PESA CONFERENCE 2013
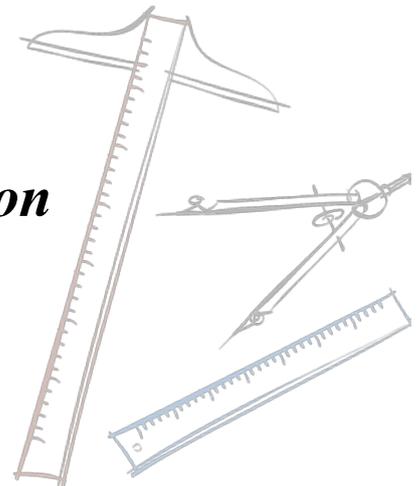
Abstracts

(in order of appearance, by session number)

PESA Philosophy *of* Education Society *of* Australasia

*Measuring Up in Education*

This session comprises of three papers that explore emergent pedagogical and philosophical issues in a New Zealand arts-based early childhood project Move, Act, Play, Sing (MAPS).

The papers draw out pedagogical themes and insights on arts learning that diverge from the prevailing culture of measurement and standardisation prevalent in educational practice and research. The exploratory nature of the research process as seen in the arts provocations and philosophical underpinnings provides a level of uncertainty yet at the same time opens up insights that challenge accepted norms of teaching and learning.

PAPERS:
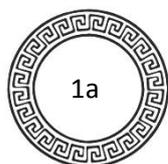
Christopher Naughton, *New Zealand Tertiary College*

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"They won't be measuring anything…so what are the goals and purpose of the study?" A reflection on the philosophical terrain of Move, Act, Play Sing (MAPS)

Work in progress

Keywords: **Arts | Early Childhood Education | Emergence | Deleuze**

ABSTRACT:

With the increasing privatisation of education (Honan and Sellars, 2007; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004) schools and early childhood centres may see their educational priorities as conforming to those of their local community rather than state legislature. This quote above was made by the mother of a child who was involved in one of the early childhood centres in the MAPS project undertaken in Auckland New Zealand. The dismissal by the mother of a project with seemingly no predetermined goals and purpose, addresses a facet of a philosophical de-territorialisation of practice (Olsson, 2009) – where researchers look to what is immanent (Deleuze, 1994) in the work that may unfold as opposed to measuring achievement according to fixed learning outcomes. By looking at several instances from the MAPS narratives, the evolution of ideas can be traced with reference to emergent practice (Osberg & Biesta, 2008)

where community artists, teachers, children, parents and researchers, enter into an immanent plane (Deleuze, 1994) where their practice can be seen as constantly evolving or becoming.

As teachers involved in MAPS started to adopt more autonomy in the work of the project, the children's integrity and invention were sought above efficient procedures and striated evaluations (Mozère, 2007), allowing teachers to question the prevailing culture of standardization, regulation and reduction of the Arts. An answer to what the goals and purpose of the project could be made categorically at the conclusion of the project in terms of the art making and sense of individuation (Deleuze, 1994) within the terms of a philosophical enquiry rather than rigid curriculum definitions.

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Deleuze's assemblages of desire: Mapping desiring machines that speak to arts based learning in early childhood settings

Work in progress

Keywords: **affect | Deleuze | early childhood | arts | knowing with | power**

ABSTRACT:

Recent critique of positivist research practices that have historically dominated the field of early childhood education has called for more exploration of approaches arising from 'postfoundational' philosophies of education (Farquhar & White, 2013). Responding to this, and following Deleuze & Guattari (1987) this paper explores the concept of 'desire' putting it to work in an arts based early childhood project (MAPS). Modernist narratives traditionally position desire in relation to a fantasised object. Deleuze and Guattari describe this view of desire as 'lack' and this is linked with deficit takes on notions of childhood. Challenging the traditional narrative further Deleuze and Guattari remove all claims to desire as a natural and spontaneous flow. They argue for desire as an assemblage, in which the construction of new assemblages is not rational and where understanding learning in terms of the rational autonomous learner has little place. An aim then of the paper is to further explore the linkages in fluid spaces where desire makes claims on curriculum, on teachers as learners, on learners as teachers, on environments as teachers, even on environments as learners. Using counter-narratives emerging from MAPS, cartographies are mapped that follow the material conditions and assemblages where desiring machines construct, question and speak to arts based learning. Further to this understanding of desire, assumptions about the binary separation of adult and child worlds, and of human and non-human worlds are contested, opening up emergent space(s) and providing future provocations to entrenched dominant practices in early childhood education.

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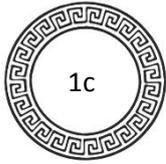
Dr David Lines, *University of Auckland*

Deleuze and the Ocean Swimmer: Relationality and early childhood arts learning

Work in progress

Keywords: **relationality | Deleuze | early childhood | arts | knowing with**

ABSTRACT:

In education the idea of relationality is often viewed simply in terms of human relationships, typically between that of the teacher and student. I argue that these readings become subsumed by dominant neoliberal discourses of standardisation and measurement. Recent research in New Zealand in arts education and early childhood (Fraser, Price & Aitken et al, 2007; Richie, 2012), attends to environmental and material conceptions of relationality. I seek to further develop a reading of relationality in education that is in tune with the environment, place, and space, and that is also responsive to the changing signs and stimulants brought about through a heightened awareness of the learning environment. I employ a working metaphor (Richardson, 1990) of the ocean swimmer (Deleuze, 1994; Semetsky, 2006) and use Deleuze's notion of difference and repetition (1994, p22-23) to consider the self as a relational learner who responds to the moving and changing character of signs, through engagement with the relational Other. The swimmer learns to swim through their relationality and responsiveness with the ocean wave, which emulates no consistent shape or form but is constantly moving and changing. Finally I show similarities between this Deleuzian learning and a story from an early childhood arts project in Auckland New Zealand, (MAPS). One aim of the paper is show how the use of a working metaphor disrupts normative interpretations of outcome-based early childhood learning and creates the potential for embodied and relational interpretations of how children experience learning as "knowing with".

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Maurizio Toscano, *The University of Melbourne*

Science Education and the Metaphysics of Measurement

Full paper

ABSTRACT:

'Science' grounds the meaning and significance of the practices, values and norms of the scientist. 'Science' also grounds the work of the science teacher and allows her to distinguish herself from other educational disciplinarians. 'Science' doubly blesses the science education researcher, for she inherits 'Science' both as an indirect object of inquiry and the means of legitimating the methods of that inquiry. Is it possible then, that despite the differences between the respective works of the scientist, the science teacher and the science education researcher, each may be measured against the common ground of 'Science'? This paper explores this question by taking 'Science' here in its metaphysical sense. The paper aims to respond, aphoristically and poetically, to the question of what, if anything, should secure the meaning of science, science teaching and science education research. It will do so by drawing upon the later philosophical writings of Martin Heidegger.

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In Touch with Reality? Philosophical Considerations on our Education Systems' Closeness to Reality — A Case for Authentic Education

Full paper

ABSTRACT:

In the *Convention of the Rights of the Child* of 1989, the United Nations declared that every child shall be given an education which enables him or her to develop his/her potentials to the fullest in order to prepare the child for a responsible life in a free society. Taking a look at nowadays educational reality, however, the mere opposite seems to be the case: Today's education systems are increasingly tough on children and youth. This competitive educational notion is being reflected in a number of adverse phenomena. The most obvious: Not an insignificant number of pupils are failing to comply with as well as achieve in the present system. In short, these so-called 'educational losers', due to various reasons, are failing to function in the current understanding of delivering and measuring of education.

In this paper, I am philosophically addressing the question in how far compulsory education does, amongst all education-political endeavours, really prepare young people for a responsible life in the World and reality of today and in how far it really allows for young people's potentials to develop to the fullest. In doing so, I am also taking a deeper look at the pedagogical principles and qualities of non-mainstream pedagogies and other alternative approaches in order to derive insightful answers in terms of how education could become more authentic and thus more reality-related.

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Ruth Irwin, *Independent*

National standards and Heidegger's concept of technological enframing

Full paper

ABSTRACT:

Positivist science seeks duplicable results which get understood in the commonly accepted framework of the modern world view. Anomalies are opportunities to reconceptualise the understanding of the event. At its best, science challenges commonly understood concepts and pushes open new frameworks for understanding. Heidegger argues that science is one of the most essential practices of modernity. That is because science occupies that space closest to the 'real' or the 'thing-in-itself' and the projecting conceptualisation of nominalism.

National Standardised testing is an attempt to understand children in a scientific fashion; as rational data that conforms to a normative spectrum. National testing is a one size fits all template approach to governance. This paper examines Heidegger's concept of the technological enframing of knowledge to unpack how pedagogy has been reduced to continual measurement in assessment rather than the development of thinking, feeling and knowing communities in the classroom.

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Yusef Waghid, *Stellenbosch University*

Learning democracy as an educational encounter: Staying in touch …

Work in progress

Keywords: **Learning | democracy | education | encounter**

ABSTRACT:

Liberal education often is criticised for not doing enough to produce learners who can enact democracy. Critics posit that liberal education is too intent on developing the cognitive capacities of individuals who might acquire knowledge of democracy, without necessarily knowing how to act as democratic citizens, because it is assumed that they might not have gained sufficient practice in democracy. I hold a different view. My contention is that learning democracy, as in acquiring knowledge and understanding of democracy, involves acquiring reasons and justifications for multiple patterns of democracy, which is an enabling condition to be or become democratic. One does not have to engage in democratic moments prior to being considered, or show one's prowess to act democratically in order to be considered, an individual worthy of having learnt democracy and therefore capable of practising or undermining it. Instead, learning democracy as an educational encounter involves, first and foremost, developing the cognitive self in relation to others, a process that in itself is situated in what Jane Roland Martin (2001: 25) refers to as 'cultural stock' – that is the doctrines, symbols, rites and rituals of cultures. Enhancing the cognitive ability of the self through learning democracy entails engaging in an educational encounter for two reasons: firstly, to acquire knowledge of different democratic understandings; and secondly, to bring one's cultural stock (which may be in conflict with democracy) into controversy with one's acquired knowledge of democratic theory.

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Utopian Worldmaking: Picturing Democracy as a Way of Life

Full paper

Keywords: **Utopia | democracy | way of life**

ABSTRACT:

William James and John Dewey emphasise inventiveness, social individuality, and fallibility in their pragmatic perspectives on human action. How do ways of utopian worldmaking emerge from the interior streams of "creative democracy" to use Dewey's term, and why, in James's phrase, is this "picture-making industry" educationally interesting? Answers to these questions promise to tell us something about the 'how' and the 'what for' of utopian imagination, democratic life, and experience.

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Standardisation Art Curriculum as the Way to Engineer Local Cultural Identity: A Critical Analysis of Art Curriculum of Secondary School in Aceh, Indonesia

Full paper

ABSTRACT:

This paper presents the cultural hegemony within the art curriculum in secondary schools Aceh, Indonesia. As the politics of cultural education study, the paper analyses critically the content of art curriculum. During the time of colonisation, researchers such as Hurgronje have used cultural resources as the tool to engineer false cultural identity as the way to gain local people submission for the foreign control. In modern time, cultural education, in particular art curriculum has always been a great interest of a government to use as a hegemonic media. My paper is to elaborate the representation of Acehnese cultural identity in the "Art and Culture" curriculum of secondary schools in Aceh. The Acehnese are the minority ethnic group that populate one of provinces in Indonesia. Recently, they encountered long conflict with the central government and it has impacted on their cultural education. This paper elucidates the national standard of art curriculum, uncovering its hidden agenda and cultural domination. With the help of Freirian perspectives, critical theorists such as Hall (1997) Apple (1990, 1996, 2000, 2003), Giroux (1991) and Beyer (1983) enlightens this paper. The paper views that the Acehnese have distinctive cultural identity from the majority group ethnic in Indonesia and their identity, however, is underrepresented in art curriculum. The curriculum is dominated by majority ethnic group culture that threatens the survival of local cultural identity, which eventually leads to cultural hegemony.

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Does the critique of humanism measure up?: Critical humanism and education today

Work in progress

ABSTRACT:

The contemporary person tends to imagine humanism as a manifestation of the modern project. Consequently, it can be assumed that there is effectively one distinct notion of humanism. I suggest that it is this Enlightenment version of humanism that is the site of critique amongst the anti- and post-humanists. In this paper, I begin by providing an argument for pluralising the conception of humanism and humanistic education through an account of its manifestations in Western history. Following this, I suggest some possibilities for a re-emergence of humanistic education in a world after postmodernity. Finally, after making a case for the centrality of criticism within the multiple humanisms, I will consider how critical humanistic education challenges an educational climate where measurement is central.

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Dr Kirsten Locke, *University of Auckland*

Surviving Education: Arendt and Lyotard on the event of childhood

Work in progress

Keywords: **Arendt | Lyotard | childhood | affect | temporality | survival**

ABSTRACT:

This paper explores alternative notions of childhood through the work of Hannah Arendt and Jean-Francois Lyotard. For both thinkers, the space of childhood was imbued with a sense of wonderment and unfettered openness to the vibrancy of hope and the possibility of the unknown. Both thinkers engaged with the theoretical coordinates of this space in ways that translated the qualities of childhood to the dimensions of the temporal 'world' of the event. For Arendt, the world of childhood-as-event needed constant vigilance and protection from the 'adult' world of modernity in order for children to freely engage in the magic of childhood. Lyotard, however, deployed the 'event' of childhood to engage with the fleeting temporality of artistic spaces in literature and painting. His version of childhood-as-event expands Arendt's articulation of childhood to something darker and more unsettling. Celebrated in the Lyotardian lexicon, the event of childhood is positioned before language, signification and meaning, and is somehow more 'savage' in its unadorned pure state of affectation. The purpose of this paper is to engage with both these thinkers in order to critique the fragility of the space of childhood in education and the way this space, in the name of childhood, is constantly under threat. Through theorising the fleeting, temporal dimension to childhood as an event, the purpose of the paper is an attempt to generate an alternative critique to the primacy of outcomes and evidence-based constructions of contemporary education that ignore the affective dimension to the world of the child, and in doing so, stifle the temporal world and potentiality of childhood.

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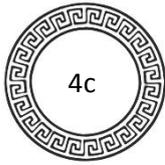
Tyson Retz, *University of Melbourne*

Explaining human agency in history education: Empathy or rational understanding?

Full paper

ABSTRACT:

This paper compares two methods for explaining human agency in history education. During a period of school history revitalisation in the UK in the 1970s, two distinct approaches emerged, both with similar educational objectives, but drawing from opposing philosophical traditions. The term 'historical empathy' was introduced from one team's interpretation of the idealist philosopher of history, R. G. Collingwood, while another team, whose influences were the more positivist scientific methods of explanation, proposed 'rational understanding' to explain why people in the past acted the way they did.

What is the philosophical heritage of each approach? Where are they located broadly in the philosophy of the human and social sciences? To what extent did they coalesce with wider currents of educational thought? That history educationalists were divided on the matter is not surprising given the conflict in the philosophy of history between hermeneutical and covering-law methods of explanation. The choice is one of conferring an 'inside' or individual character to human action, or adopting the more rationalist view that certain actions are to be expected in light of certain antecedent conditions. Yet despite the fact that they hail from competing philosophical traditions, and *prima facie* signpost separate methodological tracks, the paper suggests that in educational practice they cohabitate to provide fluid accounts of human agency in the past.

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Dr Georgina Stewart, *The University of Auckland, Faculty of Education*

Measured policy: Teacher standards and cultural competencies for teachers of Māori learners

Full paper

Keywords: **critical discourse analysis | cultural responsiveness | Māori education policy | postcolonialism**

ABSTRACT:

This paper explores how current trends towards 'measurement' and 'accountability' are reflected in Māori education policy, by analysing a key policy document titled, 'Tātaiako: Cultural competencies for teachers of Māori learners', and reading it against an equivalent policy document, 'Māori children and the teacher', from 40 years previously. A critical postcolonialist Māori discourse analysis of these two documents makes it apparent that the actual purpose of Tātaiako is to shift accountability for Māori student achievement off the structures of national education provision, and onto the shoulders of individual classroom teachers. The contemporary policy is emptied of content explaining or even referring to Māori educational disparity, instead presenting just five key words to encapsulate the concept of 'Māori potential' to replace that of 'Māori deficit'. This paper presents a close reading of aspects of both policies, including meanings, genres, usages, subject positioning, and illustrations, presenting evidence to support the conclusions of the critical discourse analysis. In conclusion, the attempt by this policy to 'standardise' cultural responsiveness is considered within the contemporary climate of a fixation on measurement.

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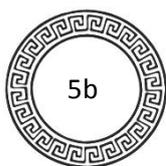
Dr Radhika Gorur, *Victoria Institute, Victoria University*

Does Current Critique Measure Up? An Argument for a Sociology of measurement

Work in progress

ABSTRACT:

Ask a policy maker today in any OECD country how their education system is doing, and they will likely respond in terms of PISA rankings. The 'soft material' of the ideological, sociological and cultural aspects of education appear to have fallen off as the 'hard material' of numeric rankings have persisted, investing nations with new urgencies, drawing particular groups for policy attention, installing new regimes of administration, and creating new technologies of governance.

Critics have responded to this growing privileging of measurement by arguing that: quantification is reductive and cannot capture the complexity of education; numbers are products of particular theoretical and methodological choices, and therefore not apolitical or 'objective'; numbers are a technology of governmentality and should be resisted; and

numbers are being misused in policy and should be viewed with suspicion.

Whilst these criticisms are legitimate, this paper argues for moving beyond debunking and towards a sociology of measurement which focuses on how the practices of defining, classifying and standardizing systematically erase variance and uncertainty to present apparently self-evident 'data'. Using examples from my research, I show how resources from Science and Technology Studies (STS), and a shift from a representational to a performative idiom, can be deployed to explore the socio-material histories and lives of numbers and the processes by which they translate the world and percolate through policy terrains. Following the work of STS scholars, I explore how we might use such a sociology of measurement to interfere productively and participate usefully in contemporary education policy.

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Can We Measure Trust in Knowledge Acquisition? A Standpoint Derived from Anscombe's Notion of 'Teaching by Testimony'

Full paper

ABSTRACT:

In recent years, a demand to measure educational outcomes has emerged. In Japan and other countries, accountability is on the reform agenda of educational systems, both at the national and local levels. Educational outcomes must be based on evidence so as to make them visible to stakeholders. The concerns exists, however, that the demand for the measurability of educational outcomes undermines a necessary condition of education, trust between teachers and students, which is not easily gauged.

This presentation examines the significance of trust as a ground for teaching knowledge by elucidating Anscombe's notion of 'teaching by testimony'. In her view, the trust of students in their teachers offers a firm ground for teaching knowledge. This trust allows students to accept the 'testimony' of their teachers and thus to instil knowledge. Therefore, trust is a necessary condition of teaching.

This presentation attains its purpose by the following steps. First, it clarifies the background of Anscombe's perspective. Anscombe develops her own views, based on Wittgenstein's philosophy that indicates the initiation of pupils into their communities. Second, it relies on Anscombe's papers to detail her discussion of 'teaching by testimony' and refers to current discussions of the epistemology of testimony. Finally, it observes that not until knowledge acquisition fails can trust be shown. This position provides a standpoint for grasping the current situation of education and suggests that those who carry out measurements be prudent.

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'People love metrics': A super sad true love story

6a

Full paper

Keywords: **Metrics | Camus | Heidegger | people | love | measuring**

ABSTRACT:

A speaker at a recent conference on higher education stated that "people love metrics." What might make it possible for such a statement to be uttered as if it were true? This paper explores the truth of the love of metrics, through the narrative of Gary Shteyngart's *Super Sad True Love Story* and the work of Albert Camus and Martin Heidegger. In Shteyngart's novel the central character, a bit of an intellectual and a hopeless Romantic, questions his identity in a metric-ocratic future. Of particular interest in this paper is the statistically probable future in which the great social network machines no longer sell their hidden user data to the highest bidder – a time in which citizens are a composite of their metrics, a more or less sexy array of 'trend' values.

This future looks quite familiar to an academic whose semesters are calculated in student satisfaction ratings, research performance scores, and perhaps the occasional self-assessment out of five. That we might love this future, and that it be a sad love story, is drawn out through the work of Camus's challenge to the ways in which the world is enumerated, in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, and through Heidegger's suggestion that it is entirely in measurement we dwell as human. The paper concludes by drawing the work of these three authors into the metricocratic spaces of early childhood learning and teaching and the love of an adult world for the child's learning to measure the world.

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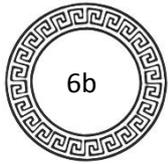
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Instrumental Rationality Revisited: The Limits of Visibility and the Desire to Know

Work in progress

Keywords: **visibility | instrumental rationality | the invisible | desire**

ABSTRACT:

This paper aims to discuss about a particular dimension of measurement, which is that of visibility. Beginning with the early modern emphasis on the observable (that is, visible and hence measurable), visibility has become a warrant of objectivity and efficiency, spreading through social activities such as work, leisure and of course education, mainly under the hood of instrumental rationality. But contemporary society has developed a more radical view of visibility. Some refer to it as an 'information society' or 'communication society' where interpersonal relations are made easier and knowledge, easier to access and gain, thanks to exposure through various media. Such an emphasis also reveals a deeper anxiety about the uncertainty of the invisible and the comfort we take in the visible as what can be calculated and controlled.

My argument is that relation to the invisible, this part of the world, others, ourselves that is not directly accessible to us, is also an important aspect of education today. Measuring up means we gain the comfort in believing that nothing is hidden or that anything can be put into numbers. But in such a transparent (and thoroughly formalist) society, we lose the desire to know, springing from the fact that there is a limit to visibility.

Acknowledging there is an unexposed 'unknown' does not means that we cannot relate to it, it just means that we cannot control it, and education is as much about learning what is already known as about learning through relation with the unknown.

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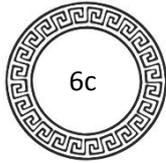
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Permanently performing learning-subjects: The assessment of 'learning dispositions' in early education

Full paper

ABSTRACT:

Questions of measurement permeate through all sectors of education. The limiting effects of assessment regimes on curriculum content, student engagement and forms of success have been widely noted, including in relation to early childhood education. 'Developmental' observations and assessments of young children have been extensively criticised as limiting, normalising and pathologising. A turn toward context, participation and voice in early education has been posed as 'a way out' of this problematic. Aotearoa New Zealand's socioculturally framed narrative assessment approach exemplifies such a turn. 'Learning story' assessments work to foreground, and extend, children's 'learning dispositions'. Overwhelmingly, this assessment approach is characterised as empowering, and enabling the development of diverse 'competent, confident' child-learners. In this paper, I draw from a recently conducted Foucauldian analysis of early childhood education assessment discourse-practice in New Zealand. Approaching ethics as self-constitutive practices, I consider possible ethical and governmental effects of this assessment and pedagogical approach. I argue that the 'telos' of this approach appears to be the production of permanently-performing learning subjects. Working with an understanding of ontology as technical, this 'troubling' analysis does not, however, involve a call for the removal of regulation, or futures-thinking as a source of direction for conduct in early education per se. By considering the normative conceptions, and technical inscriptions, that are at work in the 'learning story' approach, my argument troubles its status as 'empowering practice', and provokes instead, an analysis of issues of measurement and standardisation as they relate to practices of self-government and constitution.

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NB: My use of the phrase 'permanently-performing learning subjects' is an adaption of Tuschling & Engemann's phrase describing lifelong learning as a "technique of permanent self-performance" (2006, p. 459).

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7a

School evaluation or disciplinary subjection?
A consideration of the 'complementary' evaluation of
New Zealand's Education Review Office

Full paper

ABSTRACT:

Educational evaluation in New Zealand schools harmonises with the reformist agenda of public choice theory that applies dispassionate reviews of schools conducted by non–captive ex–teachers and school leaders, who work in the Education Review Office. They are 'non–captive' in the sense of being beholden to State Services, rather than the Ministry of Education. Variously accused of engaging in politics of blame or teacher bashing, ERO has attempted to present itself as supporting schools in a cycle of 'complementary' review, which synthesises external accountability with internal learning from review. This paper will examine the underpinning epistemology of the Education Review Office approach to review and reflect on its particular research method, arguing that it is motivated by a commitment to 'evidence–led' teaching, a problematic concept. Questions are raised regarding the 'complementary' nature of the review process to establish whether there is commitment to democratic participation by schools in the review process, as implied in the concept of complementariness. With reference to Foucauldian concepts, of disciplinary subjection, it will be argued that the so–called 'complementary' dimension of the Education Review Office process is characterised by the administration of technologies of self–discipline and self–punishment, and that 'learning' in this context is deeply punitive in nature.

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National Curriculum, Standardized National Testing and Market Orientation of Nepali Private Schools: A Foucauldian perspectives

Work in progress

ABSTRACT:

Private schools in Nepal are operated under the legal provision of the government of Nepal. As per the government regulation, they (private schools) follow national curriculum and students from private school needs to sit for the national examination also known as School Leaving Certificate (SLC) at the end of grade 10. Admissions at the higher level are based on their (student's) performance in the SLC examination. Private schools market themselves on the basis of their students' performance in the SLC examination thereby suggesting that children and their performance are traded and exchange as commodities. Due to such market orientation of private schools of the country, teachers working in the secondary level are paid much higher compared to those working in the primary level of the same school. This paper discusses such issues related to standardization of assessment and nationalization of curriculum using Foucault's (1980) notion of power and knowledge.

This paper is based on the semi-structured interviews with teachers, administrators and principals of two private schools located in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal. In addition to the primary source from semi-structured interview, it also uses documentary sources from policy documents from government of Nepal.

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Measuring Up to the 'Way': Education, Taoism and Happiness

Full paper

Keywords: **Measurement | happiness | Taoism | the Way | moral education**

ABSTRACT:

What is measurement in education for? Before answering this question, it is necessary to look at what education is for. Many would say, the aim of education is to create a better future. But we are not always sure what this involves. Often the answers emphasise intellectual development and economic goals. This paper argues that these goals are too narrow and that more attention needs to be paid to the broader process of moral education. Although intellectual education plays an important role in the development of productivity, the neglect of moral education is harmful to harmony and happiness. This paper aims to reposition the standard of measurement in education – measuring up to the 'Way' (a key concept of Taoism), the way to happiness.

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Towards a Framework of Democratic Education

Work in progress

Keywords: **Classical Democracy | Democratic Education | Deliberative Democracy | Neo-Athenian Republicanism | Models of Democracy**
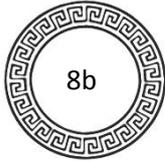
ABSTRACT:

This paper is a multidisciplinary conceptual work drawing on political and educational theory; the aim is to develop a framework for a democratic theory of education. Towards this aim, I first draw upon political philosophy to extract a set of democratic principles from the existing models of democracy. I use Hannah Arendt's (2005) definition of 'politics as freedom' as the selection criterion and review three democratic traditions in political theory, namely classical democracy, neo-Athenian republicanism, and deliberative democracy. Then, I proceed to examine the socio-politics of education by comparing and contrasting critical educational theory with liberal educational ideology. Finally, adopting a critical stance towards educational policies and practices, I apply the democratic principles extracted from political theory, i.e., inclusion, equality, active participation, choice, deliberation, and collective decision-making, to the realm of education. The result of this marriage between politics and education is a model of democratic education that treats schools as micro-public spheres for learning and practicing democracy. The ultimate objective of such a theory is to further democratize society through the institution of formal education, and vice versa.

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# Phronesis as Embodied Professional Knowledge

Full paper

ABSTRACT:

If one listens to those who claim to represent education at national levels within the sphere of the OECD, we could be excused for believing that education is simply the measuring of certain skills within the narrow confines of functional literacy and numeracy and we might believe that this is all there is to educating. This paper makes a call for the restoration of teaching professionals: teachers who are capable of making decisions and knowing what counts as a suitable curricula for their students, teachers capable of making critical and informed judgements and evaluations. This restoration would presuppose that we value a form of embodied knowing termed phronesis, which is practical wisdom that uses experience, disposition, reflection, judgement and ethics. The term originated with Aristotle but is used today in relation to describe professional knowledge. The Aristotelian notion of Phronesis is that of an embodied social practice which requires interactions with others and which typically involves a judgement through deliberation that is not calculative. Phronesis is distinguished from theoretical knowledge or science, or even technical skills; it is an intellectual virtue. This paper provides examples of the types of practical knowledge and wisdom necessary to evaluate music performances, compositions, arrangements, understanding styles and genres, musical knowledge and aural acuity, not within the confines of simple narrow structures, but informed ethical judgements which embrace all musical styles, both cultural and subcultural. This kind of practical wisdom requires the know-how and moral commitment to make judgements as phronesis and to shape new kinds of professional knowledge.

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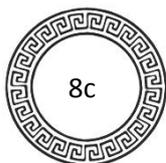
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Object-Oriented Philosophy: A Promise for Enchanting the Educational Practice

Full paper

Graham Harman's object-oriented philosophy is a new and robust approach to metaphysics and ontology that provides an invigorating account of objects and invites us to go against the grain of present-day philosophical approaches to the reality of the world and the things in it. Formal schooling tends to eschew what Harman calls "the carnival of life." The impressively rich and dynamic texture of life is ignored in favour of a static and dull cognition that is stripped of the bizarre enigma of our world. Such an approach to reality is then used to structure an impoverished learning experience for students with an eye towards control and predictability through increasingly aggressive forms of measurement rather than genuine encounters with the dramatic experience of the carnival of things. Schooling should be continuous with the world richly textured with all the fascinating objects populating it and not be a sterile and arid environment yielding a dull and deadening experience. An object-oriented philosophy enlivens our understanding of the world and all its inhabitants. This in itself is educative since it liberates us to think in novel ways about ourselves and the world and its objects. The promise of an object-oriented philosophy is an education conceived as enchantment by the inscrutable depths of objects.

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9a

Can educationally significant learning be measured?
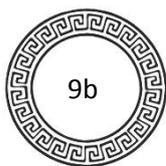
Work in progress

ABSTRACT:

This paper argues that assessment is a central feature of teaching, particularly as a means to determine whether what has been taught has been learnt. However, we take issue with the current trend in education which places a significant amount of emphasis upon assessment, which in turn has exacerbated the "teaching to the test" syndrome, not to mention distorting teaching decisions that are detrimental to the overall development of student knowledge and understanding. Part of the problem with assessment in education seems to revolve around the nature of knowledge and how best to measure human knowledge and understanding. Although much philosophical uncertainty and disagreement exists surrounding the nature of knowledge, we argue that coming to know something is a sine qua non of any education. In saying this, we highlighted the limits of assessment by demonstrating how formal tests and examinations cannot measure student understanding or what has been called "rich knowledge". Consequently, our argument is a philosophical one to the effect that assessment in principle could never measure deep or meaningful learning because the instruments available are simply too blunt, or more importantly cannot fully capture meaningful human understanding easily, at least for the purposes of certification or to ascertain the comparative quality of education between different schools.

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On the (in)humanity of the language of educational measurement

Work in progress

ABSTRACT:

Biesta (2005: 59) states that he is opposed to a language of learning that meets the needs of the learner, since, on the one hand, it assumes that learners come to education with a clear understanding of what their needs are, and on the other, it forgets that one of the reasons for engaging in education is precisely to ascertain what those needs are. The critical dilemma with a language that attempts to meet the needs of the learner is that it suggests that the only meaningful questions that a language of measurement can ask is one that is based on a language of needs, and not on interrogating that which we have yet to discover about ourselves and others. One of the alternatives to a language of needs is what Biesta (1999) describes as a process of 'coming into presence' in a social and intersubjective world, which is constituted by otherness and difference. By extending Biesta's 'coming into presence', this paper will, firstly, explore how a language of measurement based on a language of needs, belies the humanity that ought to pervade any educational discourse, since it does not offer a deliberative space for engagement or disruption. And secondly, if a language of measurement is contradictory to a language of humanity, then how can educational measurement, based on a language of humanity and compassion, rather than needs, ensure learners' responsibility and responsiveness to their own humanity, and the humanity of others?

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M J Stuart, *Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa NZ CHILDCARE Ass*

State ordering of welfare measures: liberal nations' appraisal of risk. The use of Human Capital theory in addressing educational 'under-achievement'

Work in progress

ABSTRACT:

"The Government is supporting New Zealanders on low incomes with a suite of measures designed to help them become more independent." Paula Bennett, Minister of Social Development, 16 May, 2013.

"Four priority groups are currently disproportionately disengaged from and underachieving in the education system – Māori, Pasifika, students with special education needs and students from low socio-economic backgrounds." Paula Bennett, Minister of Social Development, 27 May, 2013.

The tension of governing, but not too much, was a focus of Michel Foucault's (2008) work on governmentality. 'There is no liberalism without a culture of danger' (p.67). The production of freedom entails a productive/destructive relationship between the governed and state. Using New Zealand National Coalition Government education and welfare policies (2008- present), this paper examines political mechanisms including procedures, controls and coercions designed to manage populations identified as 'risky'. Nikolas Rose (1999) suggests that in the late twentieth century, a different set of question about unemployment are pertinent: to be governed at the level of the state and the individual, to avoid the 'risk of dependence' (p. 162). Workers need now (to avoid familial penury), to be in life-long training and education, in competition for employment; to be job-ready and actively seeking work.

I attempt a genealogical shift from the welfare economics of Alfred Marshall, to those of the present, arguing, as do Cooter and Rappaport (1984) that economic measures are not constant. I ask about power/knowledge relations over the past two centuries between the state, its education institutions and the 'undeserving poor'.

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Starting Strong III: Unpacking the Metaphor

Full paper

ABSTRACT:

The OECD last year released a new publication in the 'Starting Strong' series, purporting to be a 'quality toolbox' for early childhood education and care. Apart from the problematic notion of quality in relation to education, we argue that there is a serious problem with the idea of education as something that can be done with a toolbox, particularly in the formative stages of young children's education. We begin by laying out the framework of the OECD document and some of its salient features, focussing especially on the metaphor of the toolbox. We then explore the philosophical idea of metaphor as a persuasive device, using it to 'unpack' some of the contents of the OECD toolbox, in particular the policy 'levers' that feature so prominently. We conclude with the observation that the OECD use of the toolbox as a metaphor is an intentional and surreptitious way of inserting international economic imperatives into local government education policy.

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Other texts in metaphor, education, and policy.

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Spheres of abstraction: The Glass Bead Game and the Knowledge Society
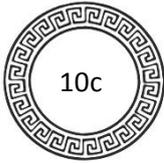
Full paper

ABSTRACT:

Any connection between the rise of a global knowledge society in the twenty-first century and a fictional work written in 1943 may appear rather tenuous to those of a sceptical disposition. However, as pointed out by Roberts (2007), 'novels by taking us into the hearts and minds of characters, provide an especially helpful means through which to explore the nature and significance of ethical, epistemological and educational ideas for human lives' (p.510). This exploration of human thinking is especially true of Hermann Hesse's work, The Glass Bead Game, which provides an alternative and somewhat provocative means through which to examine present beliefs about knowledge, tertiary education, and the nature of the global environment in which educational ideas are formulated. More importantly, it presents possibilities for a different kind of educational future, one where 'measuring up' is not confined to a narrow definition of marketable human achievement.

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John Tillson, *Mater Dei Institute of Education, Dublin City University*

How to Derive the Raison D'être of Schooling from one's Ethics of Influence

Full paper

ABSTRACT:

After delineating a concept the ethics of influence as a distinctive area of inquiry, this paper argues that as an ethically motivated influential activity, schooling ought to derive its *raison d'être from that area*. That one ought to derive one's idea of educational activities, and indeed, one's concept of education, from one's ethics of influence. While I do not hope to defend a particular ethics of influence, I hope to show how the ethic of influence that one might favour will have implications for what ought to become of schooling. More generally, having a considered understanding of and approach to the ethics of influence is fundamental to having a considered approach to ethical schooling and upbringing amongst other things, including, but not limited to, immigrant assimilation, journalism, offender reform, advertising standards and recruitment policies. Qua activities of influence, it is important that we approach these topics with a consistent understanding of what kinds of influence are and are not acceptable. Before reaching this point, I discuss what is meant by 'influence', and discuss those respects in which we may be influenced, whether ethically or unethically. When we influence something, we make a difference to that thing; to perpetuate a state of that thing that would otherwise cease, for instance. Specifically, I am interested in the ethics of making differences to people, and to those mental characteristics of people, in virtue of which they act as they do; their beliefs and desires for instance, or more generally, their dispositions.

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11a

Locality, Localization, Localism and the TOEIC Test – Implications for English Language Education at Tertiary Level in Japan

Full paper

Keywords: **Language | Ideology | Standardized Testing | Critical Literacy**

ABSTRACT:

The TOEIC is an English achievement test popular in Japanese higher education and business. While ostensibly a standardized test taken by students and office employees, I will argue that the TOEIC is also an instantiation, enactment and commodification of locality among its stakeholders. Alongside the TOEIC is an entire gamut of spatial, space-creation and space-saving practices (Pennycook, 2010) staking: (1) locality – enactments of territoriality through local textbooks and website materials, spatial berthing or ensconcing of TOEIC at universities, night classes and cram schools; (2) Localization – enactments of ideologies legitimating particularized teaching, testing and administering practices through the use of ideological tools like naturalization, reification, promotion, fragmentation and exclusion (Eagleton, 1991); (3) Localism – enactments of resistance and containment characterized by absolutisms and chauvinism (Canagarajah, 2005).

In this paper, I will critically scrutinize current discourses alongside data collected on teaching, drilling, materials writing and other seemingly mundane practices associated with the TOEIC while employed at a university outside Tokyo. I will argue that behind these practices are dominant ideologies governing language testing which in turn have a strong bearing on the status and treatment of English in Japanese higher education. The paper follows recent attention among critical scholars to the importance of looking closely at contextualized practices characterizing language teaching activities – in this case testing and measurement. Reference will be made to the work of critical educators like Pennycook, Canagarajah, Kubota who have written about the importance of examining discourses and epistemologies for a deeper understanding of the micro-politics of prevailing practices.

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# Social realism, critical realism and educational theory

Full paper

ABSTRACT:

The recent use of expressions such as 'social realism' and 'critical realism' in educational theorising reopens epistemological issues that philosophers of education should be addressing. This discussion examines the current uses of these terms and reviews the philosophical issues they raise. I argue that 'social realism' is a misguided attempt to combine sociological and epistemological claims about knowledge, while 'critical realism' signals a Kantian line of argument in some uses but not others, and in either case needs to be separated from New Age 'spirituality'.
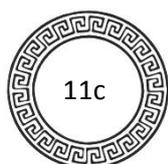
Professor Elizabeth Grierson, *RMIT University*

TEQSA as Regulator of Value meets Nietzsche as Legislator of the Same

Full paper

ABSTRACT:

This paper works as a conversation that takes place at the time of an unlikely meeting between the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency Act (TEQSA, 2011) and Frederic Nietzsche regarding value. Following the Bradley Review of Australian education in 2009, TEQSA was enacted under the authority of the Australian Commonwealth Constitution in 2011, casting by January 2012 a regulatory regime

across all tertiary institutions in Australia with the aim of ensuring national consistency in higher education. So now by law, university performance is measured and evaluated under a set of regulatory frameworks with legislated requirements for compliance and serious legal consequences for non-compliance. Wearing the hat of legal restraint and regulation, TEQSA encounters the contrary impulses of Frederic Nietzsche. In the conversation that ensues they run up against questions of value – how we mark and measure it. Each displays their own form of rhetorical trickery and the use of the seeming paradox to make an enlargement upon the state of mind they each substantiate. It might be said this is the apotheosis of transgression.

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The University of Wisdom – Exploring the Role of Wisdom for Secondary and Tertiary Education

Full paper

ABSTRACT:

We live in an age of measurement and accountability. Emphasis is given to supposedly easily assessable skills, such as reading, writing and maths. In such an environment some humanistic aspects of education seem to get lost in the wider scheme of politics, policies and assessments. Among these are concepts such as Bildung, spirituality and wisdom. This article will explore the notion of wisdom in relation to other terms of educational relevance, such as Bildung, knowledge, character, spirituality and practical wisdom. Further, Eastern and Western philosophical approaches to the concept of wisdom will be taken into account in an attempt to comprehensively explore its meaning and dimensions. In this context, philosophers like Lauxmann (2004), Schwartz & Sharpe (2010), de Mello (1992), Maxwell (2012), Lau (2009), Tucker (2003), Laozi (n.d./1993) and others will be drawn on. The role of wisdom in and for education will be discussed in light of a review of possible aims and ends in education. In particular I will draw on philosophical theories of the art of living, as presented by Schmid, as well as arguments made by Dewey and R. S. Peters. The practical focus of this discussion will be placed mainly on secondary and tertiary educational settings.

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Jessica Gerrard, *The University of Melbourne*

All that is solid melts into work: work ethic, education ethic, and measuring the purpose of education

Work in progress

ABSTRACT:

The oft-quoted phrase from the *Communist Manifesto*, "all that is solid melts into air" attempts to describe the potential of capital to constantly seep into social relations: Marx and Engels argued that capital endlessly displaces social understandings, values, and practices in order to create markets that "must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connexions everywhere" (Marx & Engels, 1998[1848], p. 39). More recently, many have identified the way in which capitalist market-based approaches have become embedded within education, and correspondingly the way in which education and learning are foundational social and economic practices across the lifespan, as individuals negotiate an increasingly marketised social world (e.g. Bernstein, 2001; Biesta, 2009). Moreover, many have already called into question the impact of aligning education and schooling too tightly with the needs of industry and work (e.g. Coffield, 1999; Crowther, 2010). Within such critiques, there often remains an implicit, and sometimes explicit, commitment to a counter-ideal of education or schooling as holding a possible promised alternative. In this paper, I explore this implicit support of an 'education ethic', and suggest that commitment to education must be cognisant of its limits as much as its proclaimed potentiality. Particularly given the long enmeshed history of education, schooling and work, commitment to education and learning must take into consideration the ways in which self-work and self-development are core affective dimensions of the marketization of the social world (Simons & Masschelein, 2008). In this context, it becomes increasingly difficult to conceptualise alternative measures of education that remain open to educational purposes 'beyond' the market and the hegemonic logic of constant self-development (see Biesta, 2010). In response, in this paper I argue for a historically and sociologically engaged theory of education, which attends to the shifting, but persistent, function and form of social power.

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Russell Hvolbek

Philosophy in Modern Education
What's the Point?

ABSTRACT:

What a sorry state of education it is when subjects subsumed within the word "philosophy" are found boring. And yet, in high school and college philosophy classes this is indeed far too often the case.

A close acquaintance of mine just finished up his first year at a very prestigious American university. During the course of the year he took two classes in modern philosophy. He read selections from Descartes, Gassendi, Hume, Leibniz, Kant, Nietzsche, Arendt, et.al., and while he did claim that Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals* was fascinating, for the most part he found the teaching of the two courses boring, and what is even worse, largely a waste of time. A waste of time!

I ask: With any one of the great thinkers mentioned above and the issues about which they write how can boredom be the result? I answer: Teachers are missing the only point, the only reason for teaching philosophy.

With Hans Georg Gadamer's two short books on Greek philosophy as reference points—*The Beginning of Philosophy* and *The Beginning of Knowledge*—this paper discusses the only reason for teaching philosophy. The argument goes as follows:

1) The two major dialogues of the modern world—science and capitalism—determine the educational values of our school and university systems.

2) These dialogues transpire in a calculative and pragmatic thinking—reducible to measurement—that aims at control of the earth and success in the market place.

3) This mold of thinking and the knowledge it gives us is an extension of our biological need to survive. In this thinking and this knowledge we excel. But in this

dialogue we are simply sophisticated beavers making better dams.

4) Philosophy, on the other hand, was the creation of a different type of thinking.

5) Philosophic thinking is not calculative and the knowledge it provides is not useful.

6) Philosophic thinking had a recognizable starting point and its creation results in a completely new orientation and understanding of what is going on in the world.

7) Philosophic thinking is the "making available of experience that accumulates and awakens the meaning of all this has for us." Parmenides. This is the point!

Thus:

1) Philosophy is not cumulative knowledge and it should not be taught as a history of ideas, facts, and data. Measurement is not the language of philosophy.

2) The primary goal of any philosophy class is to bring the student into thinking philosophically, and thus to make the student aware of a different orientation to reality than the pragmatic useful orientation into which we are thrust as animals.

3) A philosophy class succeeds when it makes the student aware of the mysterious complex nature of the being of reality

4) The point of philosophy is to expose the student to all that is "here" beyond our using and taking.

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Secondary school students' ideas of learning and schooling. A case study of a middle years program

Work in progress (Masters research report. Nearing completion)

ABSTRACT:

In an age of measurement, deeper questions about the purpose of schooling and the nature of learning are insufficiently addressed. In particular, the perspectives of students on these matters are rarely considered. This presentation reports on a qualitative case study, undertaken in 2013, to investigate secondary students' ideas of learning and the purposes of schooling. In particular, the study looks at how student ideas are influenced by participation in an alternative middle years program (the "Explore Program"). Analysis of student interview data indicates the contemporary dominance of narrow "private" notions of the purposes of schooling, and neoliberal policy priorities, including that of measurement. It is argued that "Explore" and "mainstream" embody conflicting educational discourses, and that student data illustrate the complex struggle of coping with the resulting dissonance between the two. Whereas abstract and generalised statements about learning and schooling fitted more predictable patterns (learning as simply increasing knowledge, school as preparation for a job), student narratives embedded in personal experience, drawing from photo elicitation, provided alternative insights. These included more subtle, emergent notions of learning such as coming to see the world in a different way. It is argued that experiences of disequilibrium, facilitated by structural aspects of Explore, are central to an account of the impact it has for students, and its potential for destabilising narrow notions of learning and schooling. These structural aspects are examined employing concepts from complexity theory. The implications for research and evaluation concerning middle years programs in the contemporary policy and institutional context are examined.

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Peter McDowell, *Charles Darwin University*

Where is 'the measureless' in educational research? Some reflections on Hegel's concept of measure

Full paper

Keywords: **measure | the measureless | Being | Essence | ontology | non-philosophy**

ABSTRACT:

The paper examines the intriguing position of 'measure' within the complex, conceptual genealogy that unfolds in Hegel's Science of Logic. As one of the principal, culminating concepts in the Doctrine of Being, 'measure' becomes intimately involved in the first, doctrinal transition of the logic, namely, the crucial shift to the Doctrine of Essence.

By holding in suspense a series of tensions between fundamental precursors—among them 'quality' and 'quantity', a duality wonderfully preserved in mainstream social research—the concept of 'measure' is metaphysically laden enough to generate a dialectical counterpart that is curiously paradoxical and conspicuously absent in contemporary methodological discourse (whether in the discipline of education or more broadly): the concept of 'the measureless'.

Failure to acknowledge 'the measureless' easily leads to misconstrual of the logical distinction between Being and Essence, and, consequently, the intricate interdependencies between carefully differentiated categories become largely unfathomable (this includes, for example, overlooking the considerable conceptual separation between quantification and causation).

The paper then reflects on the prevalence of this unhelpful situation from the perspective of Hegel's phenomenology, where 'measure' and 'standards' are so compellingly inscribed into the heart of consciousness and its doctrinal presentation.

Some important, further implications are drawn from significant commentaries by Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty on the famous 'introduction' to Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit. From Heidegger comes the realisation that a substandard (or naive) approach to mensuration prevails for reasons that are intrinsically ontological, to which Merleau-Ponty adds the forbidding prospect of an unavoidable encounter with non-philosophy.

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Education without measure? A wistful interrogation

Work in progress

Keywords: **mystery | measurement | flux | form | limit**

ABSTRACT:

This paper takes a wistful stance on the topic by inviting the reader to imagine, with us, a contemporary world without measurement. If this world were possible we explore its potential for education. In educational settings free from measurement what would learning look like? Could we even talk of pedagogy? Suspending 'reality' for a moment we return to the limit-limitless/form-formless philosophy of Pythagoras and the nature of flux offered by Heraclitus to contemplate a world without exclusive attention to the origins of (Platonic and Aristotelian) logic and all that followed - a trajectory we argue has seldom been questioned in education. We join a bevy of philosophers (Novalis, Foucault, Ranciere, Heidegger, Dostoevsky, to name a few) to ask what if Socrates was wrong in proposing that what is important can only be discovered through order and reason? What, instead, if the pre-Socratic attention to the mysterious, un-uttered, realm of flux was brought into conversation and revealed a legitimacy in darkness and the shadows of unknowability? What if there was no need for separation through a dialectic approach to knowledge and its forms, and unimaginable ideas were unleashed through alternate routes that resisted dichotomised positions - legitimately speaking of appearance as illusion and uncertainty rather than fact? In this world without measure what might learners be able to contemplate and teachers 'see' when released from contemporary measurement frameworks? Would it even be possible?

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Daniella Forster, School of Education, *University of Newcastle, Australia*

Reading the possibility of ethics in preservice teacher professional experiences

Work in progress

ABSTRACT:

This work-in-progress attempts to deconstruct, read and re-read, the 'obligations' preservice teachers name and not-name in a reflection on a collection of 200 'ethical events' articulated in a capstone teacher education course which explored their philosophies of teaching and discussed applied ethics through the interrogation of policies and particularities of contemporary Australian school education. Obligation is more of a "matter of being claimed, in which something has a hold on us… that has us before we have it" (Caputo, p 31) rather than the holding of a value or principle or claim for the enduring Good. Deconstruction can be "understood as an ethical demand, and ethics [can be] approached deconstructively" (Critchley, p 17) in an attempt to recognise the explosiveness of the problem of respecting alterity in writing about ethics. In

Against Ethics deconstruction provides the im/possibility of writing about proper names, which are the condition for allowing "us to say when and where obligation is happening, and to whom, and they help us remember" (Caputo, p 72).

Acknowledging the variety of contemporary research in the area of ethics in teaching my analysis of these preservice teachers' writings traces major concepts and traditions in modern ethics that may have been used in alternative readings to characterise these subjective phenomena and potentially bring deeper meaning to the role morality of teaching. Reading these texts for the 'possibility of ethics' one might see implications for the devolution of ethical standardisation in teaching as a necessity of "taking responsibility for responsibility" (Biesta, p. 71) for teacher education.

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On Thinking (and Measurement)

Full paper

Keywords: **Metrics | Camus | Heidegger | people | love | measuring**

ABSTRACT:

We do indeed "live and work in a time when the issues facing education, many of which have been with us for a considerable period, are being approached primarily through measurement – classroom assessment, research methods, standardized testing, international comparisons". It is also true that "we do not often stop to consider what counts – and alternatively, what doesn't count – in a climate where measuring up to a standard is the name of the game. At a deeper level, we rarely raise questions about measurement itself."

Heidegger argued that what is "most thought provoking [in this 'thought provoking age'] is that we are still not thinking," in *What is called thinking?* (*Was Heisst Denken?* 1954, p.4). This somewhat startling assertion deserves careful attention especially in relation to the quote above ("we do not often stop to consider what counts – and alternatively, what doesn't count – in a climate where measuring up to a standard is the name of the game"). Heidegger's assertion is pertinent for a number of reasons: he associated this "not thinking" with a "critical moment in history"(p.57),

with a "call", and with a "miscalculation". I will argue that it is important (again?) to reflect on a number of questions: what is *thinking*, especially in relation to *measurement*? What is the role of technology (that is, is "technology" a "guarantee of stability" in measurement), and is the relation between technology and measurement the mark of an "unconditional lack of reflection" (as Heidegger argued in *The End of Philosophy*, 2003, p.99)? Indeed, what is the nature of "measuring up"? Was Heidegger correct in arguing that we have "miscalculated" in so far as we have sought "the safety of the mere drive for calculation" (*The End of Philosophy*, p. 106)? And how does the desire for a higher form of "representational thinking" (in Heidegger's words; EOP, p. 110) in these contexts serve and promote a number of aims in higher education, such as ("student-centred") learning and even "flourishing"? I will attempt to provide answers to a number of these questions by reflecting on the broad but fundamentally important question of measurement and its limits.

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Dr Ann Ryan, *Monash University*

A Madder Shade of Red

Full Paper

ABSTRACT:

My story is an account of the work I am undertaking with my students to challenge the taken-for-granted structures dominating assessment practices in my faculty. The students and I are trapped in arbitrarily constructed boundaries at the expense of our own learning, understanding and meaning making. The account traces the development of a resolve to build trusting and dialogical relationships with students by addressing a growing concern that my theoretical rhetoric was not being supported by my practice.

I have begun the difficult process of relinquishing my control in the classroom and it involves the introduction of a student self-assessment process that, in the first instance engages the students in confronting their own experiences of years of conditioning in traditional assessment regimes. It is emotional as well as intellectual work.

Friere (1973, 1998) described the process of self-assessment as a pedagogical philosophy stemming from critical pedagogy; an ethical and political process of self-discovery. This account describes the courage of the students to trust in the experiences they are offered and their intellectual engagement in the process. Making visible the myths of the claims of validity, justice and objectivity of traditional assessment regimes, allows us to critique the way in which particular voices and authority are privileged in the dominant education discourse. Using a more dialogic interaction students use their own language to grapple with their understandings and meaning making and in so doing challenge the form and content of dominant forms of knowledge – they tell their own stories.

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Maxine Greene

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The Fractal Academy: The Econometrics of the University 2.0

Full Paper

ABSTRACT:

In this paper, we consider the econometric modelling that underpins the global university of enterprise to be matter of fractal logic. The idea of fractals, coined by mathematician Benoît Mandelbrot in 1975, explicates self-similar phenomena, namely, patterns that replicate on closer inspection: a jagged coastline, for example, exhibits the same jagged pattern when viewed on different scales. Fractal logic is not all about "natural" forms: it was developed with the aid of computers (Mandelbrot worked for IBM at the time). The University 2.0, or university of measure, at once entrepreneurial, globalising and convergent, exhibits the same fractalism because it is underpinned by the self-similarising logic of econometrics (systems of measure and thus knowledge management). Excellence, the byword of the university of enterprise, means, in effect, the benchmarking of "best practice" that is enabled by the new systems of review that exist to measure the performance of universities worldwide. The capacity to compare or correlate such systems means that the measures that govern university practices are algorithmic measures of measure, or templates — averages or constants of prior systems of review developed at peer universities (these templates only mimic the collective enterprise of peer review). This development of enhanced systems of measure calls for that species of post-criticism that we call construction, which demands that universities reflect upon the scripting, or programming, of education by econometrics.

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Paul Hager, *UTS,* **David Beckett** & **Jeanette Lancaster** *University of Melbourne*

Complexity Theory as a Fresh Approach to Understanding Practice, Agency and Learning

Work in progress

ABSTRACT:

This is a joint presentation based on a forthcoming book, provisionally titled *The Emergence of Complexity: New Perspectives on Practice, Agency and Expertise.* This double session is comprised of two distinct sections. Firstly, there will be an outline of some current pressing issues surrounding our understandings of practice, agency and learning; and the connections between them. Although in recent decades much good work has been done on practice (e.g. MacIntyre, Schatzki, Kemmis), agency (e.g. Luntley, Winch, Anne Edwards) and their relationship with learning, significant challenges remain. For instance, how to account best for: the complex interrelations of the many components of practice?; the

kinds of tacit know how evident in practice and agency?; the novel and unpredictable directions sometimes taken by practice?; the roles of individuals and groups in the learning that typically accompanies practice and agency.

The second part of the session will present aspects of complexity theory, extending the work of Paul Cilliers, to introduce a less reductive conceptualization of complexity than is currently employed in the social sciences. This will then be used to reconsider the problematic issues, offering new insights into our understandings of practice, agency and learning.

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SESSION 16 Symposium for an Asian Link

Revisiting East Asian Culture: Master Craftsmanship, Letters, Examination, and Teacher-Student Relationship

Member 1:   **Morimichi Kato**, Professor,
              Department of Education, Sophia University, Tokyo, Japan

Member 2:   **Ruyu Hung**, Professor,
              Department of Education, National Chiayi University, Taiwan

Member 3:   **Duck-Joo Kwak**, Professor,
              Department of Education, Seoul National University, Korea

In this symposium, three presenters from three different countries, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, will attempt to retrieve four fundamental aspects of East Asian culture that played crucial role in the East Asian educational tradition. They are 1) master craftsmanship, 2) letters and language, 3) examination, and 4) teacher-student relationship. The clarification of these aspects can contribute to the deeper understanding of East Asian education. At the same time, this attempt aims also at opening up a broader conceptual perspective from which we can see and explore an alternative way of understanding 'educational practice' which have been obscured by its engineering and consumerist modes recently accelerated by education reform movement for public schooling across the world. Each discussion will focus on how the concepts suggested can contribute to reviving (or envisioning) educational practice in such a way as to be adaptive to the post-modern demands on education or schooling. What follows is each presenter's short note on his or her own theme.
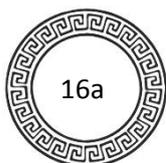
Morimichi Kato

Chuang Tsu's Understanding of Master Craftsmanship and its Educational Significance

ABSTRACT:

Chuang Tsu's writing contains many references to master craftsmanship. A master craftsman is regarded as a person who has attained the Way, *Tao*. The understanding of master craftsmanship had profound influence upon Japanese culture.

In this presentation, I will analyze two examples of master craftsmanship mentioned by Chuang Tsu and clarify its fundamental features, such as the importance of non-verbal dimension of body knowledge and the embodiment of *Tao*. Then, in order to elucidate its special, East Asian feature, I will compare them with the craft analogy of Socrates, who considered craft as a model of knowledge. At the end, I will argue the relevance of Chuang Tsu's understanding of master craftsmanship for philosophy of education today.
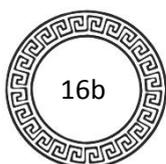
Ruyu Hung

The Weight of WORDS: Exploring the Chinese Graphocentrism

ABSTRACT:

Derrida's critique of phonocentrism lends a powerful voice to a fundamental doubt towards the preference implied in the Western philosophy that privileges speech over writing, reality over appearance, identity over difference. As he states, it is the 'absolute proximity of voice and being, of voice and the meaning of the being, of voice and the ideality of meaning' (Derrida, 1976, 12) that makes 'the epoch of the logos' that governs the Western metaphysical tradition. In the light of Derrida, many theorists take the critique of the taken-for-granted dogmatic phonocentrism (as well as the logocentrism) as deeply educational, in terms of, say, 'a new didactics, a poststructural pedagogy of the text' (Trifonas, 2000, 271) or a 'political and profound humanism' (Peters & Biesta, 2009). In this sense, the Derridarian pedagogy can be understood as aiming for doing justice to and opening up possibilities for the oppressed and the marginalised that have been debased and excluded by the metaphysics with deep-seated phonocentrism and logocentrism. Darrida's critique is inspirational in thinking the opposite of the phonocentrism as taking writing prior to voice—graphocentrism. In my view, there is a strong tendency of graphocentrism in Chinese culture. The graphocentric 'syndrome' can be detected in

many aspects of Chinese living. For example, most TV programmes in Taiwan are aired with subtitles even they are speaking Chinese or Taiwanese. Hidden behind this simple symptom is an unconscious but worth delving dependence on visual signs. However, as Derrida reveals the injustice and violence resulted from the phonocentric metaphysics, the Derridarian critique does not mean that the shift to its opposite—graphocentrism brings justice because graphocentric thinking may also cause biases and prejudices. Hereafter I aim to expose the graphocentrism implied in Chinese philosophy and to explore the educational implications.

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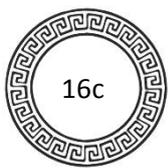
Exam-obsessed Culture in the Korean education: any Connection to the Confucian tradition?

ABSTRACT:

Korea is well-known for its high ranking in the OECD international competition for the academic achievement of K12 students. Korean parents are also famous for zeal for their children' education. While this phenomenon sometimes seems envied by other countries, exam-obsessed or ranking-obsessed culture underlying it has been harshly criticized by educators in Korea for its dehumanizing effects on the Korean youth to the extent that even elementary school students are said to have a strong impulse to commit suicide at their poor academic scores. The high social and familial drive for education in Korea has deeply to do with a common belief rooted in the minds of the Korean public that education is a quickest and best road to social ascent. This instrumental idea about education can be said to be a modern phenomenon, common to all modern societies, not unique to the Korean society; for public schooling is considered, albeit a liberalist myth, to be a legitimate modern system that allows an individual with merit to overcome his or her given social backgrounds. But the unusual degree of public frenzy for education in Korea as well as in other Asian countries leads us to suspect that it may also be connected to their Confucian view of education. This paper will explore to what extent this can be the case by examining the political and moral function of education within the Confucian tradition.

(17a)

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How far have we really come? Advancing the notion of an 'ethics of care' in the generation of inclusive quality education in post-apartheid South Africa

Full paper

Keywords: **Ethics of care | School | Moral education | Capability | Democratic citizens | Virtue of being human**

ABSTRACT:

This paper focuses on the concept of ethics of care within the South African education context. In considering the context of an evolving South African education system, post 1994, the aim of the paper is to conceptualize the relationship between ethics of care and quality education that is generally represented statistically. The objective is to define ethics of care within a feminist paradigm embodying moral good, consideration, sympathy and tolerance in relation to quality education. Thus in order to establish the philosophical problem, the paper turns to the works of Noddings, Rawls, Benhabib and Nussbaum to illustrate that education may be seen as the development of democratic citizens via direct caring experiences that encourage productive learning. The argument is that children are "sources of agency and worth in their own right" (Nussbaum 2000, p. 58) and therefore deserve equal opportunities to educational benefits in supportive environments. Ultimately, by being human, "one bears an internal relation to all other human beings – especially those who do not belong to the same group" (Smeyers 2012). These points of view appear in stark contrast to the current reality as there is a noticeable tension between ethics of care and the South African educational situation from a conceptual position. The paper therefore addresses South African post-1994 education to signpost a conceptual argument that develops an understanding of ethics of caring as part of the dialogue for change so that social, language and cultural barriers may be overcome to achieve quality education.

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Tina Besley, *University of Waikato*

Measuring human well-being and social development: is the good life possible in an unequal world?

Full paper

ABSTRACT:

With computer systems enabling our current era to become one increasingly dominated by measuring, using meta-data, meta-analysis and developing algorithms for many aspects previously never thought possible to be measured, measures summarising human well-being and social development are now being developed and used to compare and monitor global performance within and across countries. Several measures now exist, including the UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) and Ian Morris' Social development Index (Morris, 2010 & t.besley@waikato.ac.nz

2013) based largely around the HDI. 'Morris's Theorem' that historical change 'is caused by lazy, greedy, frightened people looking for easier, more profitable, and safer ways to do things' (Morris, 2010, p. 28). But what are these quantified measures and how precise are they, what validity do they have and do they show us that if we are or are not living the good life? Can education change this and improve our lives? This paper briefly examines such issues which affect us and education in its broadest conceptualization.

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Aristole & other philosophers…

Tetsu Ueno, *Oyama National College of Technology, Japan*

The Difficulty of Ethics Education of Science and Technology for Adults in Japan after FUKUSHIMA

Full paper

ABSTRACT:

The purpose of this paper is to infer the following with my practice of scientific technological ethics education for adults in Japan: how the Japanese citizens' idea about the control of science and technology changed since the Fukushima nuclear plant accident that occurred due to the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami on March 11, 2011. In conclusion, it is clarified that the following popular public opinion is unfounded: Japanese citizen noticed that it was dangerous that they left decisions concerning science and technology to professionals and specialists, and they recognized that it was important that the citizen participate in the policy decision on science and technology since the nuclear plant accident in Fukushima. On the contrary, it seems that the tendency the citizens leave the decision concerning science and technology to specialist and professionals has accelerated more. As grounds of an argument of this inference, I use the discussion by citizen in scientific technological ethics cafes which have been held in Tochigi Prefecture, the next prefecture to Fukushima, since 2010.

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Bibliography:

Ethics education

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18a

Developing Environmental Education and Ecological Culture In Taiwan: The implications in Walden

ABSTRACT:

In the nineteenth century, Henry David Thoreau, a famous American writer and philosopher, had advocated the concept—life of simplicity. His book, Walden or Life in the Woods, published in 1854, for modern people in the face of the environmental crisis, conveyed numerous crucial and profound ecological thinking and environmental philosophical implications. Thoreau put much emphasis on the inner value of nature and enthroned an outlook on natural beauty. In this essay, the authors, thus, attempt to explore the implications in the Walden to find inspirations for improving the present environmental education and ecological culture and come up with some suggestions, spotlighting the primacy of nature and pointing out how human beings' avarice and unlimited desire for excessive luxuries and materials cause environmental problem.

This essay will embrace four parts, and the first part will deal with both environmentalism and naturalism, elaborating on the details of Thoreau's experimental life in the woods and discussing the way Thoreau gave expression to the narrow observations of natural world in combination with private care about nature and experimentation in person. The second part will explore the implications of environmental education in Walden and take environmental pollution as an example to show how different a lifestyle it is that people lead from Thoreau promoted. By doing so, the authors hope to raise the awareness of the importance of environmental protection and sustainable development among human beings. The third part will analyze the differences between the current environmental educational practices in our country, Taiwan, and the ideals mentioned and highly praised by Thoreau. The conclusion will bring up suggestions for improving environmental education and ecological culture to reveal the possibility of all-embracing compatibility of both nature and civilization.

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The Political Morality for Deliberative Citizens – Rawls and Callan Revisited

Full paper

ABSTRACT:

Deliberative democracy encourages citizens to search for mutually acceptable reasons in the public deliberation process, and regards this as the most democratic way to accommodate moral differences in the public sphere and political institutions. The essence of deliberative democracy thus lies in the spirit of collective decision-making and authentic public deliberation. It also expands democracy from merely a form of liberal constitutionalism to a more inclusive and progressive practice within a community.

The study of deliberative democracy has so far been focusing on conceptualizing deliberative democracy and institutionalizing it in empirical contexts. Deliberative theorists have yet to give a substantive account of the education of deliberative citizens, notwithstanding education actually plays a crucial role in the cultivation of deliberative citizenship.

To conceptualize the notion of deliberative democracy in the context of citizenship education, I will argue that the implementation of deliberative democracy needs to be supplemented by a specific political morality in order to cultivate free and equal citizens to cooperate with each other in an inclusive liberal society. This political morality specifies the traits, dispositions, and characters that liberal citizens should acquire in order to facilitate the public deliberation process. For these specific ethical traits, I consider John Rawls's idea of the political conception of person as a good example for illustration as well as for further reformulating the model of deliberative citizenship. I will also touch on the Eamonn Callan's interpretation on Rawls's idea and interrogate the ethical weight of being a deliberative public person in a liberal pluralistic society.

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Narcissism, The Good Life and Philosophy in Schools

Work in progress

ABSTRACT:

In this paper, I will argue that a non-essentialist notion self-knowledge is a necessary for living a good life, especially in the 21st century, which is often described as a period characterised by constant change, instability and increasing diversity and complexity. The notion of self-knowledge was central to Plato's idea of the good life and a just society. It involves the ability to accurately identify and develop our own interests, needs, desires, talents, capabilities and limitations and the ability to coordinate our actions and interests with our socio-cultural environment, including other people. People without such capabilities risk a life of constant disappointment because they may pursue goals that they are not genuinely interested in or able to achieve. I argue that a lack of self-knowledge is a key feature of narcissism, which involves having an inflated sense of self – even delusions of grandeur. Many psychologists, cultural theorists and sociologists have reported increasing levels of narcissism in modern Western nations, especially amongst young people (e.g., Twenge & Campbell 2009). As narcissism involves a lack of self-knowledge, it is likely to lead to increasing levels of anxiety, unhappiness and meaninglessness. Schools can help respond to this growing problem by deliberately fostering self-knowledge. I will outline the type of pedagogy and curriculum that I think can best foster self-knowledge. Like Plato, I believe that participation in philosophical dialogues is essential to fostering the capacity for self-knowledge and, as such, philosophical inquiry should play an important role in all schooling.

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Liberal education in a technical age

Work in progress

ABSTRACT:

From the late 1950's vocational courses in colleges of further education in England were expected to include elements of general and/or liberal education. Using data from official documents, contemporary publications and the papers of those involved, this paper examines the background to this curriculum change: these included contemporary concern about the risks associated with (over) specialization especially in courses in technology and the overemphasis on the economic aspect of education. It goes on to consider the principles and practice of 'liberal studies' and suggestions for measuring their effects. The values and purposes of the promoters and of the critics of the change are then examined in order to reveal the lack of clarity and coherence as to the intentions of the innovation. The negative attitudes of most employers and of the teachers of technical subjects and of students left the teachers involved in a mission of doing good by stealth, by sugaring the pill of periods which often for students resembled their experience of school and got in the way of their bread-and-butter studies. In conclusion, the merits of a top-down curriculum development of this kind are considered along with the view that, with the later removal of liberal studies from them, vocational courses for young people in England are exceptional in the absence on them of a component of general/liberal education.

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Measuring up in Educational Philosophy in the 21st century Nigeria's Education: The fundamental problems of theory and praxis of education.

ABSTRACT:

We live in a world where international comparisons of standards in education constantly confront us all as stakeholders in the face of the burgeoning crisis of quality in education. From one end of the world to the other, educational aims, objectives and goals of nations of the world as construed in theory and practice of education are replete with different challenges that depicts their milieu. In contemporary times in Nigeria, foundational philosophies have revolutionized both philosophy and philosophy of education as academic disciplines, but the set pattern of teaching philosophy of education in Nigeria today does not seem to make use of the evolving revolution with a heterogeneous colouration. Philosophy in its various epochs in history has played varied roles in man's development that cannot be down-played or tucked away in the dark. This expository study is informed by the need to recognise the contemporary challenges in global set patterns or standards of teaching and learning philosophy of education in an attempt to improve the quality of teaching and mentoring for retention; address the increasing concerns about quality reproduction in education and reduce teachers/learners at-risk syndrome in our classrooms. What do we know about the risk implications of engaging non professionals in teaching? What are the fundamental problems of philosophy of education in Nigeria? In this study, a comparative analysis of models and strategies that can reinvent standards in teaching, using qualitative research methods to update educator's experiences and implications of findings would be discussed.

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Rationality, Immortality and Education: Unamuno Revisited

Full paper

Keywords: **Unamuno | reason | feeling | immortality**

ABSTRACT:

The Spanish thinker Miguel de Unamuno argues that the need for philosophy arises from the impulse toward life itself; philosophy, he says, is more poetry than science. We seek to know – to understand ourselves and the world – but we are prompted to do so by an underlying spiritual yearning. As individual men and women, the most important problem we face is our own mortality: What will become of us when we die? Deep within us all, Unamuno suggests, is a longing for immortality. In addressing this need, reason and science take us in one direction while feeling and desire take us in another. This tension is the source of our despair – the tragic sense of life – but the uncertainty it produces is also the basis for our hope and growth as human beings. This paper considers some of Unamuno's key ideas and explores their educational implications.

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Measure twice, cut once. An auto-ethnographic narrative - reflecting on knowledge.

Work in progress

Keywords: **auto–ethnography | emergentism | social realism | knowledge | outcomes**

ABSTRACT:

Questions concerning measurement and assessment in the classroom most often refer to learning outcomes, achievement statements and value-added progression in literacy and numeracy, to suggest some key examples. This close-ended fascination with 'what counts' runs counter to notions of curricula that articulate an aspirational agenda, as well as to contemporary concepts of 'futures education' or '21st century learning'. A central unquestioned matter underlying these conceptions of contemporary education seems either to overlook or to recast the place and role of knowledge and its relation to pedagogy.

Does knowledge count for anything any longer? Did it ever really matter, anyway? Is 'knowledge' no more than a signifier of the dominant discourse? Is knowledge–building an emergent process that should focus on the engagement of the individual, removing the imposition of uniform objectives for teaching and learning with prearranged outcomes?

The authors of this presentation come from different perspectives on these questions. They seek to challenge not only their own thinking on these questions, but to also challenge the way in which philosophical and theoretical research might be presented to a critical audience. Naughton takes a position that knowledge is emergent, and will draw on Osberg and Biesta as reflective of this position. Benade takes the view that there is a body of disciplinary knowledge to be acquired and will draw on Young, Moore and Rata as reflective of this position. This presentation will not only consider the variation and tensions that exist between these positions, but will seek to do so by adopting a form of auto-ethnographic narrative method. The authors agree on one point: they are unsure of what the outcome of this presentation will be.

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Trust and schooling

Work in progress

Keywords: **trust | judgment | schooling**

ABSTRACT:

The concept of trust is important in making educational judgments. Trust is also important in acting on those judgments in the context of schooling and in other aspects of the social institution of schooling. Various aspects of contemporary schooling are examined to identify the place of trust in making appropriate pedagogical, procedural, personal and political judgments.

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The Value of Teaching

Work in progress

ABSTRACT:

Dewey (1916) opposed the idea of a separation between what the teacher teaches and how it is taught calling it "radically false" and one of the unfortunate dualisms affecting education (172). But we may also glean from his comments on the social nature of subject matter that any separation of the teacher student relationship from subject matter and method is also radically false (199). To put this another way: the question of the appropriate relationship between teacher and student is not one that is distinct from choices about how and what to teach, but central to these choices.

What seems harmful about the teacher testing movement is that it settles the question of relationship before any such choices can be made by the teacher. It imposes its order from outside, indifferent to what is taking place on the inside. Max Weber describes the process as "rationalization" in which our social relations and practices take the form of technical efficiency as opposed to those relationships that are based on tradition.

In order to explore the idea of the teacher/student relationship in more detail, I wish to draw on two general sources: philosophical reflection on the nature of teaching and representations of teachers in novels and films. I choose Plato, Rousseau, and Dewey as my philosophical sources because they each adopt a distinctive approach to the idea of what a teacher is by giving a central role to the nature of pedagogic relationships.

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21a

Specialized Evidence in Education: Using Measurement As The Means For Certainty

Work in progress

ABSTRACT:

Movement towards an indisputable and unquestionable evidentiary basis that seeks to quantify the value that a classroom teacher has added to the individual learning outcomes of particular students represents a contemporary shift in education research. Value-added models of teacher effectiveness research (TER) stem from the desire to clearly distinguish and ascertain the value that a classroom teacher has added to the individual learning outcomes of particular students. Yet, its validity in terms of addressing teacher effects and student achievement is and remains uncertain (see Gorard 2009). This paper will critically engage with the notion that there is a growing interconnection between public education policy development and implementation and distinctive forms of education research. The paper draws on critical theory and particular aspects of the theoretical framework(s) of Foucault to examine first, the methodological basis and second some of the specific claims of value-added research.

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Bad Research, Bad Education: The Contested Evidence for Evidence-based Research, Policy and Practice in Education

Full paper

ABSTRACT:

The term "evidence-based" research, policy and practice in education is an extension of evidence-based medicine (EBM), utilizing randomized controlled trials that emerged from the field of clinical epidemiology in the late 1980s. Introducing "current best evidence" and "five levels of quality evidence", including statistical validity and risk prediction, meta-analysis, systematic review, clinical relevance, currency, and peer-review it was developed as a framework for public health policy in the 1990s with the establishment of the Cochrane Collaboration in 1993 and the Centre for Evidence Based Medicine. The same evidential model has been since generalized and applied to other areas of public policy including education. Most recently, it has been developed in a UK Cabinet policy paper (2012) "Test, Learn, Adapt: Developing Public Policy with Randomised Controlled Trials" published in collaboration with Ben Goldacre and David Torgerson, arguing that Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs) should be used much more extensively in public policy. In March 2013 Teach First in the UK launched 'a new vision for evidence-based practice in education and teaching' attended by Secretary of State for Education Michael Gove and introducing Ben Goldacre (2013), author of Bad Science, who presented "Building Research into Education". This paper reviews the evidence-based movement in education against this background reviewing claims concerning the relevance, style and levels of evidence for EBE.

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Why what counts doesn't count. The paradox of evidence in contemporary educational policy and practice

Full paper

Keywords: **Methodenstreit | economics | education policy | educational practice**

ABSTRACT:

In Die Methodenstreit of the late 19th century two intellectual giants thrashed out (inconclusively) an important argument about how research should be conducted: should it be conducted through empirical evidence, or should it be conducted through logic and reason?

The economists, represented by Carl Menger, were on the side of logic. The historians (and in the period this term represented all the social sciences) led by Gustav Schmoller advocated empirical evidence.

Over time, in terms of governmentality, the economists have won. The practical consequences of Die Methodenstreit (or the values it represents) is that economists are not obliged to render their theories intelligible in terms of real effects, and the social sciences are required to justify all their claims in terms of empirical evidence intelligible to economists, that is to say, in the form of numbers.

This paper will explore this argument, by reference to Die Methodenstreit and some critical developments in recent NZ educational history.

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22a

The trouble with boarding: education and boarding school novels

Full paper

Keywords: **literature | schooling | boarding | boyhood | Foucault | José Régio (1901-1969)**

ABSTRACT:

The boarding school system was meant to produce gentlemen, not novels. As places that join residence with teaching, boarding schools provide an unorthodox home. After a period of rapid expansion, the popularity of boarding schools declined somewhat in the 20th century, partly over concerns that children were being turned into adults too soon. Prolonged adolescence became the dominant trend, which required a half-pace education: day school, where the pupils attend school without really leaving home.

However, the boarding type of education remained popular among novelists even when day schools were already taking the lead: they took a special interest in this type of education that allowed them not only to depict the brightness and promise of innocent adventures in the classroom but also the dark, nocturnal side of those micro societies were boys ruled on their own.

In this paper I analyse the literary conventions of the boarding schoolboy novel genre and consider the educational model implied by the boarding solution. I draw on Foucault's On Other Spaces and explore how ideals of 'manliness' forged by the bourgeois 19th century resonated with this model of single-sex education. Particular attention will be paid to the Portuguese novelist José Régio (1901-1969) and his distinctive contribution to the boarding school novel: a contribution built on the central themes of will and desire.

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The problem of 'reactive measures': A philosophical analysis

Work in progress

ABSTRACT:

In my paper I address the problem of formalized 'reactive' measures, which are understood here to be those formalized performance measures that can be influenced, or gamed, by the strategic behaviors of individual and organizational actors (see Weingart 2013, 88). It is argued that the use of such reactive measures in educational institutional and policy contexts as governance technologies is at best ineffective, and at worst dysfunctional. To support this argument, and drawing on the conceptual tools of Husserl's phenomenology, among others, I will develop a broad typology of the unintended effects arising from the use of formalized reactive measures. I focus on distinguishing three types of effects. First, the establishment of 'economies of thought' (Husserl) in which more fundamental reflections concerning the purpose of educational activities are eclipsed, for example, through the narrow focusing on outputs rather than broader outcomes. Second, the appearance of 'lock-in' effects, where certain strategic and dysfunctional behaviors continue to persist in spite of changes in the policy environment. Third, the phenomenon that the unintended effects of reactive measures are, intentionally or unintentionally, rendered invisible. I will conclude by proposing that some of the problems of reactive measures can be ameliorated by relying on context-sensitive objectives that are negotiated locally rather than on centralized and formalized forms of performance measurement.

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Measuring the Zone of Proximal Development?

Full paper

ABSTRACT:

Ever since the zone of proximal development was first popularised in the 1978 compilation, **Mind in Society**, educational discourse in the Anglophone world has acclaimed Vygotskii's zone as the exemplar for measuring the cognitive development of children. However, on closer inspection, his developmental zone proves to be a site for employing psychological tools, not merely material ones. Psychological tools, by virtue of their dual symbolic nature, bring into question any temptation to reduce qualitative assessments of development, especially in the cognitive realm, to quantifiable descriptive ones.

The grounds for upholding such a reduction ultimately appears to centre, on the one hand, upon appeals to measures of comparability, be they comparisons amongst individuals or within the one individual. On the other hand, the basis for such reduction is the implicit assumption that the developmental zone fundamentally entails mastering measurable skills upon which conceptual and hence cognitive development relies. What clearly demonstrates a crucial issue at stake about measurability in education are cases of children with impaired development within, for example, the autistic spectrum of disorders. Their assessment reveals our tendency to conflate the comparability of categories to be applied with the phenomena being compared under one or more categories.

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Vygotskii (1931), (1933) & (1934); Luriia (1947); Goldstein (1940); Bolles & Goldstein (1938); Sheerer & Goldstein (1941); Werner (1940) & (1948)

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23a

My beautiful Periodic Table: measurement, metaphor and marks on the page

Full paper

ABSTRACT:

This paper is a philosophical exploration of the notion of measurement, using an approach referred to as 'diffraction methodology', which means reading two or more concepts and frameworks of understanding from disparate traditions 'through' each other, not merely 'against' each other. This paper takes 'measurement' as a will to determine or fix space and time, which opens the way to a comparison of ontological models of space and time from both Western and non-Western (Māori) traditions. The spirit of 'measurement' is concomitantly one of fixing meaning, which is taken as the essence of the growth of the scientific genre of language that took has taken place alongside the growth of science itself, since the European Enlightenment. The Periodic Table is used as an exemplar of the ideals of the deterministic philosophy of measurement, which underpins both modern English and the philosophy of science. The paper reflects on how a scientific philosophy is embedded within modern English by comparing linguistic characteristics of English and te reo Māori, especially in relation to ideas of measurement, precision, space and time.

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A complex question by any measure: exploring notions of justice with respect to the education of disabled children and young people

Full paper

Keywords: **justice | equality | inclusive education | special schools**

ABSTRACT:

There is a well-known and oft-quoted adage that the true measure of a society is how it treats its weakest and most vulnerable citizens. The apparent simplicity of this statement belies the complexity of the issues to which it pertains. The question of just educational provision for disabled children is one such complex issue. While it would be fair to say that there is now widespread acceptance for inclusive education, the question of the place of special school provision remains the subject of debate and controversy in a number of jurisdictions. So, while some would argue that the presence of special schools is a measure of the failure of a society to treat its disabled children and young people justly, others would argue that it is a measure of its success.

This paper examines this debate and the notions of justice and equality that inform it. Drawing on Walzer, Nussbaum, and others I suggest that in relation to place, what counts as just educational provision for disabled children and young people must reflect the complexity of the issue and requires more than "simple equality". The provision of special schooling as an option would seem to attend to this complexity and thus, arguably, is consonant with the demands of justice. The paper concludes with the proposition that in relation to education, it is not unreasonable to argue that the presence of special schools can be a measure of a society's success in its treatment of disabled children and young people.

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Epistemic Responsibility and Constructivism: A virtue-based alternative way of knowing for constructivist teaching and learning environments

Full paper

ABSTRACT:

The popularity and ubiquity of constructivist teaching and learning methodologies has led to a great diversity of theoretical and pedagogical approaches. However, the epistemological groundings for constructivism have remained largely stable, with knowledge conceived as being external to the individual but is constructed and internalised through active engagement with the environment. Studies in the epistemology of constructivism as well as in educational epistemology as a whole have focused on beliefs about knowledge of the individual but focus less on the traits and characteristics that would impel the person to want to learn. This study aims to explore the use of virtue epistemology as an alternative way of knowing for constructivism that would better take the motivations and traits of the individual into account. A virtue for knowledge can be defined as an acquired excellence of a person who is motivated and reliably successful at gaining knowledge from cognitive contact with reality (Zagzebski 1996). In particular, the virtue of epistemic responsibility as a trait that drives a person to substantiate beliefs and knowledge claims in authentic situations (Code 1994) can provide those in constructivist classrooms with a better means of judging how and why a student would want to learn. This study seeks not just to elaborate on the aspects of epistemic responsibility that pertain to constructivism – traits of knowledge-maximisation, flexibility and adaptability as well as contact-maximisation, but also to suggest a means of measuring these aspects in students.

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24a

Slow maths: challenging the metaphor of education as a race

Full paper

Keywords: **education | mathematics | culture | slow | curriculum**

ABSTRACT:

Metaphors shape the way we think and act. They are not mere words, but rather they are concepts that deeply affect how we view the world and the ways we interact with the world. In this paper I will briefly discuss some metaphors for education that have become prominent in educational discourse and focus on one – education as a race ("to the top", "to be in the top 5") – that I argue has become dominant in the current political rhetoric. I discuss how this positions the curriculum as a one-dimensional track, assessment as the generation of a single number that is valued above all else, teachers as coaches detached from the participants, and students as runners striving to reach the only end-point that matters.

I will describe the beginnings of the slow movement as a protest to the one-size-fits-all approach of fast food, and suggest the generative metaphor of education as slow food. This has the potential to reposition curriculum, assessment, teachers and students as constituents and actors in a process and product steeped in history and culture, and in which diversity is an attribute to be valued rather than minimised. I apply this metaphor to the specific activity of school mathematics and show how it might generate an approach resonant with that described in previous chapters. I conclude with some examples of how Slow Maths might be applied at different grain sizes to curricula, units of work, lessons and single interactions.

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The Measurement of Performance and the Educational Arms Race

Full paper

ABSTRACT:

This paper explores the way in which the growing emphasis on measuring educational performance undermines a delicate balance between two very different goals of education. Ideally, education should improve the prospects that children have to flourish over the rest of the lives, whilst also identifying which children have the talents necessary for being granted access to certain important professional roles. The recent emergence of school league tables, excessive testing, and a general preoccupation with quantitative information has made this balance harder to realise, and biased the provision of education in favour of the latter, more competitive function.

The main point of this paper lies in the claim that excessive measurement of performance begets excessive (and thus unjustly wasteful)

competition. More specifically, children (and parents) have become trapped in what economists call a positional arms race – a sort of entrenched collective action problem that can only be solved by careful government action. This arms race has led to the over-burdening of children, the growth of educational inequality, and the crowding-out of values relating to children's ability to flourish alongside each other rather than out-compete each other.

This paper seeks to give an account of exactly what the educational arms race is, and why it should trouble us from a moral, as well as a practical, point of view. Some proposals as to how to curb the educational arms race (by changing the way we think about performance measurement) are then presented.

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Testing and time: Existential implications for education

Work in progress

Keywords: **student | time | knowledge | care | Heidegger | Dewey**

ABSTRACT:

What are we measuring when we test in an educational setting? The verb "test" derives etymologically from the task of ascertaining the quality of a metal by melting it in a pot, where testu or testum in Latin means an earthen pot, a term which came to be associated with this task of ascertaining quality. As such, a test more generally involves ascertaining the quality of something. In educational settings we test to ascertain the quality of a student, someone who studies, a quality which is equated with the quality of his or her proficiency and knowledge in the area in which this study is occurring. So here we have three things that are being tested at the same time: a way of being (that of being a student), a way of doing (proficiency), and a way of knowing (knowledge). We are generally familiar with the notion that we are testing knowledge and proficiency. But are we so familiar with the notion that when we test educationally, we are also testing the quality of someone's being a certain type of person? In this paper I shall explore further how being, doing and knowing connect through the philosophies of Heidegger and Dewey and aspects of the educational relevance of this connection. In so doing I aim to illuminate some of the issues that accrue to our understandings of being-a-student as these influence our comprehension of the way education works as a human endeavor, connected with life. Central here are issues of time.

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25a

The Dissociative Political Subject and Disruption in the Enterprise

Full paper

Keywords: **dissociation | logic of diversity | enterprise | technologies**

ABSTRACT:

This paper reflects upon the problem of measurement when the logic of an individual's diversity puts them in conflict with education's administration of power. While education policy interprets technology in terms of economic objectives, the concept of technology can be separated into distinctive matrices of practical reason in relation to production, language, power, and the self (Foucault, 1997). However, despite the fact that the ontology of a particular problem cannot determine the unique technology that would be required to address it – for reason that all technologies are interrelated – Foucault's thinking puts the truth-game of economics' application of the concept of technology in question. For example, it would appear that while education wants to be thought of as being inclusive, it has not considered how technologies of power are used to govern the dissociative subject's governance of the self when the logic of an individual's diversity implies that the means of measurement, used by the student, should necessarily be different from that of the teacher. Furthermore, how should we think of this above relationship of individual to society, when framed according to the concept of Ferguson (2006/1767) and others, that the health of society is dependent upon the capacity of the individual to be dissociative? This paper interrogates Bingham and Biesta's (2010) critique of pedagogies that seek to bring the student to truth, and asks what would the epistemology of the student's means of measurement need to be for the student's disassociation to be considered to add health to society?

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A critical exploration of assessment in relation to silence and silent students

Full paper

ABSTRACT:

Large-scale educational reforms have put assessment and evaluation at the top of the agenda in order to create more effective schools, seen in the light of different countries wish to compete on the global market. But what are being measured in schools? Is it really the knowledge and achievement of students that are being assessed, or is it students' ability to verbally express themselves? We critically explore assessment in relation to silence and silent students, using a phenomenological life-world approach drawing mainly on the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

Some students are experienced by others or by themselves as silent. Perhaps, they are neither given, nor do they take, the space that is required for participation in a conversation. They remain silent even though the ongoing discussion wakens their reflections and thoughts, or even if they know the answer to questions asked. Merleau-Ponty emphasizes, that there is something that exists beyond what is said, something which cannot be communicated verbally, which he calls a silent and implicit language. He stresses how thought, language, and relations are intertwined. Since tests are mainly based on words, and performed outside an expressive and relational field, the silent dimensions of students' knowledge and achievement may be neglected. Tests therefore run the risk of being limitations for fair assessment. To stop and think about silence can draw attention to the importance of listening to the silent and implicit language of students in different teaching situations, especially when it comes to assessment.

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'What counts': (Re)considering Steiner's epistemology for our contemporary educational context

Work in progress

Keywords: **Steiner | knowledge | thinking | education**

ABSTRACT:

Discussions of measurement embed understandings of the purposes and potentials of education, these in turn are informed by the way we construct understandings of knowledge. Knowledge in contemporary times is the gathering of information; we need to know the concrete, specific, measurable aspects of a human life. This approach separates the 'how' of education from questions of 'why' and 'what'. Consequently, questions about the meaning or purpose of education are marginalized. Knowledge in this current framework becomes a strategy for governing. Foucault named this cultural trend towards rationalization and objectification as the defining problem of our time. The philosophy of Rudolf Steiner considers a central philosophical question - the nature of knowledge- and offers a unique way of understanding that which we currently try to 'measure' and 'standardize'. This paper offers an analysis of Steiner's assertion of the role of human thinking as the unifying world principle and explores his critique of the Kantian argument that there is a limit to human knowledge. Arguably, it is time to investigate other, perhaps less acknowledged participants' ideas and to explore the contributions of frameworks whose alternative perspectives are not yet integrated into the discourse of the educational debate. The philosophy of Rudolf Steiner offers a distinctive contribution to considerations of knowledge and in turn to the purposes and potentials of education, offering ideas that could help us redefine 'what counts'.

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On the uses and disadvantages of psychometrics for educational measurement

Work in progress

Keywords: **Psychometrics | Measurement | IRT | Nietzsche | Rasch | Assessment**

ABSTRACT:

There are many assessment models currently being deployed in the field of educational measurement. Some of the most popular are Rasch modelling and other item response theory (IRT) models. These structures assume that it is possible to measure a uni-dimensional latent trait in a cohort, and that there is a one-to-one correspondence between this trait (such as competence is a specific field) and the probability of performing well on a test item in an assessment instrument. There are many uses of psychometric techniques in educational measurement. Some of the advantages of item statistics will be presented and evaluated.

However, there are also possible disadvantages, and to follow Nietzsche (this paper's title paying tribute to one of his Untimely Meditations), there are many potential abuses of psychometric statistics when it comes to assessment design and implementation. This paper will critique the philosophical assumptions inherent in IRT techniques, and work towards demarcating the legitimate and illegitimate uses of these methods in educational measurement. Questions concerning the potential misuse of psychometric theory will be posed, and qualified benefits will also be highlighted. Psychometric techniques have much to offer to the field of educational measurement. However, some words of warning are necessary.

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The Mismeasure of the Child: Politics, Measurement and Education

Work in progress

ABSTRACT:

This paper is an analysis of the histories of the present of the measuring of the child. Through a Foucauldian genealogical method, the focus is on the genealogy of measurement. The way the child is measured under the current neoliberal condition is analysed: how the child is treated, sychologised and approved. The analysis examines how measurement has been used to mould, discipline, test, tweak, digitalise, surveille and treat the child. This paper focuses on how the idea of measurement is essential within policies that affect the child, and analyses the links between politics, measurement, education and the child. It considers notions of 'results' and 'implementation' which are used to 'improve' the child's wellbeing and development as a direct result of such measurement, using the example of Friedman's (2005) Work and its implementation by New Zealand government agencies in their governance of the child.

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Can Children's Learning be Measured? Not from a Neurophilosophy Point of View

Work in progress

Keywords: **learning | measurement | neurophilosophy**

ABSTRACT:

There are some things about children which can be measured, provided two conditions are met. First, that they possess properties which can be measured and second, that we have suitable devices for measuring such properties. Children have height which can be measured against the centimetres of a metre rule and weight which can be measured against the kilograms of scales. Things become rather more problematic when we set out to measure things like intelligence and learning. Whether we have something called intelligence which can be measured by intelligence tests is difficult enough; the second criterion is met to some extent but the first seems beyond our grasp. Learning is more difficult still. If learning is what happens in the brain, then the first criterion is met, at least in principle, but the second is not (or not yet anyway and any device is a very long way off). Learning, as a neural activity, remains private; on the other hand, outputs of learning are public and could possibly be measured if we possessed suitable measuring devices, instruments, techniques or what you will. However, measuring learning outputs (if this were possible) is not the same thing as measuring learning itself and cannot even serve as a reliable proxy for learning, having serious problems of its own. So, I conclude that while some aspects of children can be measured, their learning is not one of them.

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Critical Thinking in Education: reflections on its perceived levels, method and point

Full paper

ABSTRACT:

In an increasingly information-rich and knowledge-oriented world, where the pace of political, economic, technological, scientific and communication advances often outstrips the pace of educational reform, it is pleasing to see that the development of critical thinking competencies in students, at all levels, has continued to permeate educational discourse. This ought to come as no surprise. An investment now in critical thinking competencies in students is a direct investment in a nation's future intellectual capital. It is why it has been embedded in the Australian curriculum. This paper, however, posits questions and concerns about the way critical thinking, including its perceived levels method and point, has been traditionally conceived by educational theorists and practitioners. It argues that a clearer understanding of this key competency in teaching and learning is needed and must precede attempts at finding reliable and valid ways of measuring and testing critical thinking. It argues further that philosophy is well placed to assist in this undertaking.

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Critical thinking versus moral perfection as the educational aim

Full paper

Keywords: **critical thinking | Harvey Siegel | Immanuel Kant | perfectionism | highest good**

ABSTRACT:

Should critical thinking be the aim of education? Harvey Siegel argues that it should. His reason is that any other aim requires critical thinking to be acknowledged. Moreover, Siegel believes that reason has to be cultivated or, in his term, educated, so that those concerned develop the skills necessary for a critical thinker, skills that enable a person to assess reasons and arguments. Further, those who want to be critical thinkers "must have … certain attitudes, dispositions, habits of mind, and character traits, which together may be labelled the "critical attitude" or "critical spirit." Siegel's reason for this is that people may have the skills but not be appropriately moved to practise them. Therefore, a critical thinker must have the "critical spirit", which motivates him or her to use critical skills whenever needed. However, I argue that the final end of education cannot be critical thinking, but moral perfection; and that it is when we pursue the highest good, produced by human freedom, that we cultivate our moral character and strive for moral perfection. I also argue that it is not reason that ought to be cultivated, but our moral predisposition to use reason. This we do when we are enabled, and freely choose, to have our will determined by the principles of practical reason. Hence, it is not merely a question of critical skills, but of pursuing the highest good – the summum bonum – and of cultivating our virtue and judgment continuously through the use of examples.

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Multiliteracies and the critical thinker: philosophical engagement with mass media in the classroom

Full paper

ABSTRACT:

Teaching children philosophy enhances critical thinking skills that are sorely needed in today's technological society. When it comes to mass art and social media, we need to discern between reliable sources of information and the plethora of dross. Using a virtue epistemological approach, I claim that Philosophy in the schools supports a values- and outcomes-based approach to education. There are measurable outcomes that are academic, but there are also holistic benefits including social outcomes that emerge from using philosophy in the classroom. Multiliteracies competencies is an important skill that can be gained by critical engagement with multi-media sources. As such sources are commonplace, we as educators should embrace them, and teach our students to engage with them critically. Teaching children critical thinking skills through the study of Philosophy is important because philosophical thinkers continue conversations that seek to dispel ignorance. I will support this claim using examples of engagement with mass art and media that can be applied to the classroom setting.

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28a

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A Preliminary Examination of the Concept of Altruism as an Aim of Education

Full paper

ABSTRACT:

Many are concerned with education's role in preparing societies to meet challenges related to globalization. Among various educational aims related to globalization is that of developing in young people a critical awareness of the lives of disadvantaged people, in their communities and across the world, to become compassionate, or socially responsible, 'global citizens'. This general interest is shared by policy makers envisioning global or twenty-first century citizenship education, as well as by philosophers of education and social justice-oriented teachers. However, the aim of such education or its most appropriate pedagogy or schooling context is not always spelled out, owing to the controversial nature of various interpretations and recommendations related to poverty and injustice today (i.e., economic redistribution versus austerity; privatisation versus socialism).

In this essay, I ask whether altruism can be usefully elaborated as an educational aim for global citizenship and social responsibility. First, I examine philosophical treatments of altruism such as by Thomas Nagel and Lawrence Blum, and consider the educational implications of significant features of a useful definition of the concept. Next, I juxtapose these views with those of Confucian and Buddhist scholars, to consider whether a universal value of altruism for contexts of west and east is plausible. Finally, I apply my conceptualization of altruism to Hong Kong curriculum, providing a concrete context for considering altruism as a useful educational aim. I end by highlighting the tension of teaching for altruism in settings (unlike Hong Kong) where moral education is contentious, while citizenship education is not.

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Hermeneutic Imagination and the Ecology of Meaning: Ecopoetics and Indigenous Métissage in Education

Work in progress

ABSTRACT:

In this presentation we discuss weaving the philosophic substrata of ecopoetics and Indigenous métissage to germinate a place-based approach to education informed by ecological and relational understandings of the world. Central to these discussions will be the educational implications of hermeneutic imagination, Indigeneity, dwelling, the agency of the more-than-human world, ethical relationality, and the development of a critical pedagogy of place that recognizes the ecology of the sacred.

Drawing upon key scholars developing métissage as a research sensibility, we will explore Indigenous métissage as a counternarrative to the grand narrative of our times; seeking to engage with it as an active literary stance, political strategy, and pedagogical practice. Similarly, we will draw upon some of the philosophic roots of ecopoetics - most notably eco-hermeneutics and eco-phenomenology – to move beyond an understanding of ecopoetics as strictly an art form, and consider it as a mode of inquiry, an educational practice, or as Tim Lilburn has claimed, "a way of doing philosophy" (2002, preface).

We contend that the instrumentalist muffling of more-than-human 'voices' in education, or what Evernden (1985) refers to as 'cutting the vocal cords of the world,' lies at the very foundation of a colonial logic. An ecopoetic approach offers one possible way to shift from viewing the more-than-human as inert "background" to a consideration of the active role it could play as co-teacher. Thus an ecopoetic educator encourages students to attend to language as a way to 'come home to the world' (Zwicky, 2003), to both read and be read (Bringhurst, 2006), to provoke philosophy to be deeply metaphoric and imaginative when it needs to be.

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Having the courage to measure up for education

Full paper

Keywords: **courage | aims | existential | religious attitude | spirituality**.

ABSTRACT:

In this "age of measurement" it is increasing difficult for educators to educate (Biesta, 2010). The pressures to conform to the demands of bureaucratic authorities generally trump over educators and their aims to educate. One of the factors contributing to this is because as Dewey (1929a, p. 133) has argued, our aims and our desires to educate don't have deep enough roots. He suggests that educators ought to have "cultivated" and "significant conscious desires" and a disposition to be "courageous" (1929a, p. 134; 1929b, p. 38) in order to attain the independence to ensure that our practices in education are indeed educational. Dewey (1934) called such a disposition a "religious attitude" because it engages with the ultimate concerns that people can aspire towards.

In this paper I shall argue that this religious attitude of Dewey's which can enable our roots to deepen, does not just pertain to our aims of education as an intellectual phenomenon. Rather it can be understood as existential (Webster, 2009) in the sense that aims of education are specific to individuals in situation – not to abstract or universal understandings of education. It shall also be argued that this existential aspect of our being is emotive, and deepening its roots might enable us to become more courageous and thus more able to challenge the barriers inherent in our current 'age of measurement' so that education may become more of a reality.

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From measuring diversity to embracing diversity to changing difference

work in progress

Keywords: **Malabou | changing difference | diversity | plasticity**

ABSTRACT:

Curriculum reviews conducted at universities in South Africa are engrossed with questions regarding how diversity is dealt with in the curriculum and management structures of the university. These questions position diversity discourses at universities in very different ways, but from a reviewers point of view, it is mostly embedded in 'measuring' diversity. My experience as a reviewer at my own institution and at other institutions in South Africa made me realise that for the most part universities opt for an 'embracing diversity' approach. I will argue that this approach as well as the 'measuring' of diversity is ontologically weak and could inevitably lead to silence in terms of diversity discourses. The latter point will be augmented with autobiographical examples emanating from these curriculum reviews. I will argue for an approach to diversity that is based on Catherine Malabou's ontological position of changing difference through the process of plasticity. Toward the end, I hope to contribute conceptually to the process of profound transformation in terms of changing difference so that we can transcend the 'measuring diversity' and 'embracing diversity' discourses.

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Templates for Enhanced Learning

work in progress

ABSTRACT:

This paper draws on my recent experience of applying for a Learning Enhancement Grant (LEG) to develop an online commons for Writing Studies at the University of Auckland. From the point of view of the project team, comprised of Writing Studies teaching staff and e-Learning advisors, such a commons will neither simply 'up' the IT platform of our teaching nor function as community outreach. Rather, it will embed our classrooms more fully in digital environments and enable pursuit of deliberately disruptive aims. First, such a commons will encourage students and a wider public to reconstruct and repurpose their own teaching. And second, through welcoming play and engagement in ways that are not for-credit, it will challenge the authority of the university itself as arbiter of what 'counts' in educational terms, offering a means of interrogating tick-box or end-stopped pedagogy — which the project team believe narrows and shallows teaching and learning, and mistakes the value of education itself.

Of course, we could not elucidate these aims in the templated LEG application form, which demands that such projects align with templated faculty- and university-wide teaching and learning objectives, and that they nominate the templated terms on which their own success can be evaluated (through enumerating resources uploaded, tabulating page hits, graphing results of an online survey, and so on). Such indices of 'success' run counter to the project team's intentions. We hope the online commons will assist as we increasingly introduce templates, standards, aims, checklists, evaluation criteria and key performance indicators into our classrooms as objects of inquiry in their own right, and as we continue to develop pedagogical practices — or teaching 'templates' — which ask after the grounds of an educational ethos that privileges and programmes measures of this very kind.

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Culture, curriculum and assessment

Full paper

Keywords: **assessment | Maori achievement | educational achievement**

ABSTRACT:

Assessment and its strong links to teaching, learning and the curriculum are recognised universally but how assessments depict learners and what effect this may have on their future learning are questions that need to be considered. Assessments ideally should inform and enhance teaching and learning but often the messages being transmitted to students about their abilities and achievements as learners, are not perceived as encouragement on to further learning. The perception of these messages as negative are part of a deficit discourse prevalent in many education facilities that identifies what students cannot achieve or ranks student performances against others. In this paper different understandings of what constitutes an education will be considered as will the role of assessments being administered to and on students. In addition the influence of culture on educational achievement will be acknowledged and discussed.   While there have been a number of studies undertaken to recognise how and why many students are failing, the educational community do not seem to have achieved the goal of implementing these findings as evidenced by the latest school leaver statistics on NCEA attainment reported in the local newspaper.

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Measuring up: returning to the possibilities for novelty in education

Full paper

Keywords: **Whitehead | measurement | ontology | education**

ABSTRACT:

In education today, we find measurement surrounded in controversy and contest, to such an extent that mathematics itself is said to be the source of our confusion. For example, the same measurement comes to take on different meanings within mathematics. Abstract and exact consideration from mathematics, has provided mankind with a platform for understanding of the physical world for centuries. However, education is in danger of loosing an important rudder for steering its course. In my view the importance of mathematics in measuring education ought to be embraced.

Mathematicians transplant ideas that are valid in one area and offer them in another in the hope that they will take and flourish. Such was the case with Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947), who extended and reworked his ground-breaking research in symbolic logic as a metaphysical account of being in the world. In doing so, he opens an innovative insight on our relationship with mathematics. For example, whilst measurement expresses a quality derived numerically from a determined quantity, we require to be lead back to mathematics through the categorisation of that quality. To return quality to the complete abstractions of mathematics, is to have exhausted immediate concretisation. At this point, the possibilities for novelty in education begin, now secured in mathematics.

In this paper, I examine measurement with wider purposes in mind for education. Drawing on the metaphysics of Whitehead, I suggest that being confronted by such brute fact of measurement ought to allow for a far richer fabric of education.

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Measurement in Education from the Perspective of Book 1 of Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics including Reflections on Modern Legal Education

Full paper

ABSTRACT:

Near the beginning of the Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle wrote that 'it is the mark of an educated man to look for precision in each class of things only so far as the nature of its subject allows'. Over the last 50 years, legal scholarship and education have seen the rise of 'jurimetrics' – the study of legal questions using the methods of the natural sciences and especially mathematics. For example, studies of classes of prisoners have been undertaken to determine the characteristics of those who have reoffended and to identify those who are likely to reoffend in the future. Jurimetrics can provide useful information about a range of topics in legal education which can be helpful in the development of legal policy and even in the disposition of individual cases by judges. However, great care must be taken in using jurimetric data for such purposes. Justice – the defining principle of the law – is a matter of judgement rather than of quantification. Wisdom based on experience and knowledge is the essential foundation for sound judgement in legal matters, and such wisdom can make discriminating use of jurimetric information. Mathematical knowledge is not the model for knowledge per se. The humanities, including the law, must persistently resist pressures to 'mathematise' that which is not properly a subject of numerical measurement.

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Fragmented skills: the limitations of outcomes based vocational education

ABSTRACT:

Drawing on findings from Board of Vocational Education and Training (BVET) funded research, this paper analyses the nature and the effectiveness of outcomes-based vocational education, focussing on the aged care and disability services sectors. Australian vocational education and training (VET) is built on training packages that specify nationally endorsed competency standards and qualifications. The qualifications are designed to recognise and assess the skills and knowledge people need for employment. They are also expected to provide the basis for educational and occupational progression. However, there is a large gap between qualifications and jobs in aged care and disability services. Current qualifications do not adequately address the values and attitudes considered to be essential attributes for anyone working in these sectors. The introduction of person-centred care is exacerbating this problem. Initiatives such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme, as well as less prominent programs in aged care, are transforming services to centre them on the dignity of the people who are elderly or living with disabilities. This is having a profound impact on both the structure of employment and expectations of employees. Addressing the mismatch between competencies and specific job tasks is not sufficient. We must confront the limitations of competency based training itself. An alternative way of conceptualising vocational education, based on Sen and Nussbaum's capabilities approach, is also discussed.