

THE ROLE OF THE ARTS IN PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION: MAKING THE INVISIBLE, VISIBLE

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There is a broad and extensive literature that looks at the role of the arts in professional education, but it is not often considered as an area of study in its own right. Researchers and practitioners have in general been interested in the use of the arts in a specific professional context, and write, appropriately, for those engaged in that professional field. Developments in the use of the arts in health and medical education are particularly numerous (Kinsella, 2007; Kinsella and Vanstone, 2010, Robinson, 2007; Ting et al 2012). Others have considered the use of the arts in legal, information professional, leadership, management, business and teacher education (Adler, 2006; Eisner, 2009; Harrison and Akinc, 2000; Joseph and Mertz, 2000; Newman, 2006; Shaw, 1992; Snyder, Heckman and Scialdone, 2009). In some cases, researchers have focused on the use of one particular art form and its potential. For example, in a comparison of two plays about disability, Johnston (2010) explores how theatre can be used as a means of engaging citizens in the development of health care policy in Canada, while Reisman, Nigliazzo, Buckley, Childers & Shafer (2011) use poetry as a means to reflect upon learning experiences in medical education. There are of course eminent writers who have written more generally about the value of the arts in education (e.g., Eisner, 2002; Greene, 2000). Such writers may draw attention to the value of the arts in professional and vocational education, but this is not the main focus of their work.

This understandable tendency to write for a specific professional audience rather than an education community means that there is still work to do to garner and synthesise the learning that has emerged from a range of developments and investigations. Such work would compare and contrast the successes and limitations of various initiatives and see whether it is possible to draw conclusions about the nature of benefits that accrue from arts work with professionals, the kinds of arts-based activities that are most effective in these contexts and begin to expand the theoretical work in this area towards a more integrated theory of the arts in professional education.

Structure of the paper

We begin with a section that briefly overviews our prior research that connects to our interest in using the arts in professional education. In the next section we explain our political and professional orientation towards this work and the reasons we think it is important. This paper draws upon existing literature to theorise and discuss the benefits and challenges of using the arts within professional studies. We explore how, increasingly, higher education is under pressure to develop professional programs that prepare learners for the workplace and provide ongoing professional development and education. Drawing upon critical theory, we argue that there are inherent problems with programs that are too limited and technical in their scope, and that there are benefits in exploring how more creative approaches may be incorporated within professional programs in higher education. This section also establishes two separate, sometimes conflicting, but potentially complementary

rationales for promoting and researching the role of the arts in professional education. In both cases, we argue, there are aspects of professional education and the professional role that are less clearly articulated, and less visible that can be rendered more visible through arts work. The first concerns its radical potential for creating professionals who may resist simplistic, hegemonic definitions of their role and the second its capacity to contribute to the needs of the profession, employers and the economy by promoting creative and imaginative approaches to professional challenges.

This is followed by a discussion of the challenges of collating the literature in this field and an explication of a set of categories that we are using as a preliminary framework for analysing the use of the arts in professional education. Our intent is to develop this research as a stepping stone to a new collaborative project that will explore these issues in greater depth.

The Connection with our Prior Research and Teaching.

We have both been engaged in professional education and training and in research exploring this and the role of the arts in education for many years. Our current interest builds on this and seeks to pull together a number of strands.

Christine has a long standing interest in the role of fiction in education. This has included examining how educators can use popular fictions to help trainee professionals discuss issues such as bullying and school refusal. Her research has examined how schools, lifelong learning and teachers, children and young people are represented in popular fictions (Fisher, Harris and Jarvis, 2008). The transformative potential of fiction (2012a) is something that has particularly interested her and has recently been working on trying to develop a better understanding of the development of empathy through fiction (Jarvis, 2012b).

Patricia has been working on a Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) funded study that examines connections between lifelong learning, citizenship, and the craft of writing fiction. With her collaborator, Susan Holloway, she has explored the importance of introducing novice educators to a critical literacy framework for lifelong learning (Holloway & Gouthro, 2011) and written about the value of using fiction to explore radical perspectives in adult education (2013 forthcoming).

Introduction and Rationale

We have been motivated, in our different contexts and countries, by a common interest in the politics of professional education and a concern with the dominance of utilitarian and technocratic approaches to vocational and professional education (Atkins 2011, Gleeson and James, 2007 Lucas, 2007, Orr, 2009 and Simmons and Thompson 2008). Thompson (2009, p.,37), argues that in the Further Education Sector in the UK:

“teaching and learning is constrained by an instrumental remit for the sector, which prioritises perceived economic needs over broader conceptions of education and training.”

Neoliberal influences create a narrow focus for lifelong learning policies and practices whereby the perceived needs of the marketplace are prioritised over broader social issues, such as inclusion or equity. Grace (2007, p. 87) looks at how current Canadian policies impact on young adults by emphasising ongoing training linked to enhancing the economy. In this context:

“bolstering the social is problematic for such reasons as it confuses the competent worker with simply being a skilled worker, and it isolates training and development for learner-workers from broader social and other contextual considerations. “

The dominant educational discourse, frequently embodied in policy, has been the production of immediately employable, even ‘job ready’ graduates. Policy in the UK, for example, has focused on employer-led vocational and professional education (Leitch, 2006; Cabinet office 2008), accompanied by a marked marginalisation of professionals themselves and the education community that trains them in decision making processes about professional roles and standards.

There is a difference, however, between creating a ‘job-ready’ graduate, who is able to fulfil a narrow set of immediate vocational requirements, and developing a creative critical thinker, who is able not merely to implement current best practice, but to challenge it, develop it and even overturn it if necessary and who will be able to function at the highest level if circumstances change and new challenges present themselves. These important qualities are often less visible than their quantifiable counterparts.

There are at least two intertwined strands to our argument that the arts have an important role to play in developing professionals who are more than mere technocrats. The first is located in an interest in the role and responsibility of professionals in civil society and their contribution towards the public good. Professionals need to participate at the highest levels in dialogue about education, health, law and business, to take the lead in political debate and discussion and to stake their claim, as experts, to a proper role in policy making in those areas relevant to their professions.

Garcia (2008), for example, argues that MBA (Masters of Business Administration) programmes play a pivotal role in educating future corporate leaders. Using Habermas’ (1972) framework categorizing knowledge-constitutive interests, he argues that there are three levels used in MBA programmes to prepare business leaders to think critically. The first is at an instrumental level, whereby the focus is on what Habermas (1972) describes as technical knowledge. ‘Under this frame, the common belief is that leadership effectiveness is synonymous with market performance and hence, can be measured in terms of maximizing revenues’ (Garcia, 2008, p. 119). The objective is for learners to think critically about meeting corporate goals. The second level involves the intersubjective nature of human communication, which Garcia categorises as idiosyncratic. He relates this to Habermas’ (1972) explanation of practical knowledge, whereby leadership is perceived as a ‘social practice’. Students are encouraged to understand the complexity of human interaction, to reflect upon their own experiences and understanding of leadership,

and focus on learning effective communication. The final category, reformatory curriculum, involves the most advanced and radical form of criticality, which Habermas (1972) refers to as emancipatory knowledge. Learners must come to think of themselves as critical beings, in the world, and what this means in terms of democracy, social justice, and sustainability. 'Within reformatory curriculum interests, the topic of leadership is used as a catalyst, through which participants can rethink their expectations about business life and role as business leaders with the aim of significantly improving the world in which we live' (2008, p. 120).

Garcia's (2008) work provides an interesting breakdown of how scope for critical thinking is often muted in professional educational contexts. While there is often support for developing critical capacities at an instrumental level that supports corporate goals, there is less interest in addressing humanistic or critical agendas. Garcia (2008, p. 114) argues there are pressures for corporations 'to assume new roles in modern society' with the rise of civil society and increasing concerns around issues such as sustainability, but he acknowledges most MBA programs resist making substantive changes to their curriculum to develop higher levels of criticality. The arts can draw attention to these 'muted', less visible aspects of the professional role.

The second of the two strands to our argument reflects our understanding that in spite of the reductive outcome of much work to develop employer-led professional training, employers have consistently, over a long period of time, expressed their desire for a wide range of generic and transferable skills in their employees and this sometimes includes something loosely termed, 'creativity' (Kandiko, 2012). One of the reasons given for establishing the UK's National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education was that:

"The business community wants education to give a much higher priority to promoting young people's creative abilities; to developing teamwork, social skills and powers of communication." (Robinson, 1999).

The challenge here is identifying and communicating the benefits that can develop from activities which may appear to employers, tax-payers and politicians to be about play, personal satisfaction and development and leisure. These benefits need to be as clearly defined as possible, wherever and whenever this is possible. At the same time, it is true that the impact of arts-based professional education will not always be immediately obvious in the workplace. For this reason educators need to continue to demonstrate that such work is part of a holistic approach to development that will yield wider long term benefits. Adult educators have a role to play in engaging employers in discussions about evaluating the benefits of the less quantifiable elements of education (Cranton and Hoggan, 2012) – in rendering some of these less visible qualities, more visible.

In their phenomenographic study looking at how business students understand the value of creativity, Petocz, Reid & Taylor argue that

"When students move into the world of professional work, their employers will expect them to demonstrate creativity in problem finding

and solving, to have a well-developed ethical stances, to be able to contribute to their company's position on sustainability and sustainable development, and to display a high level of cross-cultural understanding" (p. 409).

Yet they found that the students that they interviewed had inconsistent and often limited conceptions around what constituted creativity. Although a couple of participants linked creativity with the Arts, they did not necessarily think that this had any relevance with their own career aspirations.

There are significant tensions, however, between an approach to using arts to develop creativity in order to enhance employability and performance and more radical perspectives outlined above. Like Garcia's (2008) analysis of the limited scope for criticality in MBA programs, Thompson (2009, p.40) discusses the instrumental approach to developing 'creativity' that has pervaded much UK educational policy:

"much official discourse on the development of creativity is concerned with instrumental justifications based on supposed economic and social need, rather than with reaching a Durkheimian 'profound condition' of the self. Similarly, creative teaching can be seen instrumentally, as a way of making palatable a narrow and dull curriculum."

We are not suggesting that the tensions between these two approaches can be reconciled or argued away. However, in practice, many educators and professionals move uneasily between the two. They may have a commitment to radical social improvement but operate pragmatically, on a day to day basis, within the confines of the economic and political constraints imposed by their employers and seek to be as creative and imaginative in supporting their clients, students, patients or customers as they can. A challenge for those engaged in educating these professionals is to be as authentic as possible in their own teaching, recognising the limitations within which most of those in paid employment, be it paid by the state or private enterprise, operate, without glossing over the tensions this creates.

We are driven, therefore, in our search to explore the role of the arts in professional education, by a belief that they have a critical role to play in developing creative and enterprising, but also radical, challenging and even subversive intellectuals, who will play a vital role in civil society. For these reasons, we believe, it is important to continue to develop our understanding about the way that arts can be used in professional education and to share those understandings across disciplines.

Looking for Categories.

We have touched in the opening paragraphs on the way that the diffuse nature of the field poses challenges for those interested in the general principles of developing professional education using the arts. This made the process of searching and reviewing the literature particularly challenging. Generic literature searches relating to the arts and professional education will inevitably miss most of what has been written. The literature generally names a specific art or even artist or piece of work and/or a specific profession. It is not possible to guess at all the possible

combinations of art and artists and professional areas that might constitute this field. For this reason there has to be a more than usual element of serendipity in the literature surveyed. It would not normally be necessary to describe the search process, but at this stage, this is an important part of our methodology and is particularly tricky, so we want, briefly, to explain what we have done.

We drew on work with which we were already familiar as a result of our professional and academic networks, conference attendance and reading and research, and worked outwards from that following up promising references. This was supported by generic electronic searches so that we identified that limited body of work that referred to the arts and the professions generally, or to any one of a range of arts (literature, film, television, fine art, music) and professional education, to law, business, management and leadership, teaching, nursing, health or medical education and the arts. Finally, we read the contents pages of prominent adult education and professional education journals going back over a five year period to identify some articles that would not have emerged from the search terms used so far. This is not, therefore, an exhaustive or comprehensive survey, but it did give us enough material to feel that we have some kind of overview of the types of work and ideas that are out there.

It was apparent from this initial survey that explorations relating to using arts in professional education take many forms and that 'arts education' in this context is used to mean many different things. We thought, therefore, that it would be of use to us in developing this work and to others in the field, to try to generate some categories that would bring together explorations that were similar in focus. The project we want to undertake together concerns the development and extension of theory and understanding across professional disciplines, relating to the use of the arts. This paper reports the initial stages of that project, namely an attempt to summarise what appears to us at this stage to be some of the main ways approaches to the arts are used in professional education. These are preliminary categorisations, and there are elements of overlap, but we have found them to be useful for framing our thinking.

Initial Categories

Using the arts to illuminate and illustrate complex themes and ideas.

Educators discuss their use of the arts to illustrate, deepen and challenge professionals' and trainee professionals' understanding of ideas and issues relating to their professional practice that are complex and multi-dimensional. This can be exploratory, such as the journal of Leadership Education's **would title of journal be italicized?** special issue in 2008 on teaching leadership through popular media, including an examination of the television series *Grey's Anatomy* to explore leadership and directive leadership styles (Torock, 2008). Joseph and Mertz (2000) use images from popular culture to help students understand the complexities of aspects of legal practice, whilst Gladys White (2008) comments on the potential for using medical dramas to help nursing and medical students explore ethical dilemmas. Such work may include creating and tailoring your own art to illustrate particular points, such as Legum's (2004) work on using sequential art in training. The use of arts to illustrate particular themes and ideas may also have a more

radical agenda and challenge entrenched beliefs about the role of professionals and their relationship to wider global and political issues. For example, popular culture has been used quite extensively in this context to challenge professionals thinking about diversity issues (Thompson and Tisdell, 2007).

Learning to use the arts in professional practice.

There is a body of literature that discusses working with professionals to help them understand how the arts can be used by them in their practice. This predominantly addresses health care workers and teachers/ educators. For example, nurse educators explore different strategies for introducing nurses to the ways that art can promote health and recovery in patients. (Coghlan & Igo, 1996; Gersie & King, 1990; Robinson, 2007). Ting et al (2012), report on incorporating analyses of hospital art into their work with medical students to help them develop a deeper understanding of the impact of environment on their patients. Art therapy is a specific profession in its own right, but aspects of the principles and practice of this work find their way into the work of more generic professionals, such as teachers, youth workers, educational psychologists and education professionals specialising in behaviour management and support. Such work attracts the attention of researchers and practitioners who wish to evaluate it and consider its implications for other professionals. Cumming and Visser (2009), for example, evaluated the impact of arts workshops run by the Devon Behaviour Support Team on the self-esteem and social skills of refugee children from countries affected by war.

In adult and community education, Clover and Stalker's (2007) edited collection brings together information about a wide range of projects in which educators have used and researched the arts in adult education, providing a source of inspiration for other professionals. There is also material that takes the form of guidance manuals or tips for workers. For example, the UK Youth Arts Development Agency produces publications and runs leadership development courses offering practical guidance to support workers and volunteers who want to explore using the arts with young people (www.artswork.org.uk).

The role of the arts in the construction of professional identities and discourses

A different strand of the literature explores how art plays a part in the construction of professional identities and dominant discourses about the profession such as examining the way teachers are portrayed in popular culture (Fisher, Harris and Jarvis, 2008; Joseph and Burnaford, 2001; Weber and Mitchell, 1995) or considering how popular culture constructs youth (Shary, 2003). This is often situated within the literature on public pedagogy, a term that is in wide usage (Sandlin et al, 2011), but which we are using in the way that it has been popularised by Henry Giroux (1992, 2002), who draws on the work of Gramsci and Stuart Hall and discusses:

“culture’s role as an educational site where identities are being continually transformed, power is enacted, and learning assumes a political dynamic as it becomes not only the condition for the acquisition of agency but also the sphere for imagining oppositional social change” (2004, p.60).

Public pedagogy is not confined to the arts, but does include those arts (such as film, television, public art) which frequently address issues, dilemmas and contexts that are of great relevance to professionals. In some cases, their representation of education, law, health and business can serve a hegemonic function and offer what Giroux calls 'a triumphalist view of globalisation' (2004, p.65). Professional education, therefore, benefits from incorporating a critical media literacy approach to examining such texts so that professionals can engage with the extent to which the values and expectations of their professions and indeed their own professional identities are shaped by these public pedagogies. For example, Jubas and Knutson (2012, p.98) worked with medical and nursing students who had watched popular television programmes set in teaching hospitals to discuss these shows as part of their professional education and reported that:

"... participants clarified that watching these shows helped them reflect on their formal education programmes, and engaging in a professional education programme helped them reflect more critically on familiar cultural texts."

They discuss how these texts both challenge and reinforce professional inequalities and the intersection between race class and gender in the construction of professional identities and hierarchies. This literature more generally considers the way the arts help to construct both the wider public understanding of what it means to be a professional in a particular field, the intersection between this and professionals' own experiences and constructions of their profession, and the political and social implications of the way that professional identities, dilemmas and practices are constructed.

The arts as a tool for the development of self-expression, self-awareness and the development of interpersonal skills.

The literature we placed in this category considers how participating in artistic practice and aesthetic expression can enable students to understand themselves better, communicate difficult ideas and get in touch with feelings and emotions about their profession (MacDonnell and Macdonald 2011). Wagenheim, Clark and Crispo (2009, p. 29) describe using the identification and analysis of personal metaphors to help teachers develop 'insights into previously hidden assumptions in their teaching practice' so that 'they will develop better self-awareness and ultimately become better teachers'.

There is a wider professional literature about popular techniques such as creative imaging, where groups are encouraged to express their challenges through drawing, promoting teamwork and more productive working practices (Simmons, 1999). Some of this work may be relatively pragmatic, including the development of confidence and skills sets needed to perform some particular aspect of the professional role (Sutherland, 2010).

The transformative education literature and the literature on presentational knowing has explored this quite extensively. Davis-Manigaulte, Yorks and Kasl (2006) describe using expressive activities to support student interns learning about a range of community based roles such as youth work and community work around nutrition.

Kokkos (2011) draws on his work with adult educators and trainers to describe his development of a seven stage process for using aesthetic experiences to encourage deeper critical reflection and connection with the feelings and emotions of others and oneself.

Art for empathy and insight

The arts have frequently been used to help trainee professionals and serving professionals understand the experiences and perspectives of those with whom they work. This can include work supporting diversity training for professionals, supporting them to understand the world from the perspective of those deemed to be 'other' (MacDonnell and Macdonald, 2011, Gouthro, Holloway and Careless, 2011, Thompson and Tisdell, 2007, Guy, 2007).

Parsons and Boydell (2012) report on various ways in which artistic expression has been used to convey knowledge and understanding generated through research to medical and health care professionals. Heyward (2010) uses drama and role play in teacher education to help pre-service teachers experience some of the multiplicity of perspectives and strong emotions of various stakeholders in education with whom they are likely to engage in their professional lives. Hoggan (2009) has examined the transformative potential of creative writing, metaphors and literature for enabling professionals to engage imaginatively and authentically with those with whom they work.

Next Steps

Across disciplines, there are many writers looking at how the arts can help bring to light those aspects of professional roles and work that are less immediately visible. They enable professionals to see their own assumptions, values and feelings; to gain insights into the worlds of the people they serve; to recognise ideologies and discourses they may often take for granted but which can have a profound impact on their practice. Our long term aim is to support the development of a theoretical framework for understanding the use of the arts in professional education. We want to build on our initial work with the literature to refine the framework we have identified and test its application in a range of contexts. Our work in generating these early categories has already made us aware of areas of overlap, evidenced by the way that some research could fall readily into at least two categories and of possible omissions. Our goal is to contribute to the literature in this area by exploring how the arts can be taken up in professional studies from a more critical standpoint. We have work to do, therefore, to explore and explicate the relationship between the theoretical frameworks we touch upon in the introduction to this paper, and the many ways that teachers use the arts in the training of professionals.

Ideally, we would also like to undertake some empirical work with those working in different disciplines to test hypotheses and deepen our understanding of how the arts are used and the cognitive, affective and behavioural impact this may have. It may be that a first step towards this will be bringing the work of people who use the arts to train professionals in different disciplines together in an edited collection.

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