Editorial

Pedagogy in Practice: 'Here and Now'; 'Then and There'

Pedagogy refers to the relationship that binds learners and educators together, such that they "are able to dwell authentically in a learning experience" (Foran and Olson 2008: 24). As professional practitioners, we may expect to dwell as both learners and educators, in reciprocal relationship with our self-directed selves, as well as with others, including students, peers, and service users. The pedagogical places in which we learn, influence not only curricular outcomes, they shape our emergence as practitioners, and how we relate to one another as human beings in a professional community, along our career trajectory. De Certeau (1988: 118) describes this interaction of directional activity and time variables in terms of 'space' as "a practiced place". Ideally, whether novice or experienced practitioners, as we move between the different pedagogical places of practice-based learning, our spatial horizons are expanded. We are drawn into a wider narrative space for action. That is, a space that opens us up to questions about new options and possibilities available to us, where different positions and ways of being as professionals and learners can be brought into the open and explored. Opportunities and moments are created when different kinds of agency become possible, when 'here and now' is understood in terms of 'then and there' (Baynham 2003).

In their different ways, the articles in this issue are concerned with this space/time orientation in practice-based learning, as well as learners' and educators' concern to dwell authentically together in specific pedagogical places. Collectively, they highlight that outcomes of learning at all levels are predicated upon the complex dynamics of perceived stakeholder purposes, curriculum design, and personal interactions within practice-based learning environments. They raise questions about the ways in which such environments open up expansive horizons towards which we, as learners and educators, can strive, or offer only restrictive spaces in which we struggle as best we can.

Mealey's article describes an initiative to reduce the demands of bureaucratic assessment structure on undergraduate dietetic students' attention in the workplace, and also at home. She argues that reduced availability of placements must be a driver for developing assessment strategies that foster confidence in both students and educators, that they can achieve learning outcomes that are desirable and worthwhile. In doing so, she points to the widening demographic of student cohorts, and the fact that pedagogical places are not confined to clinic and academy. In tune with this, Jones, McAllister and Lyle's article draws attention to a lack of service provision in remote rural communities in Australia. They show how an initiative to address this lack, enabled allied health students to participate in wider 'real world' learning, by opening up pedagogical space beyond established practice places. In Hughes, Baxter, Cirrigall and Isherwood's account of developing and implementing supervisor training for clinical psychologists, they discuss the challenge brought to evaluation of such programmes by a wide range of stakeholder interest, and the breadth of clinical practice. In many ways their concerns exemplify the space/time orientation of such learning endeavours, as they seek ways to go beyond the programme's 'here and now', as narrated by Kirkpatrick's (1959) first three levels of evaluation, and demonstrate its capacity to expand practitioners' horizon of effectiveness towards 'then and there'. The pedagogical power of this expansion is expressed clearly by participants in Jørgensen, Purkis, Tulip and Blaxter's study of service-user involvement in practice-based higher education teaching. Two articles address pedagogic place in terms of the seemingly wide horizon of cyberspace by describing learning approaches and outcomes associated with online and blended learning. Morrison, McBride and McAllister report the results of the evaluation of an online clinical educator preparation and support programme for allied health professionals. Orchard, Burley Peterson and Verrilli describe a blended-learning approach to collaborative interprofessional teamwork for improving patient care. Both articles reflect on issues of participant engagement, and the extent to which narrative space for action, based on new learning, as well as new approaches to learning, may be closed down by other factors and agendas. Strudwick and Harvey-Lloyd take up the theme of interprofessional learning with a project that positions undergraduate students as simultaneously educators and learners, and active agents in assessing their own learning outcomes. As such they are facilitated to dwell authentically in a collaborative learning experience through dynamic interaction of roles and resources.

I began with the notion of pedagogy as a reciprocal relationship that binds learner and educator together in a quest to expand their horizons in time and space. Strudwick and Harvey-Lloyd conclude their report by observing that, "[f]riendships were also developed as a result of working together". As a learning outcome, that would seem to open up an enriching space for practice between 'here and now' and 'then and there'.

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References

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