

Creative Pedagogies: Content, Structure and Process in Futures Education

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Introduction

In 1996 I bought a book called *New Thinking for a New Millennium*. Reading Richard Slaughter's introduction it became apparent to me that there was a field of investigation called Future Studies (Slaughter 1996). The direct and conscious nature of the contributors' relationship with the future was refreshing to say the least. I felt that here was a movement with a strong emphasis on positive change that was attempting to be both academically valid *and* open ended and original in its structures and thinking.

During my undergraduate study of Industrial Design I felt very strongly that I was engaged with the construction of the future, however, reading *New Thinking...* I felt that not only was my own knowledge of the future lacking, but that the approach of the design school I was attending was similarly inadequate. My friends and I were busy designing the tools, vehicles, and other consumables of the future without any real knowledge about what that future might hold.

The future state of the environment, population growth, climate change, employment patterns, and an ageing population were never seriously engaged with in the way that *New Thinking...* advocated. Although I did not have the words at that time, I was aware at some level that we had been taking a lot for granted. In short, we were busy designing for a future, based on the assumption that our world would essentially stay the same.

This sense of being engaged with the future has not changed now that I am a Lecturer, what has changed is that the focus of my creative work has changed from things to relationships. It is my students who will construct the future, creating the next generation of material and visual culture for our society. As an educator my primary concern is helping stu-

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dents to develop their own unique visions for the future. Being involved in the development and delivery of a first year elective paper called *Creative Processes* has focused my thinking on the nature of students' relationships with creativity, education and the future.

Creative Processes

What is the point of education? Is it to socialize young people so they can fit into the fabric of society? Is it to train a workforce? Is it to introduce young people to the greater possibilities that life has to offer? These are...[all legitimate questions].... But they leave out the most profound purpose that education might have: helping young people learn how to create the lives they truly want to create (Fritz 2001).

Developing pedagogies that will foster something as multi-layered as creativity obviously requires a similar multi-layered approach. As a starting point on this journey, two layers of meaning that are important to this paper are those of content and structure.

Working in the area of Art and Design Studies, my students are constantly asked to be creative, but always within pre-existing structures and limits - for example a project brief or course outline - but also within broader boundaries of what various institutions (school, university or corporation) and their representatives (teachers, lecturers, employers or clients) want. This is often dependant on the cycles of fashion and ultimately on perceived financial viability in the context of a capitalist global economy. The content of the *Creative Processes* asks students to expand their thinking, to think laterally or outside the square (to use two fashionable phrases) and there are many easily accessible techniques that can facilitate this development. In doing this work, students often find powerful reconnections with ways of being creative that have not been experienced since pre-schooling. What invariably happens, however, is that at some point in this process students find that their new creative visions - the content of the *Creative Processes* course - comes in to direct conflict with a series of structural restrictions.

The most visible and commonly encountered authority students' encounter is their tutor who may like them or may not value their work. Another common structure students struggle with is the requirements of the project brief that may or may not be open to interpretation. These are followed by other parameters that are less visible, like the course outline

and the way courses - both elective and core - are structured which are non-negotiable, with the values and tenets of the institution which are sacrosanct and finally with an educational/societal paradigm of which most people are completely unaware.

The nature and origins of these educational and societal structures is seldom the focus of Primary or Secondary education. Consequently students and teachers lack an awareness of how to negotiate institutional structures and set their own parameters for creative development. Cultural norms and values have usually been internalized by the time students reach the tertiary level and the boundaries of what is acceptable have long ceased to be visible to the average young person.

Cultural Reproduction

The path I have taken to try and imagine genuine alternatives to the way we learn and teach has required me to firstly accept a view of education, society and culture as mechanisms for the 'reproduction' of the status quo - i.e. education, society and culture as they exist now. From this perspective radical social change is not a struggle, we just need to stop busily reproducing the dominant paradigm.

The theory of 'cultural reproduction' has been described by the Austrian-American educational philosopher Ivan Illich in *Deschooling Society* (1972), and by the French sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Claude Passeron in *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (1977). Bourdieu and Passeron argue that the democratic ideals promoted by Universities serve to obscure the hereditary nature of class privilege, and that this stratification is perpetuated through the inculcation of an ideology of merit and individual achievement.

Functioning in the manner of a huge classificatory machine, which inscribes changes within the purview of the structure, the school helps to make and to impose the legitimate exclusions and inclusions, which form the basis of social order. (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990:12)

These institutions reflect a paradigm in which authentic self-determination and self-expression often comes into conflict with what various authorities find acceptable: parents, peers, schools, society and culture. Bourdieu goes on to say that a University education, which he describes as a "...privileged instrument of bourgeois society that confers on the privi-

leged the supreme privilege of not seeing themselves as privileged." More insidious is the effect this has on those excluded from meaningful participation in social life because of the way the University system convinces "...the disinherited that they owe their scholastic and social destiny to their lack of gifts or merits, because in matters of culture, absolute dispossession excludes awareness of being disposed (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990: 210)." Creative endeavor within these parameters serves to reinforce rather than change or challenge the culture that it comes from.

Seeing this process repeated again and again has caused me to ask a simple question, what alternative structures could our most creative young people come up with if given the opportunity? To answer this question I first needed a context that allowed me to consider the larger picture, the future of education - in which I could consider the implications that theories of cultural reproduction have for education - a vision informed by the futures studies reading I had done a few years earlier.

Designer Nation

Seeing the content of education, society and culture as separate from the structures that are responsible for its reproduction, it is possible to imagine the 'production' of culture through a learning process oriented towards structural awareness and change, rather than the inculcation of normative values and the 'reproduction' of the existing paradigm. This analysis allows us to then speculate as to the nature of a future based on cultural production and the nature of a pedagogy that would actively promote the creation of new paradigms.

The *Designer Nation Project* came during a brainstorming session for the development of the stage one *Creative Processes* paper into stage two, three and four papers. The initial concept of a final year project that involved students designing future New Zealand's came about after another round of the republican debate in our national media. Developing possible visions for the future is also an opportunity to amplify certain aspects of our current society, and imagine what they might look like in a republican form. As with most brainstorms, the scope of these visions began to expand, and before I knew it the students were to design new processes of government and considering how this might be expressed in terms of designed space, maybe they would go beyond existing models of nation states completely.

What follows are four snapshots of the future of my country. Some of these futures are more likely than others and depending on who you are some are more desirable than others. However they can all be imagined and are therefore, I suggest, possible.

These Futures scenarios consider the relationship between education, cultural reproduction, and structural awareness in order to explore the role that education for creativity can play in the development of future societies, and what such pedagogies might involve. I describe these futures using four indicators: The mode of institutional delivery of education; the relationship between knowledge and power; the level of structural awareness encouraged by the curriculum; and the role that creativity plays in each society.

The first two scenarios presented, are considered as status quo options, based on old paradigm left wing or social democratic and right wing or free market ideologies. My thesis being that capitalism and socialism are both status quo because they both view the "... achievement of human happiness as basically conditional on the expansion of material goods' production (Mies and Shiva 1993: 16)." The plurality of status quo scenarios seeks to show how these supposedly oppositional ideologies can both teach Creative Processes content within their existing structures, in ways that left those structures largely unchanged. The third scenario is a partial change option, predicated on power sharing between indigenous and colonial cultures, and the fourth and final scenario is a 'paradigm shift' scenario, that while largely unknown / unknowable, is conceived on the premise of a future culture of creativity.

KIWI CORP™

The first of the status quo options is a 'corporate future' that presupposes the continued implementation of new right or free market policies. The defining trend in my country since 1984 has been the restructuring of the economy according to the free-market ideology. Successive governments have sold state owned assets and infrastructure and implemented variations on the policies of the Thatcher and Reagan administrations in the UK and the USA.

- Following the privatisation of all remaining publicly owned assets, Education is offered through private training institutions at market rates, and through in-house corporate run training programs.

- Knowledge in this society is privately owned and traded as a commodity in order to advance professional development and career. Power is derived from the level of private intellectual property at the disposal of corporations or individuals, and is perceived to be a reflection of individual merit.
- Structural awareness would vary between private Universities that offer specialized education to a wealthy elite and private Technical Institutions that are solely designed to deliver vocational training, where potential workers train at their own expense. The capitalist structure of this future society would continue to be accepted as a given. All research would be market driven and there would be an absence of social analysis that traditionally has been the function of the humanities.
- Creativity is encouraged for those who will be in management and leadership positions, in order to develop the potential of capitalist structures and facilitate the constant expansion and growth of markets for private financial gain.

In this paradigm economic expansion is achieved through the further exploitation of non-renewable resources. Writing in 1972 Ivan Illich described how "...all of today's futuristic planners seek to make economically feasible what is technically impossible, while refusing to face the inevitable social consequence: the increased craving of all men for goods and services that will remain the privilege of a few (Illich 1972: 52)."

The Welfare State

Two years ago New Zealand voted in a centre / left coalition government. This again reflects recent trends in North America and England towards the 'third way', or centrist policies of the Clinton/Blair Democratic and New Labour administrations. This second status quo scenario suggests a continuation of this movement and the eventual restoration of social democratic political ideals. In this future, core national infrastructure could eventually be nationalized and universal access to social services, like health and education, would be reinstated and paid for through various forms of taxation.

- State run education is delivered through a centralized state school system. In this scenario a multi-cultural approach is taken within a singular and culturally specific educational model, reflecting the ideal of unity and the construction of a National identity.

- Knowledge in this society is state owned and is made universally available because of what it can contribute to the national welfare. It is acquired through institutional processes and is directed back through institutions that have the power to act to improve the society as a whole. Power is something Nations and institutions have, and individuals derive power from membership of these collective groupings.
- In this future, social structures are examined by agencies of government, such as universities, and strengthened to increase social security and to better cater for societies' needs. Structural awareness is enhanced through a renewed emphasis on social studies leading to a revival of the humanities and the increased structural awareness that the social sciences provide.
- Creativity is still encouraged at government and administrative levels to get the most out of socialist structures and to provide an increased standard of living and social development.

While a social democracy may embody the egalitarian, classless society that many people would like to see in this country, it still involves many fundamental inequalities and coercion due to the need to maintain a status quo. Noam Chomsky, who has written extensively on the coercive nature of institutions, describes this tendency to use education to control a population.

From the early days of the school system there was a tendency to foster creativity and independence of thought [because] you want people who are going to be in decision-making positions to be able to think and to have ideas. On the other hand you want them to be deeply indoctrinated and not to challenge authority and institutional structures. For the rest, the end goal...[of education]...is to turn you into a docile, passive worker. (Chomsky 1995)

AOTEAROA New Zealand

The antithesis to these mono-cultural status-quo options is a vision for what I describe as a partial change scenario. Since the annexation of this land by England in 1840, Maori have actively sought the right to self-determination guaranteed in the Te Tiriti o Waitangi / The Treaty of Waitangi.

This future is based on the successful implementation of meaningful power sharing and the creation of dual sovereignty between Settler and First Peoples, Maori and Pakeha/Tauiwi. Rather eliminating difference from an existing structure, successful de-colonization relies on the dominant culture 'allowing' another structure to operate parallel to it, establishing a bi-cultural society. The influence of cultural values and social structures of Maori on Pakeha, combined with the development of a truly multi-cultural framework *within* Pakeha society combine to encourage cultural diversity and to reconfigure the social structures of this country.

- Education is re-invented to reflect the plural values of both Treaty partners, resulting in education being delivered through a combination of traditional European style State schools, Kohanga reo, Wananga, alternative schools, and community initiatives.
- Knowledge is seen being largely synonymous with tradition, and is seen as coming from ancestors and the past. Such wananga/knowledge is communally owned and held. Power is understood as the right to self-determination, directly derived from an ability to enact the knowledge held within individuals and communities. While knowledge may be culturally *specific* and an issue of identity, the *sharing* of power is fundamental to bi-cultural relationship in this future.
- A curriculum based on the implementation of meaningful power sharing between Maori and Settler cultures - as outlined in Te Tiriti O Waitangi - requires a deep awareness of the cultural frameworks and social structures of both Treaty partners. For this to be possible education would be built on bi-lingual and bi-cultural frameworks.
- Creativity is encouraged to foster a sense of identity, through art, crafts, sports, performance and other cultural activities, and this is done within the existing cultural frameworks and the traditions of the respective Treaty partners.

This partial change scenario seeks to demonstrate the culturally specific nature of the current paradigm. Although this future represents a radically new social order, I describe it as a partial change scenario because it is based on the pluralist *reproduction* of two *existing* cultures within one new structure.

Sohail Inayatullah makes the point that the "...West has prospered precisely because it has been able to be diverse enough to appropriate the

symbols of others without changing its essential world-view (Inayatullah 1998:57).” Inayatullah, and others have argued the importance to Futures Studies of listening to non-western perspectives and this view is echoed though much of the literature exploring other dissenting ideas like Feminism, Ecology and Environmental Education. A crucial question facing futurists and educators in Colonial/Settler societies is how members of dominant cultural groups can relate with the knowledge base of Tangata Whenua and other indigenous cultures in ways that don’t constitute a further (neo) colonization.

TE TAI AO / The Natural World of Change

Completing the thesis, antithesis and synthesis model is a speculative paradigm shift scenario. At the recent United Nations Environment Program conference in Thessaloniki, Greece, the delegates expressed the urgency felt by many people concerned with education and the future of the environment.

The question is how long can we wait to make the changes to education we now need, regardless of how broad or how deep these required changes need to be. The challenge is tremendous - one of unprecedented scope, scale, and complexity - and we have to do this in a climate of sweeping economic, social, technical and political change. (UNESCO-UNEP 1997:16)

This fourth scenario presupposes a future society that has accepted the need for radical change at a structural, rather than a superficial level. To achieve a societal paradigm that is meaningfully different I believe we need to imagine a future society dedicated to creating a new *tradition of creative change*. I suggest that change and tradition - which combine in praxis - create wisdom, and that wisdom then feeds back, permeating the process and driving further cycles of creative change and development. Developing a ‘Wisdom economy’, rather than the knowledge/data economies that are currently being promoted relies on the development of processes that allow for full power sharing between groups, such as students and teachers, Maori and Pakeha, women and men.

- In this future, learning could be facilitated through a diverse range of independent individuals, community-based student/teacher councils, as well as the full spectrum of already existing organisations.

- The relationship between knowledge and power is core to understanding the multi-layered nature of education in this future. Knowledge is explored as being context specific and holistic, described through content, structure and process. Power relationships are understood as problematic, and learning to discern between having power over others and having power with others in relationships is seen as central.
- The concept of curriculum evolves to engage both the content and structure of education. Student and teacher become synonymous co-creating the courses they participate in. Social and cultural structures can be playfully reconfigured as and when required to meet ever-changing societal and cultural needs as perceived by the people who inhabit them.

A culture of creativity, education ceases to be fixed to certain institutions and to be seen as separate from other cultural activity. In this respect, terms like education, school, teacher, student, may no longer be appropriate. As a founding principle of these future societies, creativity is understood as being vital to human growth - both to our collective as well as our personal development - and to the well-being of the whole community.

In my experience, actively engaging students in the pedagogic process is crucial in fostering creative development. The irony of any society in which a high level of freedom and choice are encouraged is how co-operative and conservative people would possibly become. This paradigm shift may in fact look very ordinary on a day-to-day level - however I suggest that it is in the processes and structures that people are using to learn that the real change will have taken place.

Futures Education

Education is paradoxically both a sadly neglected and a vigorously contested space. The idea of a preferable future for the role that education plays in our society is obviously highly political because the education of the next generation of voters, consumers, parents, workers, and activists, will profoundly shape the effectiveness and consciousness of these groups. Whether we see education as a process of indoctrination or liberation is obviously dependant on our personal beliefs and experiences. While changes to the content of the present curriculum - like the inclusion of Creative Processes or Futures Studies - are exciting and positive, their effectiveness as agents of social change is often diminished and in many cases defeated by the structures we try to deliver them through.

The idea that a radically different pedagogy is required if students are to learn real self-determination is a central theme of Bell Hooks' *Teaching to Transgress* (1994).

With these essays I add my voice to a collective call for the renewal and rejuvenation in our teaching practices. Urging all of us to open our minds and hearts so that we can know beyond the boundaries of what is acceptable, so that we can think and rethink, so that we can create new visions, I celebrate teaching that enables transgressions - a movement against and beyond boundaries. (Hooks 1994:12)

The metaphor of a child's playpen seems appropriate to this discussion about appropriate limits and the pedagogy of transgression. This metaphor exposes the paternalistic belief that restrictive structures are imposed on us for our own good, to protect us from our selves and the world outside. In our present educational playpen, both teachers and students are encouraged to "play", to learn and experiment, but within safe and accepted limits. The existence or origin of these limits is usually not discussed or experienced until boundaries are transgressed, either accidentally or deliberately. As a consequence we don't even come close to transgressing boundaries later in life, for fear of what might happen.

Pierre Bourdieu states, somewhat frustratingly, that it is impossible to expose the structure of power relations without perpetuating the same power relations we are trying to expose.

The idea of a PA (pedagogic action) exercised without PAu (pedagogic authority) is a logical contradiction and sociological impossibility; a PA which aimed to unveil, in its very exercise, its objective reality of violence and thereby destroy the basis of the agents of pedagogical authority, would be self destructive... The paradox of Epimenides the liar would appear in a new form: either you believe that I'm not lying when I tell you that all education is violence and my teaching isn't legitimate, so you can't believe me; or you believe I'm lying and my teaching is legitimate, so you still can't believe me when I tell you its violence. (Hooks 1994:12)

Other writers on education, such as Paulo Freire, are less pessimistic. Freire similarly believed that "Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers *and* students..." but for Freire resolving this contradiction was not impossible (Freire 1972:53).

This process of resolution does however mean devolving pedagogic power to the students, by asking them to be creative with the nature of education itself, and being responsible for creating their own project briefs, course outlines, and even institutions. At some point we must cease trying to re-form the status quo and start authoring our own *Creative Pedagogies*. This vision of what might constitute the 'production of culture' is defined not by outcomes but by process. As I have already suggested, we may in fact want to leave the world much the way it is. But even if we did, the process of full power sharing would not only help to create a paradigm shift in the future, it would constitute a radically alternative present.

This distinction between the processes we employ in the present and outcomes we are working for in the future is an important one and offers a real alternative to traditional definitions of Futures Studies. When we shift our attention from creating outcomes in the future to enacting processes in the present, we move from creating visions of what our culture and society *will be*, to what it *is, right now*. In *Teaching to Transgress*, Bell Hooks captures this sense of excitement in the potential in the present tense:

The academy is not paradise. But learning is a place where paradise can be created. The classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In the field of possibility we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom. (Hooks 1994:12)

Conclusion

This paper has sought to demonstrate that without awareness of the power structures, cultural traditions, and the processes of educational, social and cultural reproduction that we inhabit, neither student, nor teacher, can avoid retreating into compliance with the familiar routine of being creative within traditional limits. Seeing this happening first hand and not understanding what was going on has provided me with the impetus to try and understand what might constitute *Creative Pedagogies* and empowering learning experiences. Developing an awareness of our own power and responsibility within the structures that we each inhabit every

day helps students to develop alternative strategies for living and these can be very creative.

As the twenty-first century unfolds most indicators suggest that there are many ongoing issues of survival that we need to respond to by changing how we conduct ourselves in the world. Sohail Inayatullah sums up this predicament when he asks us "... how do you create structures, which allow you to respond to what you can't foresee?(Inayatullah 1995)"

My response to this question is twofold. Firstly the process of learning needs to prepare young people to explore such questions themselves rather than providing an answer for them. This can be achieved by asking people (students) *how* we might go about deciding what responses are appropriate and *how* we might undertake this action? The very fact that we are asking young people these questions would represent a breakthrough.

The modeling of an inclusive process of decision-making is what could define a truly alternative future culture of learning. This inclusive process defies the dominant belief "...that one person's judgment should determine what and when another person must learn (Illich 1972:42)."

Secondly, and more importantly, it is the renewed emphasis on deciding *how* we answer these questions that could represent a real departure from a past paradigm that has privileged educational outcomes. Creating pedagogies that are supportive of an interdisciplinary and holistic future requires the re-weaving of binaries such as student and teacher, past and future, personal and professional, formal education and informal learning, theory and practice (Diamond and Orenstein 1990). This is a vast undertaking, one that cannot be achieved in personal or intellectual isolation.

As a society we can choose to continue to teach students by having experts educating them - acting on their behalf - teaching them that others define our creative parameters for us *or* we can work *with* young people to develop *Creative Pedagogies* that actually enable all of us, helping us to take personal and collective responsibility for a shared future. The understanding that learning is a shared process, in which participating is the best outcome, we learn the most valuable lesson that any pedagogy could hope to achieve: that in working for a better future we are not alone.

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