after the course".*

Another participant, John suggested,

*"I used to think of leadership as being, ... the top dog and loud and ... the assertive leader. But I definitely learned that there's- ... different leadership styles..."*

Katrina goes on to discuss how her preconceived ideas of leadership have now shifted towards a more contemporary style of leadership. These preconceived ideas were about job title and hierarchy, but she has now discarded these. She states:

*"prior to the programme I thought it was a job title and it was about authority... but after I finished the program ... that is completely wrong that there is no such thing like authority there is no such thing as like hierarchy if you are talking about true leadership these things don't even really come into play".*

True leadership, from what Katrina discusses is about being on a level playing field between people, where there is little or no hierarchy with the system.

### **Reflection**

Observation and reflections suggest that there is still a predominant culture of people who believe in a more hierarchal style of leadership. Someone who predominantly leads from the front can create a higher perceptual status and can promote a higher level of knowledge than others in the group. Instructing and guiding in an outdoor environment often demands the guide or instructor be in this situation, where he/she may have to lead from the front. Also, they may often have the greater experience and knowledge about the particular subject area. Comments from Katrina and John's preconceived ideas on leadership provide evidence throughout the data.

This ideology of the Great Man leadership theory may create a culture where the learners are looking towards that particular person to be the fountain of knowledge and lead from the front at all times. Over the years of teaching in this field, through reflections, it has been my observation that the DOLM and Leading Frontiers programme has become about empowering learners to take responsibility and become leaders within a team. This process takes time, as they build their experience references, and discover how to become leaders within a team and not rely on just one person to lead yet also understand their own social structures and emotions.

My reflective notes and feedback data from both leadership programmes constantly refer to the learner's perspectives and what they observe of the people in these roles. Reflective data suggests this is a challenging and daunting responsibility to have for facilitators. It always astounds me how facilitators, instructors, and guides are observed by learners. Even when not fully engaged with the learners, and facilitators are in the background. Like a celebrity without the monetary wealth, fame, or ego the facilitator must remain humble and grounded, to understand themselves, be self-aware and have a good understanding of their values. It is important to be able to demonstrate these on a daily basis. The level of emotional intelligence a facilitator must have, and role modelling is ongoing.

## **CASE STUDY 2**

The impact of role models and transitions are considered in this second case study.

The facilitator plays an important part for the learner as a role model. The participant's responses suggest that the facilitator's teaching style can have a big effect on how the learners learn. It is evident by Diego's conversation when asked what effect the facilitators made in his learning experiences,

*"...watching the coordinators and lecturers running the course and how they are a lot of the time being leaders, but step back leaders. ....the biggest learning curve, leadership for me is watching ... people who are teaching at a place at the highest level of leadership, being leaders without you realising that they are being leaders".*

*"...practicing watching the instructors, cos they are, you know your role models and just watching their technique and just thinking ah, they do it like that, I'll try that next time and just tips and stories from instructors from their life experiences like the stories that they can pass on where they may have been doing something wrong and they learn the hard way and had a nasty experience..."*

Participants described transition of perspectives from training to professional or personal life. The participants suggested that there are many types of leadership styles outdoor education facilitators use to present leadership training. Often this is synthesised over a period, as they develop their experiences and discover what suits them. Fred acknowledges the range of styles an organisation needs by his comments,

*"Recognising that we have different leadership capabilities, skills and styles, ... relative to need, time and context, and recognising also, and that impacts on me, ... We need leadership across a raft of areas....Recognising that about myself changed the way I behaved in my management role... emotional intelligence I think it's fundamentally sprung out of empathy for me, understanding, respect".*

Robin talks about her leadership skills transitioning into her personal life and compares this with her work environment,

*"where's [my husband's] strengths [are] in other areas with Henry [her son] that I don't necessarily have. ...so he takes the leadership on those things and so together as a team everything is running really smoothly. Sometimes I have to give him a bit on an elbow, but that's ok. And that is the same in a work environment".*

## Reflection

My reflective notes and feedback data from both leadership programmes constantly refer to the learner's perspectives and what they observe of the people in these roles. Reflective data suggests this is a challenging and daunting responsibility to have for facilitators. It always astounds me how facilitators, instructors, and guides are observed by learners. Even when not fully engaged with the learners, and facilitators are in the background. Like a celebrity without the monetary wealth, fame, or ego the facilitator must remain humble and grounded, to understand themselves, be self-aware and have a good understanding of their values. It is important to be able to demonstrate these on a daily basis. The level of emotional intelligence a facilitator must have, and role modelling is ongoing.

It has been my observations that as time progresses and leadership training becomes a memory, graduates experience recall filtered on how they perceive role models. Specific detailed encountered learning's, reflections and particularly emotional reactions evolve, and they tend to remember either the best or worst bits, which have been a significant part of that training. Also, there are particular times that resonate with whom they see as their role models more than others. Just when these occasions occur tend to depend on what state of mind, and what emotional triggers or memory hooks that are at play at the time (Beard & Wilson, 2006). For example, often the time spent away allows people to get to know each other better. When waking up in the morning, there is a rawness about sharing a living space with your peers or colleagues that day programmes cannot provide. This intense living can show the true colours of role models and how they truly live their values.

From my observations, having being involved in outdoor education since 1988 as either a learner, facilitator/ instructor or guide role, these complex interactions require conscious effort from both sides – after all, it is about 'relationships'! Understanding the power plays between teacher–learner is critical for a facilitator. I have experienced this variation on many occasions. The spectrum from feeling safe to feeling very guarded in being able to express opinions and thoughts that would or would not contribute, and would or would not help to learn development. This power differential can go either way. For example, an abseil session, and encouraging a person over the edge, when they are terrified. This relationship steps into a 'grey zone' where it can go extremely well or significantly poor. Another example is in kayaking when a person is terrified about capsizing. In my reflection, I had had clients commenting on bad experiences they had at school, where they were not given appropriate progressions and felt trapped when they went upside down.

### CASE STUDY 3

In this third case study we present a section from the practitioner thesis that considers the role of challenge and Building Psychological Resilience.

Katrina observed from her learning's,

*"you pushed us in a way that forced us, like not forced us, but guided us to maybe challenge ourselves ...."*

It is evident that the power of the instructor/facilitator or guide plays a significant role to affect the learner's direct long-term outcome. Moreover, the ability to keep facilitation at level with the learner is important for a learner's development. The following comment from Fred emphasises how important the relationship between teacher – learner is to learners,

*"Reading learner' needs [is] really good understanding of how to read people and what works for them. Uh so I think that, I think that they are all really good at [it] and the same for yourself".*

To allow learners to flourish and feel like they can explore new boundaries the data from interviews indicates the importance of creating a safe culture. The importance of an open, respectful, honest relationship was key for Fred as he said,

*"I think the facilitation was very respectful, very open and very encouraging and very comfortable so I felt safe. ... Feeling secure and safe is actually an important part of any facilitation".*

Fred also goes on to comment that,

*"...what it helped me to do was actually be open in front of a bunch of people who would then respond and say no actually you're full of shit." "... It was very open and everyone was free to speak..."*

However, when the facilitator(s) are not working so well this also can have a negative impact on the learner: Katrina notes that,

*"I think that there was a little bit disconnect ... I can't 100% explain how or what was that but there was a little bit disconnect..."*

The relationships importance is emphasized from Sierra's comment, "I think by not having a friendship with the instructor, could put a barrier up...". Moreover, John points out that the relationships between people on the training programme play an important part on learning by saying, "it was the people that I met, it was the group of people that I was with for sure, that had the biggest impact".

It was evident from the data analysis that the relationship development between people on the programme is critical to a successful outcome. People on course were people they would work with in the future, develop potential long lasting friendships and be able to learn from in the future. John also said,

*"We got really close and they were the ones... We'd be going out on trips with and we'd be, you know, getting to know them as well as like, you guys, as our instructors, you know we were learning lot from you guys. Everything that was learning was you know filtered through you guys so for me that was a really big part, was the people that I was around...It's important to be amongst good people, because you become your environment".*

There were many references to the importance of peer/facilitator programme relationships. In fact, it could either make or break a programme, where a connected culture between peers was critical for many elements of sharing ideas thus creating an environment so learners felt safe to explore their ideas.

## Reflection

**On Pushing the Personal Edge:** The programme pushes people, and my reflective observations mirror this comment. When learners have been facilitated to push to their edge, although initially, they may struggle, complain or grizzle, if facilitated well the results can be astounding for personal growth.

**Hierarchical leadership:** In my reflections, operating and training in a group of people and being faced with making leadership decisions can be a leveller for people who may value hierarchical leadership styles or perceive leadership should be run from the front, and by one person. I have observed that leadership training that encourages self-leading teams and high performing teams, this type of training can deep end learners that value the hierarchical leadership structures. They can often flounder, get frustrated and lack the understanding of how to operate. I have observed most people eventually make a shift in their perceptions once they have the time to reflect and understand the rationale of contemporary leadership. Ultimately they also need to gain the intrinsic motivation to change their lens on leadership. On reflection, it is important for a facilitator to develop an awareness of participant's mindset on leadership as this may or may not influence the outcome of their training.

**Power:** From my observations, having being involved in outdoor education since 1988 as either a learner, facilitator/instructor or guide role, these complex interactions require conscious effort from both sides – after all, it is about 'relationships!' Understanding the power plays between teacher–learner is critical for a facilitator. I have experienced this variation on many occasions. The spectrum from feeling safe to feeling very guarded in being able to express opinions and thoughts that would or would not contribute, and would or would not help to learn development. This power differential can go either way. For example, an abseil session, and encouraging a person over the edge, when they are terrified. This relationship steps into a 'grey zone' where it can go extremely well or significantly poor. Another example is in kayaking when a person is terrified about capsizing. In my reflection, I had had clients commenting on bad experiences they had at school, where they were not given appropriate progressions and felt trapped when they went upside down.

**Teaching Styles:** Everybody who teaches in education will develop their teaching style. From observations of other educators, they had their styles that I have taken learning from and noted as styles that may resonate with me. This learning and collection of data can be subtle or pronounced.

**Professional Delivery:** I note fronting up for a programme no matter how you feel, you must deliver consistently and professionally. The power of observation from learners is strong. There are times when life gets on top of a facilitator, and it is tough to provide a front that does not show the strains of life.

**On Programme:** It is at the coal-face where the interactions occur between facilitation and learner and from my observations it is a critical time for this relationship to flourish. It can have a massive impact as to the success or level of learning for future outcomes.

As each of these case studies demonstrate, this integrated method allowed me to think about what the students said and to relate this to my own experience and practice.

## DISCUSSION

The case studies and reflection on practice were used to develop a model of Facilitator/Learner Leadership Development Model. This model is not discussed here, but it has been put into practice. These models could help future practitioners with their programme development and implementation so as to better serve learners undertaking outdoor/leadership training. Of note is that the integration of reflective material continued in the exploration of that model.

Upholding your professional time management is important in any employment situation, however, imposing that onto learners is another matter. The key though is to ask, as an educator, why am I doing this? Is this effective teaching?

During my MProfPrac journey, I developed the ability to demand a high level of punctuality from my learners, albeit blended with more empathy. Blending an empathetic ear with the intent to understand why a learner may be late to class, that is, just taking the time to listen to them, is part of a facilitator's responsibility to understanding a learner's journey. As simple as it may sound, when you are attempting to deliver a professional programme and wanting to instil high levels of time management, it is challenging to have learners arrive late. I still hear educators rave on about time management, which I now gasp at (in my mind) as to how incoherent and aggressive it sounds. It sounds angry towards learners and I believe can provoke a parent/child punitive relationship. The result is the learner turns off, only listens to what they need to and there is a degradation of genuine educational relationships between the facilitator and learner.

Learning junctures are the gold! They are the place where both learners and facilitators make adjustments to what they know, where they wrestle with conflicting interpretations, and where they draw selectively on previous experiences to deal with the uniqueness of the present situation (Brown, 2010)

In addition to practice implications, the research moved the frontier of knowledge in that it contributed knowledge and was able to be used to make recommendations for future research. Suggestions for future research include longitudinal study of learner experiences and factors associated with effective and ineffective leadership training.

In my thesis I described areas of limitations of the research - this is usual practice, to put bounds on the generalisability of the findings. These included the length and scope of the research, and my connections with the participants - that I had previously taught them on the programme in question. However, on reflection I now wonder if I was being too harsh on myself. In describing the research as being "conducted over a short term" I excluded my 30 years of experience as contributing evidence. Similarly, where I described the research as being "not a purist scientific study", rather being qualitative, I neglected the importance and validity of my own reflections. I hope that the current paper will provide an example to future MPP learners as to the value and validity of this blended approach.

This statement, from my thesis conclusion, while mentioning "considering" is unfortunately missing the critical role of learning from my own experience via reflection as informing that consideration:

*"This study was about finding out what works for learners. It was about listening to the learner's voice and considering how this may better inform the researcher to develop a facilitator framework model for leadership development".*

My thesis integrated findings from the qualitative study with my reflections in a semi-integrated fashion. As the case study examples show, results from surveys and interviews were arranged thematically with each area includes a reflective piece where I explored how those findings aligned with my experience, how they together contribute to the emerging model of practice, and in some cases how I had already changed my practice as a consequence. While this structure worked for me, it would be useful for future MPP learners to explore alternative structures - perhaps a deeper integration, or maybe parallel stories in two columns or by some hyperlinked structure.

I learnt to write down my reflections from very early on in my journey. Throughout my study, I have made personal scribbles that have sprung from these conversations with my facilitator to conversations with colleagues on programme issues and how they incorporate leadership into their professional work. Key comments that strike me are: Is outdoor educational leadership training developing leaders for a sustainable future? Alternatively, is it creating authentic leaders? Is there an emergent new leadership style forming to fashion an old style out? Through my MPP journey, I have considered these musings and I feel, as a community, we are making progress in educating learners on authentic leadership, however slowly! I see so much more room for improved education on sustainable leadership. I am more determined than ever to bring these challenging questions into my practice to challenge my learners and myself as to the deeper meaning of these questions.

The journey of my MPP was one of me becoming a reflexive practitioner. Where I might have previously carried out an activity with learners and later reflected upon it. During the process of the MPP, as modelled by the integration of the reflection into the qualitative results, I now consider that I am always reflecting. I am now aware of how the minutiae of practice going on around me is the basis for conscious opportunities for improvements in practice.

Raelin (2008) highlighted the significant potential for work-based learning programmes such as the MPP to use reflection in order to build theory in practice. Raelin suggested that reflective practice extends such learning beyond the individual to the collective, and highlights reflective practice as a key mechanism for learning and knowledge production. This is supported by Siebert and Costley (2013), who also believe that the provision of a framework that enables a learner to utilise reflective practice, helps learners to make sense of their experiences, which in turn allows them to learn from their experiences.

In conclusion, this paper has provided an example of how reflective practice aids learners in developing their knowledge and skills, enables them to build confidence, and guides them in planning and implementing their personal, academic, and professional development. The paper has offered an example of the integration of reflection with another methodology - in this case qualitative surveys and interviews - to generate a solid whole.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful for the years of learners who have taken part in courses that have contributed to Andy's experience, in particular to those who provided thoughtful and insightful feedback to the surveys and interviews. We would also like to thank those who contributed to Andy's MPP journey.

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# LONG TERM VALUE: DOES THE LEARNING BEGUN DURING THE CAPABLE PROCESS CONTINUE BEYOND GRADUATION?

Lindsay Smith, Tracey Wright-Tawha and Josh Koia

Learners who embark on the year-long Capable NZ pathway of study for an undergraduate degree usually have a clear expectation of the value of the qualification they will achieve. But for some, what they gain is far more valuable than a qualification; they better understand themselves and take empowerment from that knowledge. This case study investigates the added value which can result from learners' significant self-reflection.

By definition, students using the Capable option will already have significant experience in their chosen career but, in many cases, have decided to gain their first tertiary qualification for employment related reason. During the panel assessment process which completes the Capable NZ programme, when asked to describe their reason for beginning the study, learners will frequently point to an issue which triggered the need for action. It may have been dissatisfaction with their current position, a vision of a higher level career or a concern at their ability to compete against younger, more qualified job applicants in their industry. Recurrent restructurings, corporate take-overs and constant changes leave many mid-level managers feeling at risk without formal qualifications and they plan to use the Capable process to add a recognised and accepted label to their undocumented years of experience.

But while the need for formal, independent recognition to present to existing and future employers may have been the primary motivation for the majority of learners, during the assessment a significant proportion talk of the added benefits they discovered during the process. For the last seven years I have sat on Capable NZ Assessment Panels and heard learners frequently tell of the deeply personal experience which came from reflecting on their lives and the new things they learned. They are able to gain affirmation by placing their own experiences within established theoretical frameworks; they excitedly discuss academic readings which have pushed their boundaries, and can point to a new level of understanding of the major influences and influencers which impacted their personal and professional lives.

As the each assessment ends, with detailed feedback from the panel members, as an assessor you cannot help but wonder at the longer term value of their new qualification for the learner and the impact of their degree on the employment and personal expectations they had months ago when they began. In order to get a very simple answer to this complex question, two successful learners were interviewed and agreed to share their experiences by contributing to this paper.

Even a short period after their assessment, both were very clear that had found another perspective to their success; one not evident to them even on assessment day. Tracey Wright-Tawha and Josh Koia were two quite different candidates for under-graduate degrees. Tracey worked through the Capable programme last year to achieve a Bachelor of Applied Management majoring in Māori Organisational Leadership and Josh completed his Bachelor of Social Services earlier this year. But while their degrees are very different, their underlying passions for improving their communities are very similar. Tracey uses her position as founder and CEO of a large health service provider as her platform for action and Josh bases his community work on his significant creative talents, but both go to work each day to make life better for those who are important to them.

And both began their childhood with a similar experience of New Zealand's traditional primary and secondary education and struggled to connect to expectations of a structured and teacher-centric view of the world. Tracey explained she couldn't wait to leave school and "get on with it". Her two passions at school were art and social studies but she couldn't relate to the text-book approach to these subjects. "If I was to learn about Spain then I wanted to go there and experience it, she said. "I was bright at school but certainly never thought I was clever enough to go on to university and do anything academic."

Josh also struggled through school and a series of bad associations and personal decisions led to him being expelled long before he was ready to leave in terms of qualifications or emotional maturity. Both point to out-of-school mentors being far more influential at that time than any classroom teaching. Tracey's grandfather had a track record of business success and she talked fondly of hands-on lessons in stock-control, sales and book-keeping learned before she had reached her teens. Over the intervening years Tracey had leveraged these early business beginnings into the creation of a significant health organisation which employs over 50 staff and delivers 50,000 service interactions each year.

Josh remembered a specific youth worker who gave him the confidence to see the good and creative within himself and the hands-on skills to bring out these abilities for the benefit of others. Since that early beginning, Josh has unfolded his creative talents as a poet, musician and artist and added practical skills in youth work. By combining these factors he has been able to build award winning programmes which aim to replicate his own learning journey in similarly troubled young people.

However Josh had come to recognise the limitations of practical experience as a lever into more professional roles and the greater opportunities to make a difference these offer. "For years I thought I was stupid, Josh explained, "but I decided that I had to spend four years at university to get the qualifications I needed if I was going to get ahead." When Josh talked to a friend who had been through the Capable process, he was excited to learn that his practical experience could be used as an alternative to the classroom.

Recognition of her professionalism was also an important driver of Tracey's decision to study. As her organisation took on increasingly challenging health and social objectives, she acknowledged the importance of her own mana as CEO to her whanau and to the funding agencies which make her services possible. She was also conscious of the need to be a role model to her own children and like Josh was excited to learn that she could achieve her objectives without the need for classroom study.

"But once I got started it was like someone had lit a fire", she said and Josh agreed. "Capable gave me a real hunger to learn." Both credit their facilitators with igniting their passions for study thanks to their learner-centred approach, so different to the teaching methods they had experienced at school. "It wasn't about being right or wrong, Tracey explained. "I was asked to reflect on how I had formed my thinking, who had influenced me and found the whole process very reaffirming and empowering." And Josh repeats the word empowering to describe his experience and explained, "It was good to know what all those things I had done meant something and wouldn't go to waste."

While these personal experiences were evident at the end of the assessment process both Tracey and Josh have been surprised at their on-going learning since the Capable process has been completed. "By digging deep, I have learned a lot about myself, Josh said. My portfolio was very transparent and showed the authentic me. The Capable study made me stop procrastinating and challenge myself and I also found it made me realise how much I don't know."

But looking back, after the assessment ended, Josh is clear that he has come to a personal crossroads and needs to set new goals. At the end of his panel assessment Josh was surprised to learn that he had passed but since then, has finally given himself permission to recognise his own talents, achievements and successes. His new found belief in his academic ability and "hunger" for a higher level of professional engagement has seen him begin

a search for a new role within an organisation with a greater influence on community outcomes. It is only a few weeks since he completed his qualification, and Josh has yet find the position he seeks, but his enthusiasm for his future as a change-maker is exciting to watch.

For Tracey the ongoing impact of the original study is obvious at one level; she has now begun studying for a Masters qualification. However, even Tracey is astonished at the deeper level changes which have occurred. The crossroad symbol also reflects Tracey's post-study understandings but in her case it's a realisation of her role linking her Māori Whānau on one side of the cross with the business world-view on the other and her ability to stand across both worlds. Her assessment presentation and portfolio of evidence contained a unique model of care using the Poha, a traditional food storage basket, as a symbol of how everyone needed to work together to create successful health outcomes. She contrasted this care structure with complex examples of the business tools she used to manage the operational side of her organisation.

But subsequent to the completion of her bachelor's qualification, Tracey has come to accept her role in linking these worlds of whānau and business. "Within the Māori framework there is a real focus on collective decision-making she said, and in the past I accepted that was the way things are done and had let my work speak for itself. But this journey of discovery has given me the self-belief and the understanding to see that sometimes I need to stand outside the collective and express my point of view, even when it is different from those around me.

"That means our discussions can be far more robust. If we want to consider aspirational goals 10, 20, 30 years into the future we need to be able to do things differently and this process has given me the courage to speak out when that's what is needed".

Both Tracey and Josh achieved their original goal by passing their first, formal tertiary qualification; the first in Josh's family ever to do so. And by the time they completed the assessment they had both gained a better understanding of the links between their practical experience and the wider academic world and were able to use that knowledge to improve their professionalism.

But both have been surprised at how the learning has continued at a very personal level. When they frequently refer to the Capable programme and process as being empowering, they mean that quite literally. Reflecting on what they have achieved, both have a new found sense of their own value, experience and contribution and both are using that knowledge to operate at a level well above the limitations they had earlier given themselves. It would seem that the real benefit of their qualifications is not how others now see them but how they now see themselves.

As Assessors who facilitate the final, formal stage of the Capable NZ process, we need to clearly understand our role. While we certainly have a responsibility to ensure the learner's evidence meets the requirements of the graduate profile, we have a wider opportunity to aid the learner on their post-graduation voyage of self-discovery. Only by doing that, do we give them the real value of their Capable experience; personal empowerment which can be used drive the actions needed to give effect to their passions.

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## DESIGNING FOR HEUTAGOGY: AN INDEPENDENT LEARNING PATHWAY APPROACH

Samuel Mann, Glenys Ker, Phoebe Eden-Mann and Ray O'Brien

### ABSTRACT

Heutagogy provides an approach to adult education that is based on learner determined learning and it recognised that this requires a transformation of learning processes beyond a teacher-delivered focus on content. But there are few guidelines or even descriptions of application of heutagogy to whole programmes of learning. In this paper we describe a case study of an independent learning pathway approach whereby heutagogy is the underlying principle for a suite of work-based learning professional practice programmes. Questions for further development and research are discussed.

### INTRODUCTION

There are a variety of different approaches to teaching and learning. This paper explores heutagogy as a learning environment for work-based learning, using Capable NZ as a primary case study.

Hase and Kenyon (2000) defined heutagogy as the study of self-determined learning. It applies a holistic approach to developing learner capabilities, centering learning as an active and proactive process (Blaschke, 2012), with learners acting as “the major agent in their own learning, which occurs as a result of personal experiences” (Hase and Kenyon, 2007, p112).

While heutagogy has roots in self-directed learning, it “specifically renounces the teacher dependency associated with both pedagogy (the study of teaching) and andragogy (the study of teaching adults)” (Anderson 2010). This progression to heutagogy is characterised by learners progressing in maturity and autonomy (Canning, 2010). More mature learners require less instructor control and course structure and can be more self-directed in their learning with less and course scaffolding (Canning & Callan, 2010; Kenyon & Hase, 2010).

The instructor; then, becomes a facilitator and a guide for the learner’s self-direction and focuses on the development of abilities to reflect, undertake action research, and in the use of tools. As Canning & Callan, 2010 described heutagogy fundamentally changes the role of the educator in higher education from one of “‘expert’ in a body of absolute knowledge” to one where learning “is achieved through shared meaning making in a relational, facilitative approach to reflection” (p75).

Blaschke (2012 p57) argues that “A heutagogical learning environment facilitates development of capable learners and emphasizes both the development of learner competencies as well as development of the learner’s capability and capacity to learn”.

Anderson goes further and argues that self-determinism itself is “critical to life in the rapidly changing economy and cultures that characterize postmodern times” (p42).

Heutagogy has been picked up by the education technology community, Blaschke (2012 p57) describes it as "net-centric". For distance learning heutagogy provides both *raison d'être*, and a challenge. Rather than distance education being a poor relation of a traditionally taught face-to-face learning experience, heutagogy positions distance education as a viable alternative, better even - rather than the educator being bogged down in delivering content, they become guides "in learners' interactions with varied resources to resolve problems and to gain personal understanding" (Anderson 2010 p42). Instead of lectures with sage-on-stage delivery, mobile technology encourages participation, questioning and collaboration (Cochrane *et al.* 2012).

In this paper, however, we are not concerned with the digital environment or learning management systems. These aspects of the learning environment, are important, but in the case of work-based learning they are much less important than the experience generated by the culture and processes of the self-determined learning programme.

It could perhaps be argued that heutagogy within higher education is a contradiction in terms. The deification of knowledge and the structures developed over centuries to regulate, protect and deliver this content in a carefully staged manner might seem at odds with what must seem to many an anarchic approach of learner-determined learning. Blaschke (2010 p63) raises this issue "the higher education response to heutagogy so far has been one of reluctance, which could be due to the impracticality of implementing a full-blown educational framework of heutagogy".

McAuliffe *et al.* (2009 p4) acknowledged the learner empowerment from heutagogy and the educator/facilitator should "maintain a distance appropriate to encouraging learners to actively engage in that world through the process of discovery as it relates to their own interests and needs", but that they should "should remain a vital part of helping learners interpret their world". McAuliffe *et al.* also questioned whether "guidelines set by certain internal and external stakeholders (would) allow students to have 'control' over what is or isn't assessed".

While there are numerous studies describing elements of a heutagogical approach in higher education (particularly in distance education: Cochrane *et al.* 2012), or a heutagogical approach applied to elements of a higher education programme such as clinical practice elements of nursing training (Bhojrab *et al.*, 2010), this paper describes an attempt to base a suite of programmes on a heutagogical principles.

Crucially, heutagogy implies a different relationship with the curricula. Hase and Kenyon (2007) describe how heutagogy goes beyond andragogy's focus on adult education with self-directed learning linked to experiences to a different relationship with the curricula "we thought that andragogy did not go far enough...curricula were still very much teacher-centric with little opportunity for any real involvement at a micro or even macro level by the learner" (p112).

In relation to practice elements of early childhood training, Canning and Callan (2010 p74) described a desire to "weave capacity for heutagogy into the foundations of our study programmes". So the question for this paper is how an institution can focus on processes of learning through the design and delivery of programmes. In other words, what curricula and programme structures permit this weaving?

In a 2007 paper exploring the formation of Heutagogy, Hase and Kenyon described it as a "child of complexity theory". They described how it combines action research, complexity theory and a focus on capability:

"Action research allows experimentation with real world experience where the learning is in the hands of the participants. This learning can then be tested in subsequent learning cycles... (with) a legitimate observer who is also a participant and learner all at the same time" (p113)

Flexibility of being able to try and understand unpredictable and complex social phenomena. In addition to both complexity theory and action research emphasise the emergent nature of learning. (p113)

Beyond competency, capability is concerned with unknown contexts that extend beyond competence. Modern workplaces are complex adaptive systems that provide continuous and rapidly changing contexts. (p114)

Hase and Kenyon (2007) use these antecedents to derive design implications, including (p114):

- Recognition of emergent nature of learning and hence need for a living curriculum as key driver
- Involvement of learner in this living curriculum
- Knowledge and skill acquisition are separate processes and need different approaches
- Identification of learning activities/processes by the learner not just the teacher
- Using action research and action learning as meta-methodologies in the learning experience
- Involvement of learner in design of the assessment. Self-diagnosis and application of knowledge in real life contexts
- Collaborative learning
- Coaching for individual learning needs and application

Blaschke (2010, p64) summarised the programme design elements that support a heutagogical approach:

- A heutagogical approach to learning and teaching is characterized first and foremost by learner-centeredness in terms of both learner-generated contexts and content.
- Learner-defined learning contracts: Learning contracts support students in defining and determining their individual learning paths.
- Flexible curriculum: In a self-determined learning environment, the learner is the driver in creating flexible curriculum, which is defined by the student: learners create the learning map, and instructors serve as the compass
- Learner-directed questions: Learner-directed questions and the discussion that results from these questions are what guide learners and serve as mechanisms for helping learners make sense of course content, bring clarity to ideas, and promote individual and group reflection
- Guiding learners to define self-directed questions is one of the biggest challenges facing developers of heutagogical courses, as designers must be “creative enough to have learners ask questions about the universe they inhabit” (Kenyon & Hase, 2001, para. 29).
- Flexible and negotiated assessment: In heutagogy, the learner is involved in designing his or her assessment.

We use these elements in the following sections as the lens to examine the programmes of Capable NZ.

## CAPABLE NZ

Otago Polytechnic has adopted a heutagogical-based teaching and learning strategy that has a radical impact for education. Exemplifying this methodology is the work-based learning approach of Capable NZ (the professional practice school within Otago Polytechnic). Capable NZ works with learners to recognise and extend learning in a professional work-based context at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels. At undergraduate levels, Capable NZ works with learners to align their professional framework of practice - their professional identity - with graduate profiles. These learners are expected to learn new areas, mostly to wrap their practice in theoretical context, but there are no formal classes. Instead the focus is on an individualised supportive environment for personal reflection.



Figure 1: Capable NZ value set (Otago Polytechnic).

The value-set underpinning this approach can be seen in Figure 1. This figure is in the style of the Agile Manifesto (Beck *et al.* 2001) whereby the items on the left of each statement are valued over the items on the right. In this case, the left-hand items describe a heutagogical-based approach.

### Capable NZ background

Capable NZ was established in the late 1990s as CAPL – The Centre for the Assessment of Prior Learning, and began by offering with sub-degree qualifications. The initial approach to recognising prior experiential learning (RPL) was based on an assessment process concerned with gathering evidence that proved learning had occurred and matched the expected learning outcomes of the targeted qualification, primarily the Bachelor of Applied Management (BAppMgt).

In 2008 CAPL was renamed Capable NZ, and the BAppMgt was augmented with the Bachelor of Social Services (BSS). These two degrees are the most frequently undertaken, although the Capable NZ undergraduate programme portfolio now includes degrees in culinary arts, design, engineering, and information technology, as well as diplomas in business, construction management, quantity surveying, building control, and tertiary education. Indeed, through Capable NZ a learner can obtain almost all of the qualifications available at Otago Polytechnic.

### Independent Learning Pathways for Professional Practice

Hase and Kenyon (2000) place responsibility of heutagogy with the student where they are able not only to engage in a process of knowledge creation, but also have the opportunity to determine their learning experience from the influence of their professional practice.

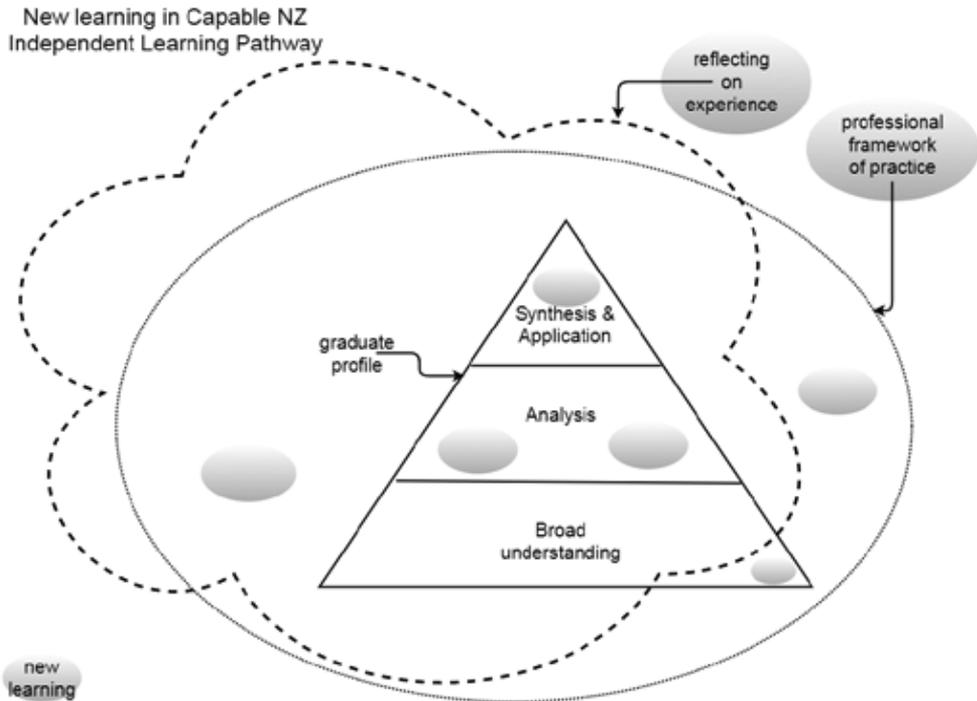


Figure 2: The Independent Learning Pathway is based around the learner's professional framework of practice that aligns with (and hopefully exceeds) the graduate profile of the qualification. The starting point of this journey is reflecting on experience (the dashed line) and then continues with new learning, determined by the learner, to solidify the articulation of the learner's professional framework of practice.

The Independent Learning Pathway (ILP, Figure 2) is Capable NZ's primary approach to learning. Currently about 250 people graduate each year through this process, mainly in the Bachelor of Applied Management, and the Bachelor of Social Services (Otago Polytechnic internal reporting). This pathway is for practitioners who wish to use experiential knowledge as the basis for a new learning journey that results in the development of a framework of practice that aligns with the graduate profile of their chosen degree (often with the endorsement of an identified major). It is important to note that the ILP approach is not an assessment process, but a learning process, one which brings about new knowledge and understandings for the learner: It is not just a process of gathering evidence to prove that learning has already taken place. This intensely reflective process helps learners identify the experiences that shaped their practice and continues to shape practice, extract the learnings from those experiences and make sense of those learnings through the development of a framework of practice that aligns with the graduate profile for that discipline. Learners are supported by a facilitator.

It is because degrees are defined through graduate profile outcomes that alternative learning pathways such as those provided through Capable NZ are possible. What is required is that the learner develops the specified 'specialised technical or theoretical knowledge' as well as the Level 7 (bachelor degree level) generic capabilities, and there is no requirement as to how these knowledge and skills be acquired. Indeed, the NZ National Qualifications Framework (NQF) specifically empowers learners to achieve "in ways most suited to their educational, work or cultural needs and aspirations". (NZQA 2016 p3). This may include credentialing learning obtained formally or informally towards their qualification. The NZQF does not put limitations on how or where people can learn (NZQA 2016).

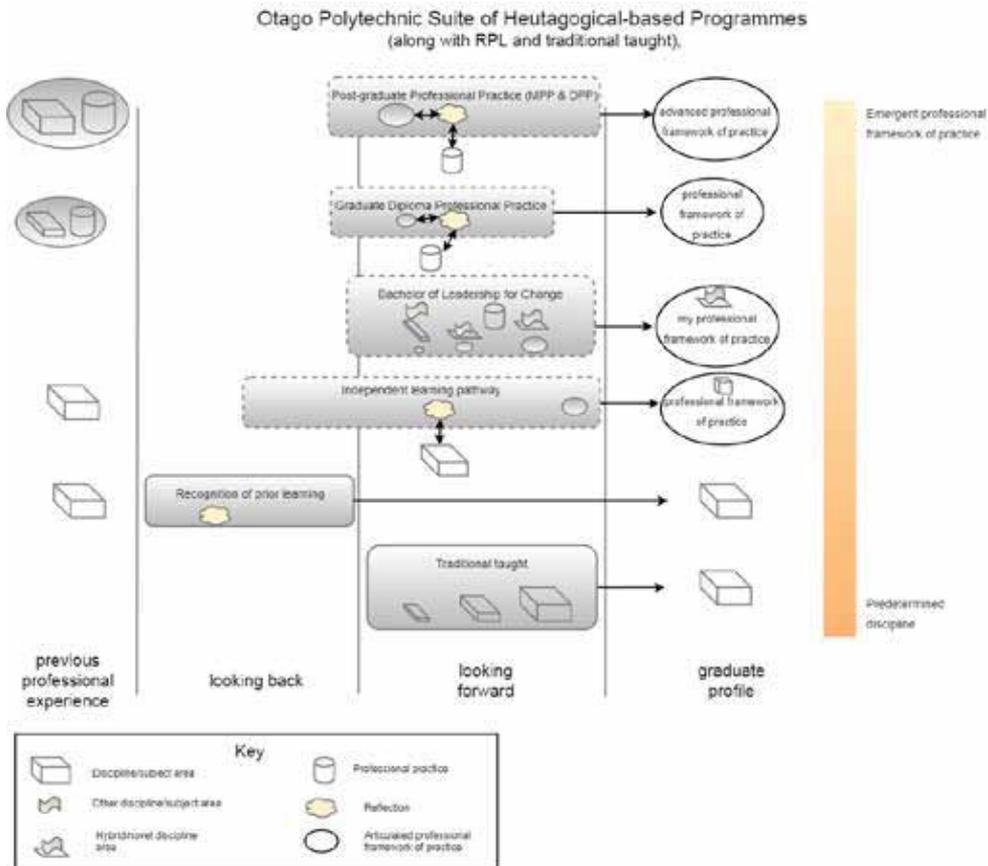


Figure 3: Qualifications designed for heutagogical delivery, from top: DPP and MPP; GDPP; and ILP (a delivery approach to various qualifications), and for comparison an RPL degree, and a traditionally taught degree (Otago Polytechnic).

Figure 3 shows the learning focus of the Capable NZ professional practice suite - including new qualifications discussed in the following sections, and with an RPL and traditional taught degree for comparison. At the bottom of the diagram, the traditional taught vocational degree can be characterised as having a largely predetermined set of experiences designed to teach students the required skills for a particular predetermined (and usually narrow) discipline. There is little or no incorporation of previous knowledge or experience and it is primarily a content heavy curriculum and teacher-centric delivery, perhaps with, say, some choice in essay topics and practical assignments.

The RPL qualification, as used by the precursors to Capable NZ to meet specific industry needs (such as changed requirements for professional registration) is, by contrast, largely the opposite of the taught degree. The process is one of validation of existing knowledge with credentialing against a specific graduate profile. While it can be a reflective process, there is little or no attempt at incorporating new learning, except as a result of this process, to undertake further learning or courses to address identified gaps.

The Independent Learning Pathway, and the other professional practice pathways, are drawn here with dashed boundaries. This is to represent the increasingly blurred boundary between the worlds of work and education that these learning journeys traverse.

At the top of Figure 3, the Capable NZ professional practice post-graduate qualifications for experienced practitioners are the Master of Professional Practice, and the Doctor of Professional Practice (MPP and DPP). These can also be considered individualised learning journeys. For both, the goal is the advanced professional framework of practice. This is articulated in a “practitioner thesis” where the defensible argument is that professional framework of practice. The process starts with a review of learning that leads to stating the learner’s aspirational framework of practice (e.g.: “to become a thought leader in values driven software development”). This is paired with an organisational practice goal (e.g.: to create a culture of values driven software development). The main work then becomes the professional development thread, interwoven through reflective practice to the work-based professional practice change (usually formally described as “auto ethnographic action research”). Learners are supported by academic and professional mentors. The graduate profiles for both the MPP and DPP are written in terms of higher levels of thinking in a post-disciplinary sense, rather than for specific disciplines.

Note on disciplinary terms: we assign terms according to this plan: Candidates come from their discipline, we encourage holistic multi- and trans-disciplinary thinking, and the approach of professional practice is post-disciplinary.

The Graduate Diploma in Professional Practice is similar (at least at this level of abstraction) to the MPP. It is an undergraduate qualification for experienced people who do already have an undergraduate degree (or equivalent experience) which enables the articulation and development of their practice.

## DISCUSSION

In this section we link the Capable NZ ILP approach back to heutagogical and wider education literature and discuss the implications of this for future development and research.

Capable NZ’s existing ILP programmes (both undergraduate and postgraduate) clearly follow a learner-determined heutagogical approach. For all of these, the learner is experienced and is combining existing work practice knowledge with new learning to articulate their new professional framework of practice.

Stephenson (1998) considered the implications of supporting student autonomy. He described situations where there is a “transfer of responsibilities” whereby “students have direct responsibility for aspects of their education which are either not often directly addressed within an institutional setting (such as student motivation and personal development), or for aspects which are the traditional preserve of teachers and accrediting bodies (such as the direction, content, pace, location and assessment of the student’s studies)”. Stephenson argued that this transfer of responsibility brings inherent risks, and that it is the responsibility of the teacher (facilitator in our case) and institution to support learners in assuming these “daunting responsibilities”.

Joyce *et al.* (2008) consider the differing characteristics of facilitation and what is required to be an effective facilitator. A good facilitator has many interconnected, paradoxical roles:

“Simultaneously we [teachers] are managers of learning, curriculum designers, facilitators, counsellors, evaluators and, reluctantly disciplinarians. To the best of our ability, we modulate across roles according to individual and group needs as we select and create learning experiences for all our students”. (2008 p118).

This characterisation of facilitation sums up clearly the many roles that Capable NZ facilitators adopt in their practice; the skill is in knowing when to be what. According to Costley and Dikerdem (2011: 38), the facilitator works “alongside the student to develop rather than direct the students’ understanding”. When considering facilitation, at a philosophical level it is difficult to go past the work of Freire and his emancipatory view of transformation (e.g. 2000). He sees the teacher not as someone who provides answers to problems, but as someone who helps learners gain a form of critical thinking about the situation. He called this ‘conscientisation’. Conscientisation (or conscious-raising) enables an understanding that the world is not fixed and is open to transformation, thereby

empowering learners to see their place in the world in a different way. In so doing, it is possible then to imagine a new and different reality.

The role Freire espouses for teachers is the role of facilitator in Capable NZ. Furthermore, he advocates for a relationship of trust and communication between teacher and pupil, based on mutual respect and humility, which in turn means the teacher also learns and the learner also teaches. Thus, learning and teaching become a collective activity, a 'dialogue' between the parties, rather than the traditional transfer of knowledge from teacher to learner. Again, this captures the very essence of the facilitator/learner relationship in the Capable NZ programmes.

Given the role of career development in all the Capable NZ programmes, it is also useful to consider the facilitators as career counsellors. The works of Carpenter (2010), Hall (2002) and Amundson (2003, 2009), to name but a few, provide invaluable insights into the skills needed of a facilitator in a higher education context. These are the skills necessary for developing a trusting, respectful and collaborative relationship, as well as the ability to elicit the learning that the learners reflect on, analyse and critique to the level required for a degree. The authors discuss developing relationships (Hall 2002), demonstrating a climate of "mattering" and active engagement (Amundson 2003, 2009), and lastly, the capacity to support and guide clients to develop robust capabilities for positive futures for the 21st century workforce (Carpenter 2010). Thus an important area for future development and research is the articulation and testing of a set of capabilities for facilitators themselves.

Hase and Kenyon (2007) described heutagogy as a "child of complexity theory" and this has implications for the design and perception of Capable NZ's heutagogical programmes. Anderson (2010 p39) described how complexity theorists are often at odds with positivist researchers and educators, who attempt to eliminate or control all the variables that influence learning. Rather, complexity, and hence heutagogy, seeks to create learning activities to allow effective behaviour to emerge and evolve. Conversely, complexity theorists seek to understand features of the environment; especially the social or structural norms or organizations created that resist overt or covert attempts at self-organization. McElroy (2000) noted that "the point at which emergent behaviours inexplicably arise, lies somewhere between order and chaos" (p196). This sweet spot is known as the "edge of chaos (where) complex systems innovate by producing spontaneous, systemic bouts of novelty out of which new patterns of behaviour emerge" (after Kauffman 1996).

Bhoryrub *et al.* (2010) describe nursing practice as "themed with complexity and unpredictability, and hence uncertainty" (p322) and that "the learner, from a heutagogical perspective, is the only relative constant within an environment of unpredictable variables and is hence best placed to direct and embed learning as it arises" (p325). This uncertainty is not something that should be designed out of education, instead heutagogy provides a vehicle for "making sense of the necessary uncertainties" (p326), or as Anderson (2010 p40) describes, "enabling learners to surf at the edge of chaos", and not to "eliminate or constrain the creative potential of actors engaged at this juncture".

*Heutagogical education is by necessity surfing at the edge of chaos.*

A further implication of the uncertainty, is that of emergence, particularly of emergent professional frameworks of practice. Further research should describe the nature of professional practice, change in the learners - and influence on the thinking and practice of others (Canning 2010, p59). Research should include the role and integration of the notion of ethical practice and sustainable practice (Mann 2011). From a research accounting perspective, there are also questions about the extent to which this professional practice change meets criteria for research impact.

New Zealand is founded on a partnership between the crown and Māori. In Otago Polytechnic's case, this is manifest in a Memorandum of Understanding between the Araituru Papatipu Rūnaka (local indigenous people) and Otago Polytechnic. This underpins all of our activities, including that of Capable NZ. The Kāi Tahu vision document, "Ngāi Tahu 2025", stresses the importance of education as an enabler of wider goals, of tino rangatiratanga, in "the ability to create and control our destiny". A key driver is that, "all initiatives and programmes must be future orientated",

and a key assumption is of the integration of education. The key phrase here is "tino rangatiratanga" which means absolute sovereignty or self-determination. Further research will continue to explore the relationship between this self-determination and a heutagogical approach.

A key concept in heutagogy is that of double-loop learning and self-reflection (Hase & Kenyon, 2000). In double-loop learning, learners consider the problem and the resulting action and outcomes, in addition to reflecting upon the problem-solving process and how it influences the learner's own beliefs and actions. Within the ILP process, learners do question and test their own personal values and assumptions, for example in the review of learning in both undergraduate and postgraduate but it is not known if they explicitly realise they are learning how to learn. Nor, indeed if they recognise that learning has taken place. Canning and Callan (p76) describe how for most learners

Reflective practice is a totally new dimension to learning and requires explanation and support. Previous experiences of learning encouraged an 'absolute' approach to knowledge as something finite, with assessment based on finding 'right' answers – resulting in dependency on academic staff. Reflective practice and heutagogy is the means by which students can formulate their own ideas once they have navigated the emotional turmoil that results in this process.

Similarly, Caminotti and Gray (2012) describe the importance of storytelling for adult learners (for andragogy), we would contend that it is even more important in heutagogy.

Further research should focus on the role of learning - did the learners know they were learning? Was it transformative? Did it involve "emotional turmoil"? How can we construct opportunities for learning how to learn that do not become a requirement that sits uneasily with heutagogy? It would be useful to carry out longitudinal studies of learners in these heutagogical programmes. Also, to explore the relationships between transformation in learning and change of practice in the learner (and beyond).

In terms of surfing the edge of chaos, a challenge for Capable NZ is meeting organisational expectations. For example, how do student-determined outcomes meet requirements for all assessments to be specified on a course descriptor to be handed out in day one class? To some extent the issue is with the models used. Wall *et al.* (2017) explore a matrix model with two dimensions: delivery (existing and new), and focus (broad and narrow curricula), giving four classes "piggybacking", "digging deep", "mainstreaming", and "focusing". Work-based learning, Wall *et al.* argue, spans the middle of the matrix. We would argue that the ILP approach doesn't fit this matrix at all.

A significant part of heutagogy encourages a space where collaborative reflection can take place. In most of the heutagogical literature this is seen as a community of practice, or communities of learners. Canning and Callan (2010), for example, describe approaches that "promote knowledge sharing rather than knowledge hoarding" (p74) in classes of early years learners. Such communities of learners are a rarity in Capable NZ. Partly this is because of geographical and temporal separation (learners can start any time) and the post-discipline professional practice approach might mean they are the only current learner in their field. Where groups of learners do form, they are usually pre-existing community - such as a group of work colleagues who have decided to undertake study together, or a wider cultural or family group. Instead Capable NZ has encouraged learners to consider their existing networks as communities of practice. Further research should explore the potential for communities of practice within the ILP approach.

In Figure 3 we used the timing of experiential learning to characterise the various Capable NZ offerings. It would be useful to extend such models to position heutagogical approaches in a wider sphere of learning. Within work-based learning two clear paradigms can be seen. The first is where the main relationship is between the learning and the academic institution and the "work-place" provides a vehicle for learning. These might be work-based learning through negotiated projects right through to extended work placements and internships (Pegg and Caddell 2016, Fletcher-Brown *et al.* 2015 employagility, Feldmann 2016, Algers *et al.* 2016). A second approach is the recognition of the inherent learning in work itself with concepts such as the lived curriculum (Moore 2004) or practice-based innovation (Ellström 2010). The relationship here is worker/learner and employer. Where higher education does

get involved it tends to be as a credentialing service, usually post hoc as Otago Polytechnic's earlier RPL of partial or whole qualifications. When the learning becomes new learning, the approach goes beyond "about work" to become "in work, at work, for work" (Lester and Costley 2010).

## CONCLUSION

This paper explores heutagogy as a learning environment for work-based learning, using Capable NZ as a primary case study. Capable NZ's Independent Learning Pathway approach follows heutagogical principles in the design and delivery of its programmes. But it does raise challenges and questions which are opportunities for development and for further research.

This paper is based on a single case study. As such it is limited to describing the experiences of one institution in implementing a heutagogically based approach. Care should be taken with generalizing from this case. Further, no success metrics are given here, and it would be useful to include learner voices, possibly through longitudinal study.

- Driven by the necessity of "surfing at the edge of chaos", future research directions include:
- Guidelines on identifying the sweet spot of barely sufficient structure to provide scaffolding for independent learners;
- Longitudinal benchmarking of learners in heutagogical programmes;
- the nature of "professional practice" and the integration of capabilities and meta-capabilities;
- The development and testing of ethics processes for heutagogical learning;
- The role of communities of practice in a distributed population of ILP learners;
- The extent to which learners experience an emotional trauma (and potential roles of scaffolding and emotional literacy training);
- The relationship between indigenous concepts of self-determination and the self-determination of the heutagogical approach;
- The role of transformational learning, and aspects of that (such as the role of storytelling and narrative as a learning tool) and the relationships to change in practice; and
- Facilitator capabilities for delivering programmes via an ILP approach
- Development of models to better describe the structures within and between heutagogical programmes and in comparison with traditional programmes.

**Professor Samuel Mann** teaches for CAPABLE NZ. Sam's 2011 book "The Green Graduate", subtitled "Educating Every Student as a Sustainable Practitioner", sets out a framework for integrating sustainability into every course of study. His subsequent book "Sustainable Lens: a visual guide" explores the visual narrative of sustainability. This book proposes a "sustainable lens": to act sustainably we need to first "see" sustainably. Sam has a weekly radio show and podcast Sustainable Lens where he and a colleague have conversations with people from many different fields who are applying their skills to a sustainable future. Recent work focusses on the development of a Transformation Mindset. Sam gained his PhD from the University of Otago in 1998 titled "Spatial Process Modelling for Regional Environmental Decision Making".

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## PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE DOCTORAL STUDIES: CREATING CONDITIONS FOR TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING

Margy-Jean Malcolm

### ABSTRACT:

Otago Polytechnic's Capable NZ is launching its Doctorate in Professional Practice (DPP) in November 2017, building on its track record of supporting innovative work-based learning. Doctoral programmes in New Zealand have mostly been offered in university settings to date, with their own particular approaches to teaching and learning. This new professional practice doctoral programme offers an opportunity to revisit what teaching and learning approaches will best support learners' leadership in their professions and generate relevant new knowledge for New Zealand's workplaces in a complex, changing world.

This article argues for attention to three key conditions that support the transformative potential of DPP learning to meaningfully respond to the complexity of the world that learners are working in: a solid praxis ground for the learner; intentionally structured collaborative inquiry and exposure to transdisciplinary perspectives that challenge assumed wisdom. These three conditions in turn challenge academic decision-makers and mentors, not just learners, to be open to questioning their own assumed wisdom and adapting their practices. The article draws on the doctorate findings of the author, a Capable NZ team member, and her experience as a learner studying for a professional practice-based doctorate.

### INTRODUCTION:

Otago Polytechnic is launching its Doctorate in Professional Practice (DPP) in November 2017. A robust 'container' for doctorate learning needs rigour to support its credibility, and flexibility to sustain an innovative edge. Otago Polytechnic has brought its own insider wisdom from two decades' work in transformative work-based learning to shape the DPP. This article brings an outsider perspective from someone recently joining the Capable NZ team who has completed a professional practice-based PhD within a university setting (Auckland University of Technology). The article draws on the PhD findings about conditions supporting leadership learning and the author's experiences as a doctorate student to deepen understanding of factors that can enhance potential for transformative doctorate learning.

The DPP, and more broadly Capable NZ's educational approach, is a response to the complexity of the world that learners are working in. The learner is immersed in the reality they are researching. The complex situation they are researching, their own sense of inner knowing and the new knowledge emerging is always in movement. Complexity thinking embraces transdisciplinary perspectives to support understanding of complex, evolving, dynamic and interconnected systems, and offers a paradigm to help make sense of our world and our work amidst much uncertainty and ambiguity (Goldstein, 2008). Complex adaptive systems are systems that learn (Johnson, 2001). So when working amidst complexity, a learning and adaptation orientation is central for the whole system, not just for students. Our own reflective practice as learning facilitators, academic mentors and leaders of educational institutions is essential to inform a grounded international re-thinking of what education for complex times looks

like (Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2008).

This article argues that three key conditions support the potential for transformative DPP learning: a solid praxis ground for the learner; intentionally structured collaborative inquiry and exposure to transdisciplinary perspectives that challenge assumed wisdom. Praxis-related research assumes the learner has a specific focus on supporting the development of new knowledge to inform not only their own committed action as an individual professional but also at some wider societal level (Mattson & Kemmis, 2007), whether that be in their workplace, community, iwi, hapū or whānau setting. Collaborative inquiry provides a means of co-constructing knowledge with others immersed in the research context, which extends the whole group's capability to notice, reflect, inquire and make sense of their context, their practice and their collective wisdom as it is emerging. Transdisciplinary research enables often incommensurable frames of reference to collide, diverge and support the emergence of new knowing. This learning and research approach is very different from traditional doctoral study which is usually framed around one primary disciplinary lens or field, with one primary researcher as the interpreter of the data collected from participants.

The article first identifies the research methods and relevant findings from the author's PhD which identified conditions supporting leadership learning for civil society practitioners. A particular understanding of leadership as a living learning system that emerged from the thesis is then used as a way of discussing evidence from the author's experience of the PhD research process. Key polarities are identified that need attention for any learner to be alive to their own capacity and to keep moving forward amidst the complexities of the process of generating new knowledge. Finally, the paper elaborates on the three conditions for learning that can enable a self-motivated learner's inherent potential for transformational learning – at a personal level, as a professional and as a contributor of new knowledge to a wider sphere of practice.

## PRAXIS-RELATED, PRACTITIONER ACTION RESEARCH METHODS

I located my research within the broad field of action research (Carson & Sumara, 1997; Reason & Bradbury, 2008) and practitioner research in particular (Goodfellow & Hedges, 2007) which focuses on practitioners initiating research within their area of practice in order to theorise and improve practice. Praxis-related research grounds learning in live powerful work-based questions for the practitioner that they are motivated to influence in an ethical, informed, creative manner (Mattson & Kemmis, 2007). Development evaluation (Patton, 2011), cooperative inquiry (Heron, 1996) and appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005) research methods were used to create a strong focus on generating knowledge with practitioners. We were applying action research methods to an everyday living practice (Carson & Sumara, 1997) of facilitating inquiry within ourselves and with others. We drew tacit wisdom from our own professional practice experience, to inform praxis and theory-building outcomes.

Action research enabled attention to two leadership learning interventions as they were evolving through significant periods of change. The research process itself co-evolved in response to what we as co-researchers were learning and the new questions that emerged. The coherence of the research was grounded in an understanding that reality is created and explained as we interact with our context

Two action research studies explored the research question 'What supports the emergence of civil society leadership?' with two different Aotearoa New Zealand leadership learning initiatives. Each initiative aimed to create conditions for the emergence of skills, knowledge and identities as active citizens. These active citizens were in turn shaping responses to pressing social, economic and environmental issues.

One research site was an academic leadership development program for civil society organisation managers and leaders (Unitec NZ's Graduate Diploma in Not for Profit Management). In-depth, semi-structured appreciative inquiry interviews with six graduates and a literature review informed teaching team deliberations in 2009 around the redesign of this programme. As a Unitec teaching team member at that time, I was an insider researcher.

The other research site was a national leadership team (Inspiring Communities), supporting intentional learning connections between different civil society actors involved in diverse place-based community-led development initiatives. Five co-researchers used reflective journals and five collaborative inquiry workshops across 2011 to support intentional observation and knowledge generation about what was supporting (or not) our own and others' leadership within community initiatives. I started as an outsider researcher, but the collaborative nature of this research process increasingly shaped my insider co-researcher role and my involvement in Inspiring Communities' projects.

The leadership framework presented here (Malcolm, 2014) emerged out of a bricolage process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), in which I analysed patterns between the parts and the whole of the two action research studies using a complexity thinking interpretative lens. Data analysis was both collaborative and individual, systematic and emergent, rapid and slow, in the different stages of the process. The writing process itself was a significant method (van Manen, 1997) supporting the stitching together and emergence of new knowing. Together, these different methods shaped a research strategy for knowledge generation.

Integrity of the research strategy was supported by triangulation of data, investigators, theories and methodologies, while also acknowledging that the findings are a reflection of complex, living process that can never be fully captured (Denzin, 2010). Data triangulation occurred between and within the two action research cycles by independently studying leadership development with different people, at different times and places. Investigator triangulation was achieved through the collaborative nature of these inquiries, engaging participants as co-researchers in design, data gathering and analysis, to facilitate diverse interpretations of the data. Theory triangulation was supported by complexity thinking's transdisciplinary learning orientation (Davis & Sumara, 2006), which enabled data to be analysed from multiple theoretical perspectives, with multiple hypotheses in mind. Methodological triangulation was achieved by analysing a mix of semi-structured interviews, journals and group conversation data in different action research cycles. Collaborative inquiry research is further validated through its data and sense-making being grounded in practitioner experience and the relevance of the knowledge generated for our own and others' practice.

## FINDINGS: LEADERSHIP AS LEARNING FRAMEWORK

The findings pointed towards understanding leadership as an ongoing interactive learning dynamic. Leadership is like working in a living, moving sea with tides always in movement. The sea is unpredictable, so we need to keep learning to read its movements, decide whether and how to ride its waves, adapting our responses to work with the ongoing movement and polarities of the tides.

Lederach, Neufeld, and Culbertson (2007)'s four quadrants of change framework supported understanding of some of the inter-related layers of this leadership sea. These authors argue that transformational change in communities is dependent on concurrent movement in four key areas: personal, relational, structural and cultural:

- Personal attitudes, behaviours, actions and values sets of individuals
- Relational connections, ties, trust between people and organisations
- Structures, systems, formal 'rules' that govern communities, families, organisations, government and society as a whole
- The culture of a community as the unwritten rules of the game – the way we do things around here (Inspiring Communities, 2013, p. 29)

The *Leadership as Learning* framework (Table 1) identifies some of the typical patterns of leadership responses identified from the research, within these four inter-related, moving layers. Constructive responses are presented as

## Leadership as a Learning Framework (Malcolm 2014)

PERSONAL TRENDS		PERSONAL TRENDS		PERSONAL TRENDS		
Individual responses when they are in control	Individual responses when they are in movement	Individual responses when they are in control	Individual responses when they are in movement	Individual responses when they are in control	Individual responses when they are in movement	
Ego dominance	Strong sense of self, my culture, strengths, values and identity	Curiosity, humility, astute noticing, sense making, reflective practice, letting go, creativity, generosity, giving and receiving, ethical stand and mentors and mentoring, feedback and feed-forward, experience of being trusted, finding courage, sense of possibility, living with uncertainty	Defensiveness	Self-awareness	Valuable self-my doubts, fears and questions	Paralysed by self-doubt
Rigid control	Self-directed learning			Awareness of and genuine interest in others	Burnout	
Professional at directing the how	Leading out front: catalytic, facilitator, convenor, best-led	empathy, engagement, valuing diversity, search for common ground, 'and-and' thinking, offering and accepting leadership opportunities, can do attitude, confidence to 'just do it' - in a thoughtful way, walking alongside, leaving gaps, spaces, silence, intentional peer learning mechanisms, facilitation skills		Willing to learn and share others	Over-responsibility	
One person 'band'	I can make things happen... see my part in this			Leading together: enabling group, decentralised control, student directed	Inert, not enough expertise	
I am right and you are wrong	My voice counts			We can make things happen: agreed shared purpose	Too polite and not addressing real issues	
My vision follows me	Personalisation and commitment			Listening to others' voices and how	'Group thinks not enough diversity of perspectives	
				Building shared vision and commitment, one conversation at a time	'Them and us' thinking they 'need to change', not us	

Table 1. The Leadership as Learning framework

polarities, tides always in movement. Sometimes what were once constructive leadership responses get taken to an extreme and become destructive, tipping into their shadow sides, like waves that dump us. These shadow sides are described in the outer columns. In the middle column, qualities, competencies and approaches are identified as resources which the research participants drew on when leading in complex situations to anchor their practice.

This article goes on to discuss how these research findings can inform the design of effective leadership learning environments, including the DPP. In the next section, my experience as a doctorate learner is discussed, applying the Leadership as Learning framework to help make sense of the polarities and tensions which supported my own reflective practice and the emergence of new knowledge.

### **Applying these understandings to the design of the DPP learning “container”**

A complexity leadership perspective shifts the focus of leadership from the individual leader's qualities, competencies or style towards a focus on leadership as the collective learning and adaptation work of the whole system. Leadership focuses on creating conditions that facilitate the inherent capacity of complex systems to learn, self-organise, adapt and innovate. 'Learners' within this perspective are not only individuals, but can also be groups, communities, organisations, bodies of knowledge, languages, cultures, and even species. Learners act as open systems with porous boundaries to exchange information and energy with their environments which in turn impacts changes in their own structures and those environments (Davis & Sumara, 2006).

For the purposes of this article, conditions that facilitate learning within the DPP are discussed with at least four learners/learning relationships in mind – the individual learner; relationships with and within the supervisor(s)/facilitators/mentors team, the practitioner's practice world environment and the educational institution processes. These are all layers of interacting nested systems which are interdependent parts of a wider, dynamic whole.

**The Personal Layer:** My own self-motivation was an essential foundation for getting started and sustaining momentum with the doctorate study. The “who am I and why do I want to do this study?” exercise that my supervisor gave me at the outset was a real touchstone. The exercise (a condensed form of Capable NZ's processes) clarified my motivation, which was to make sense of and enhance a lifetime's work in the civil society space as an active citizen. Self-motivated study disciplines helped me carve out a way forward, mapping one piece of the journey at a time. I set the agenda for monthly supervision conversations, as I searched for and inquired into my deeper research questions. There were new skills to learn, especially about academic writing styles, finding my own authoritative voice and building a cohesive argument. Exploring different theories of knowledge opened up new ways of seeing the world and helped make sense of my lived experience and research data.

Complexity thinking, Goethean inquiry approaches (Kaplan, 2002) and developmental evaluation were deeply influential in the research outcomes and process. They shaped and added rigour to the research methods and ethical principles applied throughout the research. They helped me articulate my framework of practice and world view in particular language and deepened my seeing and sense-making abilities working the complex phenomena. The underlying understanding of complex, living systems being always in movement, helped me ride the inevitable personal tides between my strong self and my vulnerable self during the study. The strong/vulnerable polarity identified in Table 1 is a key polarity identified from the research which runs counter to traditional leadership discourse which portrays leadership as more strong than vulnerable. The shadow sides of this polarity, especially being paralysed by self-doubt, were certainly there at times for me. Curiosity, reflective practice, letting go control and mentoring from my supervisors were some of the resources identified in the middle box of Table 1 that helped grow my ability to live with uncertainty and to keep the tides between strong and vulnerable in more healthy than destructive movement.

**The Relational layer:** My relationships with my two supervisors had a pivotal impact on my motivation to complete. I embarked on PhD study with a dynamic mix of real curiosity for new learning and deep fear about my capability to complete. That polarity between curiosity and fear stayed in ongoing tidal movement throughout the six year

journey from MPhil enrolment to PhD graduation. My supervisors played a pivotal role in 'holding' me through that journey, believing in me when I had lost faith in my capabilities, inspiring me with new perspectives and possibilities, starting from where I was at, stretching me beyond my comfort zone at times, but always being there reliably alongside. They gently engaged with my exploration of collaborative inquiry, complexity thinking and academic writing. They respected my own knowledge from 40 years' experience in diverse civil society roles. They pointed me towards research methodologies and knowledge systems that helped me to name and frame my intuitive inquiry approach with academic rigour.

Two key polarities in the relational layer of the "Leadership as Learning" framework (Table I) were particularly relevant to the supervisor relationship. I was moving between listening to the many voices of my co-researchers and also needing to find my own authoritative voice in the final thesis writing – taking care to avoid the risk of 'group think'. The supervisors moved between leading out front (teacher-led), us leading together and leading from behind (student-led). The extreme of teacher-led was the strong advocacy of my primary supervisor to challenge the academic committee's initial rejection of my PhD proposal. My proposal presented a challenge to an academic world that was not used to transdisciplinary, collaborative research, let alone a complexity thinking approach to emergent new knowledge. The committee were concerned my proposal was too big and unwieldy and pressed for the exclusion of some of the theoretical and methodological approaches I was exploring. My supervisor's message was clear: "I will defend to my death your right to ask those questions but not your right to answer them. Margy-Jean will answer them herself over the course of her PhD journey." My supervisor's successful advocacy on my behalf was a challenge to myself to 'just do it', in a thoughtful way and make sure I convinced the examiners four years later that I could address their concerns. I needed to demonstrate the importance of transdisciplinary thinking and how engagement with a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches was a useful resource, not a problem to be resolved through imposition of one worldview. I needed to find ways to honour both the ethics of collaborative inquiry and how to bring my own authoritative voice to the thesis.

**The Cultural Layer:** I bring a strong values commitment to participatory research undertaken 'with' communities, whether I am an insider or an outsider researcher. My experience of the doctorate research stretched my thinking around how far collaboration could extend into co-design of the core research question, collaborative processes of data analysis and interpretation, and shared use of the research findings for different publication purposes. Both action research cycles were collaborative, but the second one took collaboration culture to a new level in my experience. In the first research cycle, my colleagues were more research participants and users of the data gathered, to inform our collective work on academic programme redesign. In the second research cycle, collaborative inquiry began with defining a 'working together agreement' and agreeing on our underlying framing of the research. We became co-researchers and co-participants in gathering and analysing data and publishing findings for wider practitioner and academic audiences' use. Power over key decisions and ownership of the knowledge generated was shared in both cycles, but in quite different ways.

The power of collaborative inquiry goes beyond simply being a respectful, ethical research approach. Collaborative inquiry provides disciplines for observing, interpreting and theorising around practice. Immersion in the whole system is necessary in order to see and sense these patterns, in both the present moments and the bigger picture over time. By being so immersed, the very act of noticing fosters the potential for the emergence of new learning. In creating a collective space for making sense of our practice, collaborative inquiry supported a strengthened collective culture of reflective practice and demonstrated a strategy for enhancing the leadership of everyone involved. Knowledge was being socially constructed by the group, grounded in participants' practice reality and shared in a way that new understandings were able to be both tested and applied in the true sense of the concept of praxis (Heron, 1996). At its best, collaborative inquiry research can strengthen learning organisation culture, leadership development of all co-researchers, and a particular multisensory awareness for seeing the bigger picture, spotting where the energy is and framing shared understanding of how to move forward.

**The Structural Layer:** The construct of a PhD as an individual research contribution to new knowledge represents

a particular challenge when working with collaborative inquiry approaches. What Davis and Sumara (2006) describe as the collective emergence of a group's body of knowledge cannot be solely attributed to any individual locus of learning. The thesis drew on the voice and insights from those who engaged in both research cycles, my own reflective practice and the rich literature of complexity thinking, civil society leadership and leadership learning to communicate findings. There was frequent use of "we" in the thesis to honour the collective wisdom of my co-researchers, not just my own contribution.

Right from the outset there were polarities to manage between educational systems' expectations of structured plans and the emergent nature of the inquiry processes. The academic institution held the ultimate power to approve or decline my research proposal and ethics application, even though the partnership agreement developed with research co-participants had so clearly defined mutually agreed terms of engagement. Thankfully, the ethics committee approved of our detailed work around 'how' we would work together, which gave us some flexibility around 'what' emerged during the research process.

A particularly helpful support structure was a regular pot luck dinner convened by my primary supervisor as a collaborative peer learning laboratory for all her students. It created a 'loose' container with a 'tight' discipline of regular meeting and shared learning between students (past and present), supervisors and other resource people all passionately committed to postgraduate learning. Unfortunately I was not able to attend often as a distant student but I still felt the strength of this potluck learning community – especially as an environment for rehearsing my oral examination. The "potluck" was a great example of a supervisor's role in creating the conditions for self-organising peer to peer learning systems that are central to how complex adaptive systems thrive. Teachers, like any leaders, can play an important role in creating conditions for learning, which challenges the expert/novice power dynamic and frees up potential for everyone to exercise leadership as learners facing complex times in their work, home and community environments.

Overall, the tension with the education structures in my experience was more around the academic committee's difficulty coping with the transdisciplinary complexity thinking lens than the ethics committee's ability to accept collaborative inquiry. My experience points to an over-riding emphasis on creating conditions for learning being more constructive than any undue control over how students frame their inquiries.

## DISCUSSION

As an Otago Polytechnic Learning Facilitator, I am deeply interested in how best to foster conditions for learning that enable students to reflect on their experience, extend their learning and leadership development as active citizens, and contribute to society from whatever their roles. As a student engaged in writing a doctorate thesis where data is gathered and analysed collaboratively, I explored questions about how new knowledge emerges and puzzled over how to foster and describe this kind of emergence with others.

Complexity thinking is a philosophical and pragmatic way of thinking and acting (Davis & Sumara, 2006) which I have embraced as a particular understanding of the diverse nature of reality, the diverse ways that we interpret it and how knowledge is continually co-constructed through the interaction of multiple ontologies. Variation is seen as a resource, not a problem to be resolved through imposition of one worldview. It is in this sense that complexity thinking represents a paradigm shift from assumptions that coherent research must be framed through use of a single paradigm (e.g. positivism, interpretivism, critical theory, post-structuralism). Without imposing complexity thinking on any particular students, I see this philosophical approach as useful for the DPP in ensuring students have creative space to explore diverse ways of seeing and sense-making, thinking and acting as we foster the emergence of new knowledge.

Researchers are traditionally encouraged to use tightly defined research paradigms, questions and methods to foster learning, just as teachers have been encouraged to define clear graduate competency profiles and curriculum

frameworks to foster learning. These learning approaches put an emphasis on particular framing and content to support learning. The problem is that in dynamic, diverse, complex contexts, our questions change, our methods have to adapt, and new capabilities and knowledge need to grow in response to what is rapidly emerging. Content can become quickly out-dated. Single research paradigms may not provide diverse enough insights to make sense of a complex situation.

My doctoral research highlighted the importance of attention to process-oriented interactions to foster learning amidst complexity. These interactions need to support ongoing inquiry about what is unfolding and critique of content for its relevance. Leadership learning in both action research contexts emerged as much, if not more, from the process of how researchers, teachers and civil society leaders enabled collaborative inquiry relationships, as from any content focus on what was being researched, taught or initiated.

In analysing the process of this research and its findings, a pattern emerged of a learning dynamic around three core interactions: with peer learners, with new thinking, and with practice contexts. This dynamic was supporting my individual learning as researcher, enabling collaborative research processes and encouraging leadership learning for others. When we understand this pattern, in whatever our role, we can be more intentional in noticing what conditions might need adjustment, to maximize any system's capacity for learning at any point in time.

The first element of this learning dynamic is the building of collaborative research relationships as peer learners with our research context partners. Peer learners need to clarify what kind of partnership is intended. Power dynamics can shift when peer learners inquire together, rather than acting as teachers, researchers or leaders with assumed power and expertise over others. The distributed intelligence of a whole peer learning group can be accessed and support decentralised leadership. Learning can be enhanced when collaborative relationships are mirrored across every level of a learning system, not just with the immediately apparent 'learners'. However, facilitators of collaborative inquiry learning have to manage some paradoxes when working as both co-researchers and co-participants in peer learning relationships. Facilitators need to offer some of the critical distance of an outsider and have some of the in-depth context knowledge of an insider. They need to honour their own voice as a participant and facilitate everyone else's voices to be heard.

The second element of this learning dynamic requires stretching thinking and experience beyond the known. A culture of curiosity and openness towards the known and the unknown can be supported by collaborative inquiry relationships. There is a role for teachers, researchers and leaders in creating disturbance around established assumptions, worldviews, theories, identities and habits of practice. However, as facilitators of learning, there are paradoxes to manage around creating a safe enough environment and at the same time stretching people's thinking and experience to foster higher-level learning. Fear and resistance can block higher-level learning if there is not an established culture of trust. There are also tensions around how much to challenge assumptions and expose inquiry to new outside perspectives when trying to honour and enable a group's own wisdom to emerge from reflecting on their own practice.

The third element of this learning dynamic is grounding in practice context, values and outcomes. Any learning is highly contextual. Different learning processes support reflection on practice experience to inform future praxis outcomes. The developmental process of inquiry throughout this doctoral research was anchored in clear shared values and intent about social change outcomes. Yet it was essential that inquiry questions and outcomes were not too narrowly defined to enable emergent learning beyond what was initially anticipated. There was a necessary paradox between loose and tight structures to support on-going cycles of intentional reflective practice. Structured processes, skills and commitment were needed, individually and collectively: for noticing, questioning, dialogue, sense-making and application of learning. Yet our processes also needed to keep adapting to context constraints and opportunities as the inquiry progressed.

## CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS:

My doctoral study showed how leadership as learning can be supported through collaborative inquiry as a means of co-constructing knowledge and action, as a whole group extends their capability to notice, reflect, inquire and make sense of their context, their practice and their collective wisdom as it is emerging. The flexible structure of the DPP should be able to support students if they choose collaborative inquiry approaches within their professional practice research contexts. This option can deepen the learning and praxis ripple effects of any one student's study to their wider work context, while at the same time enhancing the context relevance and triangulation of their findings.

The DPP offers an opportunity for encouraging deep professional practice learning and leadership development not only for individual students, but for the organisations, professions or other work contexts within which students choose to locate their study. Praxis-related practitioner action research aligns well with a complexity thinking's approach in its focus on supporting the capacity of any system for its own ongoing learning and adaptation. Doctorate study offers a powerful opportunity for leadership formation, through structuring reflection, harvesting implicit knowledge, growing sense-making skills, articulating and deepening application of new professional practice wisdom.

It is highly likely that the DPP development will trigger learning challenges for Capable NZ, Otago Polytechnic and the wider tertiary education sector too, as structures, systems and cultural habits of how things are done need to be revisited to respond to the complex world our students are researching and working in. Whether teachers, learners or the systems we work within, from a complexity thinking perspective, we are all learners who will need to keep adapting what education, ethics approvals, transdisciplinary research paradigms and acceptable methodologies look like for complex, ever changing times. The vision, mission, values and culture of Otago Polytechnic provide a sound basis to embrace those challenges as the DPP develops its unique contribution to professional practice knowledge informing innovative change.

**Margy-Jean Malcolm's** teaching, research, voluntary and consultancy work is informed by a lifetime involvement in community development, from local neighbourhood work to central government policy. Previously a Senior Lecturer on Unitec NZ's former Graduate Diploma in Not for Profit Management. Margy-Jean's PhD study enabled her 'Leadership as Learning' practice framework to emerge from collaborative action research and her own reflective practice. The framework fosters deeper understanding of how to work with complexity and grow the leadership of everyone as active citizens. Margy-Jean is a facilitator for CAPABLE NZ.

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