



TEACHING & LEARNING
RESEARCH INITIATIVE

NĀU I WHATU TE KĀKAHU, HE TĀNIKO TAKU

CASE STUDY

Inquiring into how the visual arts as embodied knowing and being contribute to the exploration and development of twenty-first century transformative learning sought by the New Zealand Curriculum.

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Abstract

This case study explores how the visual arts as embodied knowing and being can contribute to the exploration and development of the twenty-first century transformative learning sought by the newly revised *New Zealand Curriculum*. Twenty-first century ways of knowing and being frame identities as multiple, fluid and diverse. Ongoing learning in and about multiple viewpoints and perspectives is an orientation which arts learning can achieve and sustain. Practitioner research was undertaken in collaboration with two primary school teacher participants who taught visual arts in two urban schools. Both were interested in exploring how inquiry-based learning could be undertaken through visual arts as a way to investigate sustainability. Findings from the case study suggest that the teachers' experiences of curriculum implementation in and through the arts and sustainability offered ways to reconceptualise and re-imagine curriculum itself. Approaches were affirmed in the teachers' pedagogical practices that felt more playful, with intentional diverse outcomes for students. Understandings of 'shifting' for the participants closely connected teaching, learning and identity as a kind of 'shapeshifting' that incorporated the past and attended to unexpected yet valued outcomes. This approach has parallels to art-making processes and pedagogy, informed by deep subject knowledge but able, through experimentation and interactivity in cycles of action and reflection, to be both intuitive *and* considered. The visual arts as literacy, was re-signified as an embodied and nonverbal way of knowing.

Introduction

This case study reports my practitioner research within a professional development process aimed at engaging teachers in exploring possibilities for seeing and doing things differently in their classroom enactment of the newly revised *New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC). The context for exploration of what it means to shift conceptualisations of knowledge was the arts learning area of the NZC and 'sustainability', identified as a future-focused theme in the NZC principles. Data gathered from two teachers is discussed in relation to how 'shifting' closely connects teaching, learning and identity, and how the arts, as a way of knowing and being, contributes to the reframing of knowledge espoused in the revised NZC document as a transformative agenda for education.

Background and rationale

I was initially attracted to the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) project 'Shifting Conceptualisations of Knowledge and Learning in the Integration of the new *New Zealand Curriculum* in Initial and Continuing Teacher Education' by the possibility of critical conversations with other educators around the newly revised *New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC) (Ministry of Education, 2007). My experience as a professional learning and development adviser suggested that words in a curriculum document do not, by themselves, reframe knowledge or generate new, shared understandings. Through involvements with curriculum panels during the process of shaping the new NZC, I became aware that, in attempting to enact democracy, the complexity of multiple positionings was not always made explicit.

The use of terms such as 'creativity' (the first descriptor in the vision statement for 'what we want for our young people') and 'innovation' in the NZC, have, for example, been traditionally associated with valuing the arts learning area, but are also currently part of the discourse of the 'new knowledge and technologies' implicated in reframing learning for twenty-first century learners. Was the use of such terms, supporting a more neoliberal interpretation, seeking to ensure ongoing economic consumption and market driven values? Was this another opportunity for the revaluing of arts learning, particularly as visual arts learning in schools incorporates new digital media and technologies that both produce and express understandings of social participation? If the NZC was paying attention to the diversity of twenty-first learners, and if their diverse needs called for a multimodal approach to literacy, how were we articulating the contribution of the arts?

Participating in the project was an opportunity to further explore arts learning as a way of knowing and being with teachers and their students. In the NZC 'the arts' is one of the eight learning areas that are part of a broad, general education. My role was to support teachers to engage with the visual arts discipline and the 'new key emphases' signalled in the front of the NZC, the rationale for which was situated in a wider discourse about how knowledge would need to be reframed for twenty-first century learners (Andreotti & Souza, 2008; Gilbert, 2005). For art teachers and artists, there can be a faith in the creative process that something will emerge through experimental, active, risk-taking approaches when working with materials and ideas, and I was curious about how this learning capacity in the arts might connect to the dispositional 'learning to learn' principle of the NZC in the project data.

At the time that the TLRI project was unfolding, I began working with my colleague more closely in professional learning and development processes where the arts disciplines and their interwoven learning strands were integrated with the NZC future-focus theme of sustainability, including in an inquiry-learning pedagogical approach. This offered opportunities to connect arts learning to exploration of the ways we relate to, and value, the natural world, including perspectives from Te Ao Māori, exploring conceptual understandings such as interconnection and diversity, and the possibility of taking action for the environment with art.

During the time of the TLRI project, government funding for professional learning and development that supported primary generalist teachers' ongoing learning in the NZC learning areas such as the arts and education for sustainability, was reduced, while an initiative for national standards in literacy and mathematics was introduced, at the expense, some thought, of preparation for compulsory NZC implementation in 2010. At the same time it had begun to feel more urgent, locally and globally, to explore arts as embodied knowing—where thinking and feeling were conceptualised as less separated in learning, to allow the possibility of reconnecting to the senses and sustaining us as active learners, in real-life contexts, through ongoing change. The visual arts discipline description in the NZC stated that 'learning begins with children's curiosity and delight in their senses and stories and extends to communication of complex ideas and concepts' (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 21). Here the body was being acknowledged as integral to knowing in the arts.

The NZC supports a wider understanding of literacy as multiple and diverse, and links this to knowledge when it describes how 'each learning area has its own language or languages. As students discover how to use them, they find they are able to think in different ways, access new areas of knowledge, and see their world from new perspectives' (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 16). 'Visuacy' has been identified as a foundational skill, not only for the arts but for all curriculum, and necessary in an 'ocularcentric 21st century' (Grushka, 2010a, p. 2). In multiple literacies theory (MLT), 'otherness, strangeness and alienation are included as parts of the MLT system, as they may be explored through personal literacy ... the workings of the creative unconscious are seen as a powerful driving force in becoming literate' (Masny & Cole, 2009, p. 6). The NZC arts learning area statement for visual arts also notes visual literacy outcomes as students 'manipulate and transform visual, tactile and spatial ideas' and 'develop their visual enquiries' through experimentation with materials, using processes and conventions (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 21).

These understandings of the value of arts as languages and ways of knowing guided the design and enactment of the content and programme of teacher professional learning and development in visual arts, as did wider research that raised questions about the learning experiences and outcomes for students in the arts. The National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP) 2007 sampling of years 4 and 8 students, for example, had noted concerns that while visual arts 'remain very popular for New Zealand students', they seem to have had 'limited experience in responding to art' and 'many students at both year levels reported that they had little or no opportunity to engage in some types of artmaking ...' An article in the *Sunday Star Times* (June 28, 2009) addressed funding cuts for arts education and the effect of limited training for teachers in the arts, connecting these concerns to the disappointing NEMP results.

Such discussions, locally and globally, suggest that even mandating learning areas in an official curriculum may not ensure that students are given sufficient opportunities to learn, or that they will be confidently and capably taught, if teachers' own professional learning opportunities are limited.

Overview of the case study

The core of this case study comprises interviews with two teachers who participated in the visual arts professional learning and development process. In the following section, I consider aspects of positionality that informed my own reflections, roles and learning in the project and include a literature review that informed the case study research question. A methodology section then discusses the framing of a research question that related to the focus of the wider TLRI project, and includes descriptions of the participants, of myself as a participant researcher, and of the data collection process. Acknowledging participant positionalities forms part of this discussion. A description of how the teachers 'storied' their practice in relation to the NZC follows and includes my reflection as a re-storying of the teacher narratives. The final section comprises a second layer of reflection about my own learning in relation to the data themes and some implications for ongoing implementation of the curriculum.

Literature review

Conceptualising knowledge and curriculum

When framing the TLRI project, it was argued that

in New Zealand and elsewhere educationalists have emphasised that societal changes in the 'knowledge society' and post-modernity have significant implications for educational agendas. In particular that there is an urgent need to re-conceptualise knowledge and learning in educational policies and practices in the 21st Century ... The new *New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007) is grounded in this new conceptualisation. Thus, one of the challenges of implementing the new curriculum over the next three years is to equip educators (and parents) ... to understand and meet the needs of learners in the 21st Century. (sourced from shared TLRI material)

These understandings provided the platform for the professional learning and development and research that underpins this case study.

Conceptualising the enactment of curriculum

During the implementation phase of the NZC, official and unofficial discourse emerged that identified a 'front' and 'back' to the curriculum document. The implied intention was to encourage schools and teachers to engage with the big ideas at the 'front' of the curriculum rather than immediately turning to the 'back' of the document where achievement objectives across eight levels in each learning area are located. I noticed in this discourse that the learning area descriptions were not often explicitly mentioned as part of the 'front' of the NZC.

Schools were being urged to take time to 'explore' the new NZC in a national climate that was also industriously identifying best practice and a generic effective pedagogy for teaching, learning, and professional learning and development. While not devaluing expert subject content and subject content pedagogical knowledge, I considered a provisional title of '*not knowing*' for this case study, to identify the potential value of a more critical role as 'not knowers' (Ellsworth, 2005). This repositioning felt more aligned with the conceptualisation of teaching as inquiry and with an understanding of curriculum extending beyond a received knowledge of the new official document content and intention.

Mindful of McGee's (2006) discussion of layers in curriculum as not only officially intended but also interpreted, taught and learned, and even increasingly negotiated with students, how could the visual arts discipline of the arts—in conjunction with sustainability as a future-focused theme—offer an example for reflection of enacting the 'front' of the newly revised, aspirational NZC?

The status and position of arts learning in enacted curriculum

Given that the NZC describes how the arts have 'their own distinct languages that use both verbal and non verbal conventions, mediated by selected processes and technologies' (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 20), a further challenge was the assumption that everything about 'shifting' knowledge could be expressed in words, in the way that academic research very often requires. This challenge connected to perceptions of how the arts have been, and might be, valued in school curricula as a way of knowing and being. Eisner (2008, p. 112) argues that

the curriculum we prescribe for schools and the time we allocate to different subjects shows children what adults believe is important for them to learn [and] the amount of time allocated to a field of study influences the kinds of mental skills children have the opportunity to acquire.

Asked about their views on subject hierarchy, the teachers I have worked with generally report that the subjects most valued are those focused on written language, while others such as the arts are less valued. What, I wondered, was the status and the contribution of Grushka's (2010) *visuacy* to the discourses of shifting knowledge in the enactment of the NZC?

If the NZC was paying attention to the diversity of twenty-first century learners, and if their varied needs called for a multimodal approach to literacy, how were we to articulate the contribution of the arts? Robinson (2001) argues that that creativity has to happen 'in' something and he suggests that creativity is about imaginative processes with outcomes in the public world, as well as ideas that are valuable. I also wondered at the potential in arts learning for understanding creativity as a transformative process explicitly linked to values: for example those described in the NZC such as innovation, inquiry and curiosity; diversity; equity; community; ecological sustainability and 'the values of others'. These ideas and values became a focus for exploration with teachers in the professional learning and development workshops.

Embodied knowing

Eisner (2008) argued against the claim that human conceptual thinking requires the use of language and for the inclusion of the activity of the senses in an understanding of cognition, claiming that artists do their thinking within the medium in which they work. For example, visual perception is visual thinking. In this view neither feeling nor emotion is regarded as separate from reflective thought. As far as creative thinking is concerned, emotion and rationality usefully coexist (Robinson, 2001).

Arts learning has been increasingly described in relation to knowledge as an embodied and felt knowing and, in the visual arts, as knowing experienced by learners through processes and materials that include the new visual media skills. Dewey (1934) identified the 'disastrous' division of the mind and body, traceable in the development of Western philosophy. More recently, scholars, including Bresler (2004), have discussed the importance of healing this mind-body split, and how this reconceptualisation is made possible in and through arts learning.

Bresler draws attention to Turner's notion of somatic society that locates pleasure and playfulness in the desiring body, and her own noticing of experiencing body within community through her 'situatedness' in the arts as both performer and educator. The arts are sites of learning and being in which, Bresler argues, 'the body is central to the process of inquiry and constitutes a mode of knowing' (2004, p. 9). McWilliam (1999), meanwhile, critiques positioning of the body that still finds the need to attach to something else, in a bid to show it is part of a rational system, an ongoing aspect of the advocacy that has historically taken place for the arts to evidence its value in the school curriculum.

In indigenous knowledges, cognition is understood to include the body, feeling and affect. Royal (2009) recognises the body as a 'source of knowing itself in its encounter with the world' in Mātauranga Māori which he describes as a heritage-inspired knowledge system. Aluli-Meyer argues against the illusion of separation of mind and body, describing how, in Hawaiian epistemology, there is union of sensation and conceptualisation. 'Our thinking body is not separated from our feeling mind' (Meyer, 2005, p. 8). Acknowledging these views of the body in knowing supports a more diverse understanding of knowledge and opens up pathways to explore

the intent of the NZC, through connecting to its values and principles such as the Treaty of Waitangi, the vision statement that students will be 'connected to the land and the environment' and the value of 'ecological sustainability'.

In these different contributions towards conceptualising arts as embodied learning, thinking and knowing are not limited to words. A pedagogy of relationship to sustain teacher learning in the face of change and uncertainty was, for my role as a professional development designer, connected to the belief that knowledge resides not only in lived action (some of which can be habitual), but in the body, in contexts, encounters and relationships.

Arts as a way to reconceptualise curriculum

Greene (cited in Pinar et al., p. 605) has argued that the arts show how spaces for reflection and reformulation can be opened up in learning by provoking 'questioning that supports sense making and understanding of what it is to exist in the world ... the task is for the teacher to be a verb not a noun ... to view knowledge, teaching and learning from multiple perspectives ...'. This enables us to combat old dualities and see with fresh eyes.

The dispositional potential of the arts connects to the 'learning to learn' intentions of the NZC articulated through the key competencies and underpinned by the principles. Perkins (1994) and Eisner (2008) have discussed the potential of arts learning for supporting risk-taking, valuing multiple solutions, building community and managing self. Exploration, experimentation and play (both guided and unguided) have been also recognised as inherent to creative processes contributing to the conscious knowing in the body that connects feelings, thoughts and words through ongoing cycles of action and reflection (Fraser, Price, & Henderson, 2008).

Reframing shifting in the reconceptualisation of knowledge

As a school adviser designing professional learning and development to deliver Ministry of Education contractual outcomes in the visual arts, I worked both independently and in collaboration with another adviser in the TLRI project to support and challenge groups of teachers across our region. Both approaches involved facilitation of a series of workshops based on a lived experience of the integration of the arts and education for sustainability, often integrated with science, children's literature texts, values exploration and aspects of Te Ao Māori, including relevant practices of artists in customary and contemporary forms. Workshops were followed up in classrooms wherever possible, modelling interaction with students and supporting teacher exploration of rich themes that connected the NZC key competency learning, the learning areas, values and principles in cycles of action-reflection, a key pedagogical approach in arts learning and a 'dynamic process that unites theory and practice' (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 88).

The interacting multiple subjectivities of teacher educator, researcher and artist had become evident in my professional role and practice. As a TLRI project participant, who was also the subject of the research on my own shifts, I found myself initially resisting the notions of 'twenty-first century learning' and 'shifts in knowledge' in the project title and the linear conceptualisation of 'shifting' articulated in the steps of the Baxter Magolda matrix model (1992) that was introduced to us as teacher-educator participants, at an early project workshop. I felt the need initially to reflect on the beliefs underpinning these intuitions and what informed them, an approach I also wanted to take with teachers during the professional learning and development process itself.

Conceptualising shifting as autobiographical

Acknowledging autobiography in positionality and shifting was important methodologically as it made the social contexts of learning explicit, and suggested a less instrumental conceptualisation of 'shifting'. For me, acknowledging positionality was also important pedagogically, epistemologically and ethically, to become aware of what we bring into new learning or change processes (Moore, 2002). Experiences from reflecting on the

impact of my adviser practices during the 2007 INSTEP project and SEEN exemplar project¹ were brought to the TLRI project. These had included an identification of the centrality of embodied knowing in arts learning, and a critique of the expectation that shifting teacher practice can be simply conceived of as a linear process of inputs and outputs.

I feel we need to know our histories of knowing. In Aotearoa New Zealand, this includes histories of settlement for Māori and Pākehā and how that has permeated our educational histories. Considerations of the colonisation of the mind and post-colonial theory were close by for me when shaping learning experiences in the visual arts. It was part of my teacher identity to acknowledge those who have come before and how we are in a process of continual becoming. In this way, curriculum was already being reframed for me around not only what constitutes 'knowing' but also what is worth knowing, including how some 'knowings' and 'knowers' may be more valued than others.

Indigenous knowledges understand that knowing is about the heart and the soul as well as the intellect (Alexander, 2005; Penetito, 2009) and how 'a pedagogy capable of embodying ways of knowing cannot be sustained without wairua' (Penetito, 2009). Allied to this is the alignment of values and beliefs with action for the environment and knowledge that coming from a place is an epistemological idea—we do not learn about the land but learn from it. In the teacher professional learning and development, we would explore and inquire into these knowings as part of understanding place and space together in, and through, art.

The idea of 'not knowing' can be risky if it is interpreted as confused uncertainty that then invites what one artist called the 'red flag of control', particularly in the advisory role where the expertise associated with shifting teacher practice can be equated to certainty and having 'answers'. I began to develop a working theory to explore this aspect, beginning with the recognition that 'not knowing' for me is one way to talk about being an artist educator: creating a space for possibility and the importance of risk taking—the 'what if ...?'—that is inherent to the creative process and a pedagogy for supporting that. This, in turn, opened a space for reconceptualising knowledge as contextual and partial.

In these ways, autobiographical threads of framing knowledge as dispositional and embodied entered the TLRI project exploration of implementing official curriculum with teachers and their students.

Methodology

Research questions

In the wider TLRI project, teacher education, both initial and continuing, was seen as key to successfully realising the opportunities of the NZC. The project addressed the following questions:

- How do shifts in teacher educators' conceptualisation of knowledge and learning affect students' understandings of the principles, values and key competencies in the new NZC?
- What changes in curriculum design and pedagogical approaches were effective in shifting students' conceptualisations of knowledge and learning?
- How are the shifts in conceptualisation of knowledge and learning interpreted within the different knowledge domains of the research participants?

The research question for my own case study emerged as a question for the teachers as well as their students:

- How do visual arts as embodied knowing and being contribute to the exploration and development of twenty-first century transformative learning sought by NZC?

The arts were seen as having rich potential in enacting the curriculum's vision, principles and values, where diverse ways of knowing and being are espoused. Such beliefs underpinned the framing of a research question that connected this case study to the wider TLRI project focus, where the notion of twenty-first century ways

¹ An online resource using narrative assessment for learning in relation to NZC was developed to support students with special education needs and their teachers and family/whanau.

of being suggested the need for learners to imagine, create and reinvent multiple, fluid, diverse identities and learn to value others' identities. The complexity of identity, as an unfinished project in local and global contexts suggested in Andreotti and de Souza's tools (2008), calls for ongoing learning in, and about, multiple viewpoints and perspectives, which arts learning is positioned to engage with and enquire into.

The role of research itself, in questioning accepted ways of proceeding and knowing, for me requires a dispositional 'not knowing', particularly as the TLRI project was framed around an expectation of 'shifting' the conceptualisation of knowledge. What 'knowings' about curriculum might be reconceptualised and resignified (Pinar, 1996; Popkewitz, 2008) through paying attention to this shifting process and how might the visual arts operate with this intention?

Research design

The model that informed the professional learning and development process in the project was similar to participatory action research (Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998) which follows through a series of actions designed to facilitate change. These include identifying an issue, collecting baseline data to investigate the issue, analysing the data to determine a course of action, planning and trialling the strategies to address the issues, evaluating and reflecting on the effects of trialling the strategies and then revising the plan in the light of the evaluation and reflections.

The second research model that informed the wider project was the notion of building a teacher and student research community with the participating teacher and students and the researcher. The intention was to enable the participants to generate a local knowledge and interpretation of practice by theorising and constructing their school-based curriculum work, and connecting it to the larger development of a national curriculum. It was also envisaged that the work on classroom practices in the arts would support the provision of high quality, embodied arts learning for diverse students (Alton-Lee, 2003; Bishop et al., 2003) as a way to inform understanding of how the visual arts discipline might enact the intentions of the NZC.

The research design of the project drew on case study (Stake, 2003) and action research models (Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998) to work collaboratively with one to two teachers within their classroom contexts. The case study was not intended to be generalisable. Its focus was to explore teacher shifts in the conceptualisation of knowledge and learning and their interpretations of the NZC within the embodied knowledge domain of visual arts.

Setting and participants

The two primary school teacher participants taught visual arts in two urban schools. Both teachers had previously participated in in-depth professional learning and development, and we had established a collegial working relationship for investigating and reflecting on classroom practice. In particular, the teachers had prior knowledge and experience of how to successfully support their students to achieve rich outcomes in their visual arts learning, interweaving all four arts learning strands. While exploring specific art-making practices, this arts learning (learning in and about art), connected to inquiry into 'big ideas or conceptual understandings' (learning with art) as a community. In the previous professional learning and development, teachers had taken up opportunities to identify, explore, make connections to, and interpret components of the NZC, such as the vision, principles, values, key competencies and effective pedagogies.

Chris described herself as a 37-year-old female of New Zealand European 'typical middle class' background, who had taught for 16 years across all primary age year groups. Her previous participation with me in visual arts professional learning and development had included a project focusing on integrating arts learning and ICT. Chris was keen to return to further arts development with the focus on exploring the newly revised NZC and integrating art with other learning areas and education for sustainability. During the TLRI project, she was undertaking a new responsibility in the school for leading the curriculum focus on sustainability, as well as continuing her classroom practice with Year 8 students.

The second teacher, Jac, identified herself as a 34-year-old New Zealand Pakeha female who had been teaching for 13 years across all age levels in the primary sector. She had previously participated in the 2008 education for

sustainability professional learning and development, during which she and her Year 5–6 students undertook an inquiry learning process that resulted in a rich interaction of visual arts learning with sustainability learning, exploring a Māori world view of whenua and belonging. Her enthusiasm for the outcome of this learning with her students influenced her return to professional development in the visual arts during 2009, as she sought to deepen her understandings of this integration as a way to implement the NZC. This was now in the context of her new role with new entrant level students.

A current interest of both teachers included the way that inquiry-based learning, a pedagogical approach now established at their schools and more widely, could be undertaken through visual arts as a way to inquire into the future focus theme of sustainability and related conceptual understandings.

Relational pedagogical space

The professional learning and development process and content was designed as an intentionally lived experience of arts enacting the intentions of the NZC vision, and I recognised that this intention constituted part of my positionality as a participant interpreter of national curriculum in local contexts. The two case-study teachers were part of the wider cross-sector group of teachers, who met once a term for workshops and negotiated the focus for visits to their schools and classrooms. The group regularly shared the outcomes of their practice and their students' learning. This wider community of learners, while not discussed in this case study, forms part of the relational pedagogical context for the teacher participants' involvement in the project.

While designing professional learning and development is a process carefully planned in relation to delivering contractual outcomes for the work, there is also planning for the exploration of a layered and relevant context with art, the outcomes of which are able to also be responsively shaped by the teachers as we collaboratively flow in the learning together. Knowing physical place, and local and global issues and events may also become the focus for inquiring with art, opening up a space for reflection to further action. There are opportunities for exploring the roles of art in creating community and in representing the past, and to experience the cultural context and diversity of artist practice first-hand through viewing and responding to artworks. For example, the intention to investigate the concept of interconnectedness with art is supported when we create community through exploring the 'Developing Ideas' learning strand of visual arts. Group drawing became one way in the workshops to experience the role arts can have as an embodied knowing, as we connected our stories, played and experimented with media and processes to generate, refine and extend visual ideas. Diverse outcomes were possible when we engaged together in the space.

The rationale behind the workshop content and context is shared through the kind of 'split screen' thinking that Claxton (2002) advocates, which simultaneously values learning to learn, in this case experienced through learning in, and with, art. The intention is to support teachers to also be explicit with their students about the ways they are learning, as well as what they are learning. During the workshops, ongoing reference was explicitly made to the four arts learning strands, the arts learning area statement, wider aspects of NZC such as 'teaching as inquiry' in *Effective Pedagogy* (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 35) and the dynamic cycle of 'action-reflection' as, and underpinning, arts-specific pedagogy (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 88).

Ethics

This project had the ethical approval of the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee. Teacher participants and their schools had their confidentiality protected by the use of pseudonyms. Teachers had the right to withdraw from the project at any time and to withdraw any data that they had generated. Participants had the opportunity to provide feedback on the analysed data and be consulted about the dissemination of the research findings.

Data collection

The first stage of data collection was intended to gain a picture of how two of the teachers on the professional learning and development course currently understood knowledge and its implications for learning. The teachers, Chris and Jac, were asked about the ways in which they understood themselves as a teacher

alongside their understandings of the philosophical underpinnings of knowledge in the NZC. This included the implications of the NZC for their own teaching and learning within the subject domain of visual arts. The baseline data was collected through a survey and a semi-structured, audio-taped interview.

The second stage of data collection explored the potential of the embodied knowledge of visual arts to advance twenty-first century conceptualisations of knowledge and learning through follow-up interviews. Over a 10–12-week period, I worked with the two project teachers in the experiential workshops and the negotiated programme of in-school visits connected to professional goal-setting, including the teaching-as-inquiry cycle (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 35) to focus teacher responses on emergent student needs.

Field notes documenting aspects for follow-up, feedback and conversation were part of an informal data-gathering process. Similarly, student voice data was sometimes gathered during school visits as a focus for teacher reflection, strengthening the teachers' inquiry into their practice and supporting their recognition of how students were articulating their learning.

Analysis and interpretation of data

Discourse analysis was used to identify and understand the various ways in which each teacher participant understood the embodied nature of visual arts, and their contribution to living and learning in the twenty-first century. Mazzei (2007, p. 2) identifies an 'absent presence' that constitutes another way of knowing. I was aware that, by referring to the teacher data as a 'written transcript', the embodied nuances, silences and accompanying gestures would become unavailable. As an adviser I was also aware of the multiple and complex influences at work for change, in the teachers' contexts, that moderate the claims for shifts in practice being the influence of a single professional learning and development process. The partial nature of the data available for analysis would have an effect on the interpretation of the teachers' practice and the interpretation of teacher expression of ideas in relation to shifting their practices.

Participant-researcher positionality and teacher agency

A further dimension of my working theory of 'not knowing' relates to a desire and intention that teachers transform their professional learning in ways that they need for their practice. This trust that teachers have agency to make sense of the experience is necessary to sustaining the learning from the professional learning and development longer term. I feel the responsibility to offer the possibilities of rich ideas and connections, while being aware that there might be something very unexpected that a teacher finds useful. In light of McGee's (2006) notion of curriculum working at different levels—official, interpreted, taught and learned—there is an element of acting as a go-between and border-crosser in the adviser role, creating a transitional space where we can take risks with creative processes together. Acting our way into thinking therefore situated us as comers in a space between past and future practices.

Further informal data gathering arose when fragments of stories and responses from teachers were shared unexpectedly during follow-up visits back in school. These moments can offer surprising insights into the way teachers may have immediately translated something from a workshop for, and with, their students, and their excitement and passion is evident. Such conversations also formed part of the professional learning and development context as we reflected together.

How the teachers storied the changes in their practice in relation to implementing the NZC

Jac

In the first interview, Jac immediately reflected on her difficulty with filling in the research questionnaire, feeling her current work environment was based on different beliefs about learning and teaching from her own. Perhaps, because the questionnaire did not differentiate the teacher participant beliefs and the school's beliefs, her awareness of this dislocation was heightened and then became a key theme of her narrative. 'Well my perspective, you know, and [the] actual teaching environment are two completely different things.'

Jac expressed her current sense of challenge. She had made shifts in her practice the previous year but now faced the possibility of losing what had been gained. 'I've found it really hard to write what schooling is about ... my vision's completely different to the next person I know. But I'm still acting from the structure of the school.' On several occasions she refers to this situation as a 'crisis'. Through the use of words such as 'struggle ... real personal conflicts ... a real inner conflict ... [a lack of trust]' and 'crisis', an affective dimension in the narrative is made explicit. This is integral to an acknowledgement of being in a situation where she is negotiating different ways of knowing and that her understanding is partial. 'I get really emotional about it, because I want to change it, but I don't have the knowledge, but I have some ideas ...'

This noticing of her sense of self and her perspectives on teaching and learning is accompanied by an acknowledgement of loss of the freedom to pursue the process she believes in: '... there's no way I could have [done what I did with art last year] ... because our overall AO is chosen for us.' This refers in part to her students' learning outcomes being predetermined by other colleagues through the roles they have. It also refers to her concerns that 'we were trying to say we teach differently ... we don't want these children to come out like robots, [but] that's what we're producing, because the curriculum still is reading, writing and maths ...'

Jac mentions her role with new entrant students and finding her way with the NZC, noting that she had mistakenly assumed that with younger children 'you could have time to experiment ... but you actually don't ... they're [the Junior school] so driven by results ... [whereas] I find to follow the curriculum ... it's all about play and being creative ...' Jac refers several times to the effect of predetermined assessment criteria for the students and the effect of that on shaping the learning agenda. The set steps in the inquiry learning model adopted by the school and intended as a pedagogical approach for enacting the curriculum intentions, now 'kind of restricts creativity'.

A theme that emerges early on in the data is Jac's sense of her own role as desiring to be agentic in exploring and interpreting the implementation of curriculum. She wonders if she could even continue teaching in that setting yet notes it would not necessarily be any better to change to another one. While she acknowledges that she is conflicted about her identity in relation to the school setting, she is not expressing any desire to compromise her beliefs. This may indeed be what intensifies the realisation named as 'crisis'.

Later in the project, at the follow-up interview, Jac describes her confidence to now enact her beliefs about teaching and learning in her school setting. She also mentions the trust and support she has experienced, and being valued by her principal. Her descriptions offer a different emotional flavour, signalling a shift of position from the first interview. The narrative of a disjunction between her identity as a teacher and the context in which she works remains, but is less focused on separation and the fear of loss. Earlier she experienced tension between her excitement and conviction about 'discovery', a concept that was investigated in, and through, art in one of the workshops, and the way the school day was being structured in her setting. Later she resolved that tension by deciding to 'just do' what she believed in. Jac expressed this as a 'cognitive shift'.

In this second interview, terms such as 'risk taking', 'experimenting', 'manipulating', 'hands on', 'questioning' are linked to Jac's description of 'discovery' and her creativity focus in the learning programme. 'I think that's what happens with discovery time is that you allow the children to experiment, which is so, so important, because they get that time to, to make errors, but not feel that they're being tested ...'

Jac reports that her learning from the arts workshop has engendered an approach that is now transferred to new contexts and is transforming other learning area experiences through an embodied approach. 'I've felt confident enough to infuse it into loads of different areas ... for example, like, my children were stuck on a maths concept ... now, they've got that concept, because they had that physical hands-on approach ...'

In the midst of this narrative, Jac locates the young culturally and linguistically diverse learners she works with:

Like, they're such a creative little bunch, I mean not only my class, but you see it threaded through everybody's classes ... they need that opportunity to be expressive, and to use and manipulate and do things ... I think this year's really allowed me to explore that, in my role of being a new-entrants teacher, you can really, really be creative at every single level ... and the discovery has made me think of lots of different ways to be creative.

Jac also discusses the students' locus of control and agency in their learning, a value she expressed in the first interview.

They come in and they go, 'what are we doing for discovery?' ... so ... I feed it through the week, and I let them have a really big say in what we're going to be doing. So, they plan some of it with me, which is really exciting, like, they're getting that real student voice in their own direction, and they're five....

Rowson (2008, p. 88) discusses Perkin's (1995) description of 'dispositions as the soul of intelligence', positing that to influence them in the classroom context 'means giving students, as much as possible, time to think for themselves about things that matter to them'.

Jac also pays attention in her reflection to the shift in power relationships with its attendant feeling dimensions and perceived riskiness.

Like, sometimes I think we worry that we're not in control, whereas, yeah. We're actually in this together, and the children should have a say, and if we can get them saying 'this is the learning path that I want to', at five, imagine what they'll be like at the end of their schooling? They'll have such a great knowledge of where they're going, and what they have to do to get there.

The sense that the teacher learns *with* the students is linked to a bigger vision that she articulates for these young learners as self-directed and engaged, and developing a learning identity.

Jac discussed aspects of a unit using an Asian learning context linking to cultural values in an exploration of art and communal story telling processes. I had drafted it to align with the NZC principles and values and shared it with her, inviting her to critique and use any parts of it that seemed relevant for the needs of the class. Selected aspects were then incorporated into the class inquiry learning process. Jac notes that the class

used heaps of values in our everyday setting, so this week its been 'determination', and looking at, like, how do you be determined, and what do you do, that sense of community, and I think that's come out of us sitting down and sharing stories, and being part of a community, and what does that really mean, for us.

She also talks about how 'I've got such a diverse range of children in there' and mentions a story by a particular child that we gathered through a learning conversation as some student voice data. 'I just loved his story, about his work, because what he'd seen and experienced in China. And, yet it was right in this moment, as well. It was like all at once.' This child's painting had encapsulated multiple known worlds simultaneously. Alongside his encounter with the materials, and his immersion in the act of making and dialogue, this could be read as a transformational process of making connections and negotiating the complexity of identity.

Jac identifies the effect of the learning she was exploring on her students' oral language development, explaining that she wanted to go beyond the school newsboard idea of oral language that she was supposed to use. 'If you are wanting to have rich conversations with the children, give them rich experiences. And that can come from art, or a book...' For Jac, it also seems to be an expression of her desire for agency in her role with students when she notes '[it's] having that confidence in my own teaching ability, and not worrying what anyone else is doing ...'

How I storied Jac's narrative

In retrospect, when making sense of the interview data, I notice the multiple roles of the professional learning and development facilitator. During the first interview with Jac, I had found myself wanting to hold back from the information we were seeking in the project about 'shifts' and allow her the space to speak out her issues of the moment. The teacher's level of frankness in the first interview conversation was unexpected and immediately afterwards I did not anticipate that this recorded data would much illuminate the research question. This first interview was held immediately after the workshop later mentioned in the second interview data as a source of motivation for her back at school.

I also recalled how, after this workshop and before completing the research questionnaire and undertaking this first interview, Jac recorded an anecdotal reflection about her experience and response to the workshop using the words 'discovery time' with a hand-drawn smiley face beside it. She recorded that the effect of her learning

on her students could be the 'use of discovery and play, questioning as a tool'. Underlining, exclamation marks and inclusion of emoticons gave emphasis and a sense of her energy to her notes about her learning.

In the time between Jac's two interviews, I witnessed the children's and the teacher's own excitement in the classroom during 'discovery' where energies were evident and purposeful, and ideas were being expressed through multimodal means. In the written, informal workshop reflection, Jac seemed to recognise immediately some aspects of the workshop contexts and creative and collective processes, as being what she needed. What I was witnessing was how she went on to translate these ideas into the classroom context. Her use of the word 'discovery' now seemed to be less like a noun and more like a philosophy and creative organic process within which the children also had agency.

On occasions when I went into the school staffroom to meet other teachers, Jac would also informally catch up and excitedly recount what was happening. She was taking risks and strengthening her identity in the teacher role to align her values, beliefs and practice. I cannot know the full effect of my own practice. However, I was aware that, within this partial knowledge, I had been modelling this pedagogy of risk-taking more explicitly than usual in the workshops during the year, saying more consciously 'I haven't done this before but let's try it and see what happens ...' While I was still reflecting on how to support Jac in the challenges she expressed in the first interview, back at school she had already taken action and moved on.

Emotions are an intertwined aspect of Jac's discourse. Commenting on the potential for 'fear' and 'worry' when letting go of 'control', in Jac's second interview, was one example of this. The earlier sense of crisis expressed in the first interview, segues into a narrative that focuses on how the outcomes for students desired by the school can be reached through the different means. It seems Jac is no longer thinking she is in the wrong place and that the earlier uncertainty has become a bridge into realising new potentials. The combination of taking action, with narrating and reflecting on her practice, may have opened up the possibility of transforming while living with the complexity of diverse views around her.

Reflecting on the data themes

In retrospect, I wonder whether the first interview may have created a space for Jac to be heard and to air what she described as a crisis of identity around her role. We had discussed the possibility of her sharing this with her principal and she had followed up on that.

Thinking experimentally, there is the possibility that one story the data might be telling is how Jac was situated in a 'field of emergence' with her practice. In a kind of theory in the making, I considered that the workshop may have provided a transitional space where we shared together rather than reproducing knowledge from knower to novice. This more organic process may have potential for supporting a willingness to act in the world while being open to being acted upon by it. Pratt's work (1984) analysing when and why a teacher willingly undertakes change (cited by Boler, 1999, p. 182) suggests the possibility that 'as we learn to see differently ... we may actually gain relief from the pain of separateness'. This may account for Jac's changed emotional tone in the second interview, for even though she had now acted out her beliefs about the approach she felt was required by the new curriculum, it cannot be assumed that the school setting had shifted with her. The data in the interview narrative raises questions about the effect of the wider school community on sustaining shifts and changes which individual 'early adopter' teachers may be making in relation to their interpreted and enacted curriculum re-visioning. Jac mentioned the importance for her of confidence and trust from leadership, in both interviews.

Chris

Chris was interviewed later in the project and expressed her preference to use it as a way to talk about the categories noted on the structured questionnaire rather than completing the questionnaire for a second time.

Chris's explanation of how her thinking was developing during the process of implementing the NZC included 'inquiry' learning, with her students, that reframed the positioning of the learning areas. As she explains:

The emphasis has ... come off curriculum core learning ... and come more into the children finding their own learning, and acknowledging what they want to learn and how they want to learn it ... we don't so much say to achieve in this subject you have to do this and this because its not that obvious any more ...

The role of the learner is described as developing knowledge of learning processes, which also implicates Chris in a shift of identity as a teacher in relation to imparting knowledge and subjects as bodies of knowledge.

... and each time they go around thinking 'well next time I'm going to find a different way of doing this'. So it's gone from 'this is the subject that we're going to talk about, or learn about' to 'this is the beginning of the subject, I'm going to give you a brief overview and you can take it wherever you want' ...

In this approach, the agency of students is strengthened not only in the process of selecting the learning pathways but in co-constructing knowledge and knowing themselves as learners. Chris clarifies her role as 'working with them ... getting them to identify how they can succeed ... so they can re-evaluate what they're doing ...'

Chris sees the 'front of the new curriculum' as 'very valuable'. 'If they don't have the key competencies to be able to [function in a learning environment] ... you have to be able to teach them that skill before you can expect them to be self-learners ... and they have to be taught on a needs basis.'

Discussion of framing the learning as process flows into explaining the reframing of assessment from task-centric to student-focused and focused on process rather than final product. 'The achievement is so different from every child, and they know that. Now each child knows there isn't a standard achievement per class, there is an achievement for themselves ...' Chris links this discussion of assessment to the 'celebration' of learning 'where there is always the community coming in to have a look'.

Chris's use of ICT 'to interact with them' is a further 'huge' shift. At the same time she notes that she wants to ameliorate the students' preference for exclusive use of the internet as their inquiry resource.

As the school has put in place a lot of the skills for student understanding of the steps required by an inquiry learning process in their learning up to Year 7/8, Chris now sees her role as less about teaching students the 'nuts and bolts of questioning or finding information. I'm now teaching them different ways of expressing their information ... they can be so much more expressive with what they want to say and learn and find out'.

In Chris's class, integrating the arts became a way to both explore and structure knowledge in an inquiry process that focused around the concept of identity. As part of this learning we had organised a New Zealand-born Pasifika artist based in Samoa to share the complexity of issues of identity expressed in her work, alongside the students' own explorations of what they wanted to express and how to do that in their printmaking and other art-making processes. Later in the year the students used drama and visual arts to explore the idea of multiple perspectives in the context of early European arrival in Aotearoa New Zealand. A learning inquiry process was drafted to connect the arts learning area to NZC principles, values and key competencies. Through play, improvisation and viewing visual texts, students explored real and imagined situations. They experimented with roles and relationships, investigating the ways in which historical events have been represented.

An area of identified challenge that emerges from the data relates to Chris's education for sustainability management role with the staff, also a focus for her work in the professional learning and development during the year. She is supporting their understanding of this NZC future focus theme and she notes:

It just weaves in everywhere ... it's trying to get the message across of the importance of the front of the curriculum, and the importance of the back, because it ties both of those together. It is the hardest thing, for me, is to be able to get the staff on board to see the connections.

At this point, the interview veers towards an opportunity for clarifying ideas and resources recently explored in the professional learning and development workshops, as Chris is working on where to make the connections to the key competencies explicit in the schools' sustainability learning for their curriculum. She notes a shift in what knowledge is considered to be in the experiential learning associated with sustainability. Her comments acknowledge that this transformational learning takes place in a relational space.

We expect our children to actually leave the classroom to find their knowledge and ... [because] there is social action ... or action competence, and to get that knowledge you have to be able to go and communicate in the community to find that knowledge.

Woven in and out of Chris's narrative are comments about the ongoing emphasis on numeracy and literacy in the school's curriculum, including continuing formal reporting to the community on these aspects and how the community 'don't quite want us to change [that aspect]'. She raises concerns about the imminent introduction of the national standards.

We have taught our children to ... find their information and find their knowledge—what happens to that? Are we going to pull them [the children] back in to where we want them to be, sit them down and say you only need *this* information to survive in the world.

She queries the implementation of school-based curricula, asking 'whether they'll still continue to allow schools to develop their own curriculum ... I'd hate to see it go backwards ... to go back to the book 'teach the lesson' and focus on that'.

Reflection on the data—how I storied Chris's narrative

Chris's perceptions of changed student and teacher roles in the implementation of NZC, implies an attendant shift in power relations. 'It's changed because the children get to choose their success, and we're there to help them succeed how they want to'.

In relation to 'environmental' learning, Chris notes 'I am probably one step behind them, rather than in front', suggesting a perception now that her teacher knowledge is partial, no longer seen as all sufficient for leading the students' learning down a predetermined pathway. These comments, and her earlier reference to being up front with the technology, build a picture of how she sees herself performing as a body of knowledge, and how knowledge is now reframed as a community responsibility and co-constructed with students.

The interview narrative of how practice has shifted to implement the NZC also acknowledges challenges, uncertainties and contradictions. For example, Chris identifies the complexity of teacher decision making in a context where learning is more student-led and student-constructed. '[The values have] to be taught in different curriculum areas, weaving it through and always referring it back. And that makes it tricky because you can never write it down.' This recognition that learning emerges in a relational context suggests the teacher must be present in the moment, engaging with students and responsive to their identity as learners. There is a 'not knowing', formative aspect in this pedagogical approach that destabilises the certainty of predetermined outcomes and power relations but in so doing may now orient learning to be more inclusive, as different voices are heard.

Chris describes the process of knowing what to 'cover' as a 'minefield ... when to cover and how to cover it'. In a discussion of the use of curriculum achievement objectives as a progression or as a sampling, she notes the effect of having 28 students and 'because it's all so subjective, it really is hit and miss ...'. In the data it is possible to read traces of assumptions from what could be a pre-shift position. For example, an earlier history of needing to be able to document and fully establish the learning outcomes and assessment prior to the learning, to manage the learning, and to be all-knowing as the teacher. Chris indicates an ongoing awareness of the need to 'let go' of these material practices and be open to changing ways of being.

Chris speaks of her multi layered 'intention' with an arts unit that students will 'definitely ... see different cultural perspectives, and diversity through that, but it's assessing whether they understand that, at the end of it, or whether they're ready to understand it, I don't [yet] know'. Her reflection that 'it's definitely no longer black and white, it's definitely all grey', suggests that another kind of 'knowing' is being called for. As students' agency in shaping the focus for the learning is strengthened, there are implications for teachers' roles and identities.

Themes emergent from the interview data for both teachers

Moments of anxiety emerged in the interview data for both teachers as they expressed concern about perceived external challenges to the transformative learning they had entered into with the revised NZC in their classrooms and school settings. The predetermined outcomes of assessment resulting from school-based decision making and new national emphases on reading, writing, and mathematics standards were both felt to be at odds with their developing learning and efforts to interpret the new curriculum into practice with their students.

There was a sense in which the teachers felt these demands impinging on their forming beliefs and values about child-centredness, and learner agency. New fears were arising as a result of learning to see differently. For example Jac noted:

I think that's what we want from our students, so they come out, they're innovative, they can think for themselves, they can take their own learning direction, they're motivated, they don't just sit and go 'this is what's in front of me, this is what I do', they do challenge that ...

Both teachers expressed concerns around compliances that might deprive them of what Whitfield (2009, p. 154) calls 'the autonomy in responding to diverse children's learning needs', an aspect which they valued as an underpinning to their implementation of NZC, alongside the shifts made towards power-sharing and learning *with* students.

Teachers acknowledged the time it takes to learn and make shifts as a teacher alongside the re-signified power relationships in their roles as part of transforming their teacher identity. The anxiety around the introduction of national standards for reading, writing and mathematics may also be linked to the efforts of shifting their pedagogical approach in the implementation of the new curriculum.

I was conscious of the ways in which teachers opened up about the contradictions they perceived and felt, between their beliefs and the threats to these through external circumstances, even though they knew these comments would form part of the research data. I considered this both trusting and evidence of their commitment to their students well-being and their valuing of students' agency as learners.

Storying the teachers' stories in relation to the research question: How do they interpret the new curriculum?

During 2010, I became aware that the project researcher discourse around the use of the Baxter Magolda matrix tool had itself been shifting towards considering the 'steps' as more of a fluid continuum. Using the Baxter Magolda model with the data in this way, and identifying that the two teachers in the case study were working in contexts where there were self-identified paradoxes, contradictions and complexities, suggests that they were moving between the borders of Baxter Magolda's spaces 3 and 4. Both teachers worked in settings that had made shifts towards interpreting the intent of NZC by developing inquiry-learning processes as a pedagogical approach, in this case using the visual arts discipline in The Arts as the focus learning area. They spoke of their role in relation to that approach as if it was what it meant to implement the NZC.

Chris described how her context was constraining in terms of community expectation, assessment, and supporting student needs that were so various. Jac also mentioned assessment and leadership decision making about planning as shaping her practice in constraining ways. In this sense it seems that teachers were implementing the curriculum in contexts that themselves held varying epistemological approaches. These wider contexts in which the teachers worked and their report of them is situated within what can be described as space 2 in the Baxter Magolda model, with its views of knowledge as both 'partial uncertainty' and 'partial certainty'. Chris described enacting the desire to meet the needs of diverse students and interpret the NZC by putting the students at the centre of teaching and learning as a 'grey' rather than a black and white area. The data for Jac suggested that she had consciously shifted into that space of being more comfortable with the complexity of having an identity she wanted and acted out of, while working in a setting that showed evidence of different beliefs and practices from her own. Chris linked her concern about the national standards to her professional role and 'wanting the best from the children'. These concerns about student agency related to the

ways in which the teachers saw their role in implementing the new curriculum to support students to be the 'active seekers, users and creators of knowledge' sought in the NZC (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 8), and a view of knowing that positioned students as change agents.

The connection between conceptualisations of knowledge and learning and teacher identities and related values, emerging from the data, suggests that reframing or shifting understanding is not an instrumental process when interpreting official curriculum into practice. It is itself an embodied process that may involve the discomfort of challenge to previously accepted or assumed practices and closely held values, or even crisis when challenge is felt from within one's professional community. Making changes may involve living with ambiguity and uncertainty, the need for flexibility and for seeing differently.

Reconceptualising teaching and learning through the arts as a way of knowing and being

An approach common to the data provided by both teachers was the broadening of our conversations across the wider school-based curriculum and the narrations of their sense of self within that. There is suggestion in the data that experiences of curriculum implementation in and through the arts, had contributed opportunities to resignify curriculum implementation more widely, particularly through exploring pedagogical practices that impacted on strengthening teacher and student dispositional learning, subverting the enactment of separate, named discipline times. As the teachers interpreted the professional learning and development ideas in their classrooms, the student response and learning that they witnessed became another layer of lived experience that motivated their ongoing efforts to re-frame practice.

Claxton (2008, p. 8) suggested that 'teachers can start ... by demonstrating the same dispositions they seek in their students'. The willingness Jac demonstrated to undergo possible transformation of her learning-for-teaching self, and how she examined that in relation to and with others, suggests her shift towards taking action connected to a sense of self that was dispositionally open to seeing from new points of view (as opposed to what Perkins calls 'functional fixedness') and using her learning for new contexts. She had talked about this 'freedom' to act, a position which is more about agency than compliance, and seemed to be linked to her values of empowering student choice-making and also learning from the wisdom of one's elders.

I became aware that the teachers were processing change always in relation to their teaching and learning selves. I felt this may have accounted for the heartfelt expressions of excitement and angst when their sense of agency was perceived as empowered or constrained in the teaching context or by external demands. The interview data indicated that their perception of the NZC as a document of possibility had already meant shifts in the way the teaching role was conceptualised. The anxieties unexpectedly voiced in the data about new national initiatives later in the year, implied an intuition and concern from the teachers that teacher agency to mediate learning possibilities might not be valued to the same extent.

Knowing and 'not knowing'

What was made available in an arts-based approach that opened up possibilities for reframing the teacher role as a verb was less about a delivering a body of knowledge and more about being an embodied knower. While not attempting to claim explicit causal links to the professional learning and development process, I noticed an approach being affirmed in the teachers' practice that, while well planned and carefully resourced, felt more playful, connected to being in the moment with students and intentionally valuing diverse outcomes from the learning. This supported my earlier hunches that, alongside a systematically planned professional learning and development experience, underpinned by effective relationships, strengthening the disposition to 'not know' also affirmed teachers' agency to explore diverse ways to be in their practice. Implementation of curriculum was conceptualised as an ongoing process of becoming in the teacher narrations of shifting.

The Baxter Magolda model, the matrix referred to early in the project, was initially challenging as it felt quite linear and implied that evidence of a 'shift' was what was expected of teachers in the project. For me it seemed more dispositionally appropriate to acknowledge the process as a kind of shapeshifting that did not deny the

past while allowing us to pay attention to unexpected, yet valued, outcomes. This 'not knowing' approach has parallels to art making processes and pedagogy, informed by deep subject knowledge but able, through cycles of action and reflection, to be both intuitive *and* considered. When we explore and perform self through art making, experimenting with visual ideas and assessing actions, there can be opportunities for understanding the fluidity of identity, and for co-constructing knowledge together in a time and place.

Resignifying the visual arts as literacy

Both teachers expressed concerns about how 'literacy' would be re-interpreted in quite particular and narrow ways in the school context with the coming of national standards for mathematics and literacy. Opportunities for traditional literacies have been and will continue to be incorporated purposefully into arts learning, and to be strengthened through meaningful and motivational contexts. However the NZC itself has also presented the learning areas as diverse ways to know, each with its 'own language' and within that, the arts are described as having 'their own languages that use both verbal and non verbal conventions' (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 20).

Fraser, Price and Henderson (2008, p. 4) argue that the largely nonverbal ways of learning in the arts support the learner to express things for which words are inadequate and that arts knowing is 'undervalued if it is always translated into verbal language'.

Such findings support the potential of the statement in the NZC describing how, in the arts, students 'explore, refine, and communicate ideas as they connect thinking, imagination, sense and feelings to create works and respond to the works of others' (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 17). Acknowledging the ways that diverse learners engage in learning processes as an embodied knowing underpins arts learning in the curriculum. Buckingham, Walsh, Kalantzis and Cope (cited in Grushka, 2010b), assert that 'the under-valued language of visual arts knowing resonates with the transformative, interactivity, and productive literacy aims of mainstream education'.

Now that schools have been given permission and a mandate to create an interpretation of the NZC with their communities, how do they review the effect of emergent initiatives on the directions that the NZC has set and that their schools have responded to? The NZC vision notes that life-long learners are not only 'literate and numerate [but] critical and creative thinkers, active seekers, users and creators of knowledge and informed decision makers' (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 8). How can we keep a space for the creative and the energetic—two aspects that are present throughout the NZC?

Reconceptualising curriculum

The project raised questions for me about the word curriculum itself. How might it serve the needs of twenty-first century learners now as well as to 'secure a ... future for our country' (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 1)? How can we engage with the students' current experiences of being in the world, where local and global boundaries are interactive and fluid? We need many ways to conceptualise curriculum and its enactment with diverse learners.

Arts learning has been discussed in this paper as offering a way to reconceptualise and re-imagine curriculum itself. Art's pedagogical insights noted by Eisner and others, provide means to reconceptualise personal identity as well as to connect to culture and society—to engage with the values of others and to participate and contribute through embodied knowing. One way to view the visual arts professional learning and development process is as a relational space where participants were encouraged to engage with the NZC and to be dispositionally open to the emergent. The teacher data described taking action, and reflecting on and inquiring into the translation of these experiences, with an orientation to be present and contextually responsive to their students in the classroom. This suggests that an embodied process of transforming as knowers rather than simply 'shifting' understandings about the conceptualisation of knowledge, was taking place.

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