

Foreword

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In the beginning as an Editorial Board we had the idea that this journal number might be a special issue focusing on the notion of the 'doctoral journey'. However, in the realisation of this theme, 'doctoral journey' came to be limiting as a descriptor. What seemed to be more interesting, was a special issue that asked, 'what was your process of arriving at self-knowledge, and what was the impact of this on others?' In widening the theme, the special issue freed itself to include the testimony of teachers and leaders who had found their way to making change through multiple different routes: action research, interrogating themselves and their classrooms, exploring critical incidents, story and history, books and picturebooks, self, community and land. This issue shows the many ways educators have travelled towards self-knowing and sought to enact positive change in the world as a result. The settings shared in the four papers, book and thesis reviews include Hawaii, New Zealand and Ireland, Croatia and the United Kingdom.

It is the detail and specificity which make these accounts powerful and distinctive. Danijela Ljubac Mec, a primary school teacher in a small village school in Croatia, describes her transition from a teacher-centred school ideology to one of learner-autonomy and engagement. Her story is an inspiring one, tracking the transformation of a learning environment into one that, 'awakens cheerful children who could not wait to start new ventures'.

Pip Bruce Ferguson describes the course at a college in New Zealand that inspired her first to ask, 'Who am I who teaches?' She reveals her transformation through doctoral and post-doctoral study, from a position she defines as 'naive' to one of ongoing self-exploration and clarity. She explains in this paper why such clarity is essential as a teacher who has worked as a 'pakeha' on Maori land, and now as a new arrival in Ireland. Through critical incidents she reveals how these understandings have impacted on her decisions, relationships and sense of self as a teacher.

Jocelyn Romero Demirbag also describes a process of transition through doctoral inquiry, as she recognises her own powerful contribution as an educational leader in the Waldorf schools on the Hawaiian islands of Maui and Oahu. She explains the deep spiritual connections between herself, the school communities and the land in which they co-exist.

As editor of this special issue and writer of this foreword, I also include in this special issue my own account of being a doctoral educator, alongside the voices of four students in my Ed.D. writing programme, Dan Butcher, Adrian Twissell, Jenny Harding and Kathleen Greenway. My account tracks the way my values have evolved and been tested, as I shift from doctoral student to doctoral teacher. I explore what this shift has meant for my pedagogy as I 'pave the way' for other doctoral students, providing for them an enabling space for their own journeys in self-knowledge.

Varied and richly wide-ranging as these papers are, several themes emerge which connect them.

Doctoral learning and self-knowledge

The accounts of Romero Demirbag, Bruce Ferguson and myself (Spiro), cluster together experiences of doctoral learning. As a doctorate is increasingly the threshold qualification for a wide range of professional roles, many experienced professionals find themselves embarking on this major study for pragmatic reasons only: to sustain, assure, or rise beyond their current working roles. Yet the demands of doctoral study mean that more of the self needs to be invested in the process: time, vision, 'stickability', determined pursuit of long-term goals. Whether this was anticipated or not these demands lead to changes in self-regard. Students come to know themselves better in this long-term process, and to see anew what it is they are offering to their profession. The doctorate cannot be completed without these deeper changes taking place. All doctorates are founded on the triple criteria of originality, significance and rigour: and to fulfil this criteria, there will be major travel in the doctorate writer between start and finish: discovering what is unique and original to them, discarding what might have been clutter or distractions from this main course, and sharpening the way this is defined and explained. Even more is this the case within a living-theory inquiry, in which both self and other are deeply interrogated for guiding values, unexamined assumptions, and lived principles.

The papers in this journal-issue vividly illustrate what this travel has meant to doctoral researchers. Pip Bruce Ferguson describes a transition from 'naivety' to selfrecognition which remains ongoing. This transition is encapsulated by her important question, 'What provoked me to see that to remain silent is to side with oppression?' As she explains her values, she evidences these through life-choices and lived experience, showing how complex and contradictory it can sometimes be to 'live' these. For example, in explaining the value of equity, as a New Zealand teacher she recognises that policies towards the Maori community which masquerade as positive discrimination are in fact devaluing their unique heritage and culture. In being respectful of others, she finds that without deep shared knowledge of the other, she is complicit with power imbalances between herself and her students. Bruce Ferguson shows us that values are tested and refined by life experiences, and that we need to remain alive to their complexity on an ongoing basis. For her this is an imperative, 'if I do not investigate my own ontology, epistemology and fundamental values in life, i.e. the lenses

through which I see the world, I risk teaching with these beliefs taken uncritically as the norm against which I measure others'. She explains the drives which moved her forward in her quest for accountability: reading influences such as Foucault (1980), Freire (1970) and Palmer (1998) (reviewed in this issue), and inspirational role models such as Nelson Mandela, together with critical incidents revealing unseen collisions between herself as a 'Pakeha' teacher, and her Maori students. Only by returning to these incidents in a spirit of humility and openness to learning, does she discover her misunderstandings and her need to 'see' differently or more deeply. The paper evidences how this deepened self-understanding has changed her practice as she moves into a new second culture, as an educator in Ireland.

Jocelyn Romero Demirbag also tracks the shift that self-knowledge brings, as she moves from a sense of herself as 'imposter' to 'doctor-educator'. She writes, 'little did I know that through the doctoral dissertation process I was about to embark on a journey of self-recognition'. She recognises the multiple gifts brought to her through the doctoral process, 'validation as an educator, researcher and writer; confidence to pursue further questions; the possibility of affecting school practices and personal evolution; the opportunity to actualize personal values; and the generation of a living-educational-theory'. She comes to recognise the unique value of her learning about the Waldorf schools, not through formal qualifications, but through lived experience, powerful partnerships with others, action and leadership. She explains a deepening connection with place - the land on which the schools are built, the Hawaiian islands themselves, their history, cosmos and heritage - *aina* or spirit of place, and its soul, *mono*. Her paper concludes by placing the spiritual at the centre of place, 'human beings are spiritual beings impacted by larger beings present in the land and in the cosmos, and recognizing these beings may cause us to flourish, achieve our personal missions, and evolve in our consciousness'. She evidences this flourishing with multiple examples of how her own leadership has become articulated and visible, and how her deep questioning of self, place and other has led to action and change in the Waldorf schools.

In my own paper (Jane Spiro), I approach the doctoral process from the perspective of a doctoral educator, making the shift from thinking as a student, to thinking as a doctoral educator. I interrogate my living-theory of 'creative space' as I experienced this during doctoral inquiry, and now as a doctoral educator. My paper tracks the evolution of core values as I make this shift: the values of wellbeing and empathy become tempered by the role of discomfort and challenge in doctoral inquiry, and the need to prepare others for this disquiet. The values of connection and authenticity become tempered by the need to understand different disciplinary communities and write within their conventions in order to be heard. I explore the imperative to stay authentic to one's central message even as we adopt different voices to address different audiences; and I am congruent with this in showing my own writing both as a poet and as an academic writer. I share my paper with Ed.D. students Dan Butcher, Kathleen Greenway, Adrian Twissell and Jenny Harding as they explain their own doctoral journeys through the 'creative space' enabled by our doctoral programme.

Independent learning and the learning environment

Danijela Ljubac's paper offers a wonderful example of a teacher 'creating space' for her learners, as she evidences the transformation of learning in her primary classroom in rural Croatia. She opens by explaining her concern that teaching in Croatian schools does not encourage children to question, actively participate or own what they are learning. Her experience of the learning environment was that it was uncomfortable and constraining for the children. She addresses her concerns through action research, founding her choices on a constructivist approach to social learning as encapsulated by Montessori's maxim: 'Help me to do it by myself' (2004, p. 206). In her desire to, 'awaken cheerful children who could not wait to start new ventures', she embarks on a transition from a teacher-dominated, textbook-driven classroom to one founded on principles of active learning and learner- independence. Her journey towards the project-method is tracked in rich and inspiring detail, starting with the insights of critical friends through classroom observation, and through surveys with both parents and children. She describes the change to, 'bright and shining' children as she provides the learning space for children to choose their own project topic, to research and explore it for themselves, and to choose and create their own outcomes. The children chose topics from the curriculum: domestic animals, healthy eating, meteorology, water, winter and cats. The learning is lived, enriched by real-world experiences and encounters, entails making, doing, sharing, researching, discovery. The outcomes were determined by the children themselves: such as a daily Rainfall measurement-sheet, visits and photographs of farmyard animals, a blog about domestic animals, and a class-magazine with its own editorial team and printing press. Ljubac evidences that these transitions hugely increased the children's sense of freedom and autonomy, their independence and self-confidence, and their co-operative learning both at home and at school, fuelled by enthusiasm and focus on their task. She also shows that children who had been disregarded, or over-confident, found their roles within these cooperative teams. As the children grow in self-determination, she notes her own role as teacher becomes sidelined, with the children taking control for themselves of all stages of their project. Her final words offer an important message to other teachers, 'This example of teaching is reasonable proof that when the students came up with an open heart, and when they were given the trust, wonderful work can develop'.

Forms of Inquiry

We see through the book-reviews, thesis-review and papers in this issue, the many different forms of inquiry that lead writers towards self-knowledge. Jacqueline Delong reviews my own doctoral thesis and has identified the unifying form of inquiry as story/narrative. In writing this thesis, I wished to take account of critical incidents, childhood stories (my own and others), memory and history, as well as cycles of action research as a teacher of language, and a creative writer. I show how I arrived at my living-theory of 'knowledge transformation' by interrogating these stories as ways of learning. Jacqueline Delong describes how she responded to this approach as a reader, as I offer story as an alternative way of knowing and explaining.

‘Developing Children's Critical Thinking through Picturebooks’, by Mary Roche. Reviewed by Marie Huxtable

Marie Huxtable's review shows how this book, 'brings together into one voice the best of an academic, scholar and educational practitioner'. She introduces us to an approach Mary Roche calls 'Critical Thinking and Book Talk (CT & BT)', developed through the medium of picturebooks. Huxtable explains the values which underpin this approach: values about others, knowledge and teacher-as-learner, as well as Roche's own experience as a child who loved the escape and adventure of reading. The book demonstrates the join between the way we teach and the capacity to 'make a difference for good' (Roche, p. 146). This book has been specially commended by UKLA (<http://bit.ly/IGBuFpr>).

‘The Courage to Teach’, by P. J. Palmer. Reviewed by Pip Bruce Ferguson

In Bruce Ferguson's paper in this issue, she refers to the inspirational influence of Palmer on her own thinking. Her review reiterates this, with the statement that it is the most influential reading for her in 25 years. In reading her review we come to understand why this might be. Bruce Ferguson writes that Palmer, 'locates successful teaching in the heart of the teacher, living in community with his/her students and operating in ways that demonstrate coherence with the teacher's own system of values'. He shows how transformation within a teaching context can lead to transformation in the wider community, if a teacher lives with the philosophy of 'divided no more'. In these ways, Palmer's central thesis is evidenced by the accounts in this journal issue, such as Romero Demirbag's influence for change in Hawaii, and Bruce Ferguson's own relationship between and across cultures in New Zealand and Ireland.

‘Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation’, by Parker J. Palmer. Reviewed by Pip Bruce Ferguson

This second review introduces us to a more directed application of Palmer's corephilosophy, as he addresses the reader and involves them in their own self-development. Bruce Ferguson makes distinctions between this book and the first 'Courage to Learn'. She describes it as more generic in nature, directed not specifically at the educator but at the link between vocation and personal development more widely. The book directs the reader to find ways of, 'living by our own best lights' (p. 34).

Conclusion

Taken as a whole, this journal-issue tracks the meaning and practice of self-learning and demonstrates its capacity to lead to positive change. It shows the connection between self and others, and between belief and action in the world. It also demonstrates the join between small change inside a single classroom, and wider long-lasting change that opens up the aspirations of children (as Llubjek does), the empowerment of a community (as Romero Demirbag does) or democratic communication between peoples (as Bruce Ferguson does). In these ways, we offer this journal issue to you as resource, example and inspiration.

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