

Volume 26 | Number 2 | 2014

Pacific-Asian Education

A JOURNAL ABOUT EDUCATION IN PACIFIC CIRCLE COUNTRIES



Pacific-Asian Education

The Journal of the Pacific Circle Consortium for Education
Volume 26, Number 2, 2014

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ISSN 10109-8725

Pacific Circle Consortium for Education

Publication design and layout: Halcyon Design Ltd, www.halcyondesign.co.nz

Published by

Pacific Circle Consortium for Education

<http://pacificcircleconsortium.org/PAEJournal.html>

Pacific-Asian Education

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Finding the Golden Ticket: Reflections on the Development of Drama Education in New Zealand

Jane Isobel Luton

Introduction: Finding the Golden Ticket

Look I've got it! Look, Mother look! The last golden ticket, it's mine.
(Dahl, 1964, p. 71)

In this article I will use the moral lesson of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (Dahl, 1964) as a critical discussion around the development of drama education in New Zealand. It will signal some of the dangers that can arise when a subject is established in the curriculum. As drama has taken its place as one of four Arts-based subjects, it is vulnerable to the wider discourses that surround outcomes-based assessment and education in general. As an Arts-based researcher and drama teacher with experience of teaching secondary drama in both England and New Zealand I consider whether drama, by obtaining one of the golden tickets to the curriculum, betrays its role as a powerful pedagogy to conform to, and comply with, traditional views of education.

In *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* Willy Wonka places golden tickets inside bars of chocolate to find a suitable child successor to run his chocolate factory. He believes that an adult might, “try to do things his own way and not mine” (Dahl, 1964, p. 185). Charlie Bucket finds the last golden ticket, and at the conclusion of the story is chosen as Wonka’s successor because he is a “good sensible loving child” (1964, p. 185) who can be trusted. It appears that Charlie’s ‘goodness’ has brought him success, but does Charlie’s compliance and his willingness to conform to Wonka’s expectations mean he will always have to do things Wonka’s way?

In 1999 drama won the last “golden ticket” and entered the New Zealand National Curriculum as a discrete subject, taking its place as one of the four Arts subjects alongside Visual Arts, Dance and Music. Although it was a slow process (Carey, 1976), this is an enviable achievement for in England, the home of drama education, drama is still not recognised as a subject in its own right and in recent times is being further marginalised. Andy Kempe, a key drama educator at the University of Reading in England suggests that, “drama in secondary schools is ... rapidly disappearing because of perceptions of what constitutes worthwhile knowledge” (A. Kempe, personal communication, May 2013). So how and why did drama come to be recognised as a subject worthy of a place in the New Zealand curriculum and why did it eventually succeed a century after the establishment of a state-run education system? For subjects wishing to be included in the curriculum the golden ticket has rules and constraints which require “internal assessment, moderation, and reporting against a range of government and school-set criteria for accountability” (Greenwood, 2010, p. 70).

Has winning the golden ticket meant that drama has lost some of its potential power as a pedagogy in its desire to conform because “secondary schools still equate success with conformity and to a measurable straightjacket of facts and knowledge” (Mann, 1987, p. 65). Does the *exclusion* and then *inclusion* of drama in the curriculum reflect the changing focus of education in New Zealand?

The 1877 Education Act

For a country only recently colonised, education was a necessary and vital part of New Zealand’s continuing progress. The 1877 Education Act established a free, secular and compulsory education system funded by the New Zealand state to “instil in citizens a sense of their rights and responsibilities as members of the democratic state” (Stephenson, 2009, p. 9). With responsible and literate citizens, the nation could begin to prosper (Stephenson, 2009). When the Act came into being, the course of instruction for children included:

Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, English grammar and composition, Geography, History, Elementary science and drawing, Object lessons, Vocal music. And [in the case of girls] sewing and: needlework, and the principles of domestic economy. (Education Act, 1877, Section 84)

The focus on literacy and numeracy remains prevalent today, while vocal music and drawing are the only art forms seen to deserve merit in this first articulation of state-led curriculum. While education in the 1800s may have improved children’s lives, it was the teaching of literacy and numeracy which were to give them the skills to find employment. Girls and boys faced a differentiated curriculum since girls would invariably find their life choices limited to domesticity. Over a hundred years later, the vision for education has expanded its aims to develop “young people who will be confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners” (Ministry of Education, 2007). As theories evolve about the purpose and focus of education, drama has attempted to find ways to be present within the curriculum. Perhaps it is these concepts of confidence, connection and active involvement that opened a space for drama to step into the curriculum.

Drama appears to develop and flourish during more child-centred approaches to education. But when conservative governments are in power, the focus on literacy, numeracy and developing “entrepreneurs, innovators and inventors” (Parata, 2013) means drama is subject to cutbacks and a withdrawal of resources. In recent times this has meant “cuts in the provision of face-to-face Drama Advisory Services” leaving new or untrained drama teachers often struggling (Battye, 2009b).

Drama’s heritage

Prior to the 1877 Education Act, there were some “élite schools” in New Zealand providing secondary education which “reflected the British public school influence” (Stephenson, 2009, p. 10). These “were a transplant from the United Kingdom, where these schools were part of the structure which defined one’s status and maintained social stability” (Mann, 1987, p. 7). Some New Zealand schools, particularly those

that reflected the English influence, embraced drama productions from the earliest times. The ladies of St. Francis Xavier's Academy in Wellington gave a performance of *Phyllis the Farmer's Daughter* in 1893 (Thomson, 1993). In 1899, at King's College Auckland, a performance of *Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare was described as "a cultural highlight of the early years" (King's College, 2009). The culture being expressed was British; the production's aim was to develop students' knowledge of Shakespeare, elocution and deportment.

School productions, in England, have been an acceptable co-curricular activity for young people to be engaged in since the first recorded production in 1110AD when choirboys in Dunstable performed a play about St. Catherine (Coggin, 1956). Eton College, in the Royal County of Berkshire, the educational establishment of choice for England's elite, delivered a range of productions in the 1800s, including Shakespeare and Gilbert and Sullivan musicals (Coggin, 1956). The news that Queen Victoria's children were being given acting lessons increased drama's popularity in education (Coggin, 1956). Although theatre has a rich heritage of over two and a half thousand years, drama as a subject in schools has a long and often divisive history, frequently at odds with the government. However, when British immigrants relocated to New Zealand in the 1800s they brought their drama and theatre culture with them.

Katherine Mansfield's mother recounts performances on board the R. M. S. Ruahine from Wellington to London in 1898. Tableau entertainments took place on the deck using stage and limelight effects and her fellow passengers frequently rehearsed and learnt their lines (Beauchamp, Beauchamp, Gordon, & Williams, 1998) for performances. Perhaps they sought to recreate their own culture and create opportunities for human company far away from home and family (Luton, 2010). The earliest documented drama performance in New Zealand was Stephen Clarke's *The Lawyer Outwitted* in 1841, organised by Mr. David Osborne, at The Albert Theatre, Auckland, "a penny gaff sort of place, roughly adapted in a room at the back of Watson's hotel" (Downes, 1975, p. 11).

Actors toured the country first by horse and carriage, and then by train (Wolfe, 2002). Buildings were erected that could accommodate performances and the audiences crowded in to see a range of shows. In keeping with its divisive and mischievous history, theatre was seen by some in the early days as "a school for immorality and an asylum for vice and prostitution" (McNaughton, 2008, p. 17), hardly something that education would want to embrace. But some could see the benefits that theatre could bring to a developing society: "fill the theatres and you empty the tap rooms" (Downes, 1975, p. 68).

Principles

Aside from being a useful diversion or for developing skills in presentation, what purpose can drama serve within education? Why were educators keen to embrace this cognitive and kinaesthetic learning style to explore, create and present ideas, embracing it as either art form or pedagogy and in some cases both? Aside from being a body of knowledge about theatre, many practitioners believe drama is more than an academic subject. For them drama can change lives and give children "principles" that they will

learn to live by (Bolton, 1986, p. 8). Others feel drama can contribute to the development of communication skills, thinking skills, empathy and insight into the human condition (Kempe & Ashwell, 2000; Neelands & O'Connor, 2010) and has a "strong history of emancipatory values and aspirations for the personal and social development of young people" (Kempe & Nicholson, 2001, p. 32). Drama can help students, "understand that they think physically as well as intellectually, and learn to trust and release their emotional and muscular responses to meaning" (Greenwood, 2010, p. 76). For some practitioners drama's power lies in its ability to explore themes of social justice and to create a more democratic relationship between student and teacher in the classroom (O'Connor, 2010). In New Zealand it was suggested that drama's most exciting form in schools was "improvisation" with teachers open to "provide effective channels for emotive or creative energy" (Carey, 1976, p. 79). Thirty years later the opening statement in the National Curriculum suggests that:

Drama expresses human experience through a focus on role, action, and tension, played out in time and space. In drama education, students learn to structure these elements and to use dramatic conventions, techniques, and technologies to create imagined worlds. Through purposeful play, both individual and collaborative, they discover how to link imagination, thoughts, and feelings. (Ministry of Education, 2007)

Since drama was included in the National Curriculum in 1999 it has proved popular becoming for a while the subject with "the fastest growing numbers of students entering into assessment for NCEA, New Zealand's national qualification system, and succeeding at all levels, right up to Scholarship" (Greenwood, 2010, p. 70).

Marginalisation

O'Connor and Holland suggest that "philosophical arguments concerning the nature and value of the arts as 'ways of knowing' have been evident since the time of Plato" (O'Connor & Holland, 2004, p. 25). There is certainly "a history of marginalisation in drama education which, in turn, is inextricably linked to the history of arts education as a whole" (Brooks, 2013, pp. 1–2). Perhaps because the academy worldwide has privileged cognitive ways of knowing, learning through artistic practice and embodiment has had to prove its worth to gain a foothold in the establishment. Drama gained its place in the curriculum only as a result of the many enthusiastic voices who lobbied the government over its inclusion. In 1985 a professional body, NZADIE, now known as Drama New Zealand, was created which developed:

from a small group of activists who heard the trumpet call of Dorothy Heathcote's reconceptualisation of drama as a tool for learning and who initially worked in the corners and fringes of schools to an association that draws together a national body of strong, enthusiastic, mutually supportive and capable teachers who teach drama as an established and assessed curriculum subject up to the highest levels of the senior secondary school. (Greenwood, 2009, p. 245)

Drama New Zealand continues to advocate on behalf of drama education holding an annual conference, producing a journal, providing learning opportunities for teachers and operating a website.

Down the chocolate river

In the years following the establishment of state education in 1877 there was a growing sense that education is more than a means to develop employability and citizenship. Educators felt that the personal development of a child should be given more attention. George Hogben, the Inspector General for Schools and Secretary for State for Education in 1899, was interested in what he called the “natural” method of teaching (Roth, 2012). His 1913 curriculum allowed for plenty of singing and drawing which he felt should be “regarded as a means of assisting expression in the child’s daily life and study” (Cumming & Cumming, 1978, pp. 192–193). During the 1920s, James Shelley, the chair of education in Christchurch, expressed his passion to reform education believing:

that nobody could be a full and rounded person without some experience in the arts: painting, poetry, music, dance, drama, crafts and the even more difficult art of working with other people on creative pursuits. For him, any school system failed if it didn’t give every child a chance to become a fully rounded person. (Beeby, 1986, para.14)

Shelley was not alone in his recognition that children’s lives could be enhanced through the arts. In 1937 there was, “a watershed in New Zealand educational history” (May, 1997, p. 83) when delegates shared ideas about child-centred education at the New Education Fellowship Conference. Among these were ideas which the New Zealand government began to embrace including the theories of John Dewey (Battye, 2005) that endorsed the idea that:

any system of schooling must build on a child’s natural curiosity and interests. It must also recognize that the child is fundamentally an active participant, not a passive spectator. (Boisvert 1997, p. 72)

These concepts were radical in that they began to look at the needs and interests of the child as central to their educational development. The concept of the active participant being curious about their world is fundamental to drama’s pedagogy and offers a way for teachers to begin to promote drama’s value within education. *The Schools of 1938* (Ewing, 1970, p. 195) hinted that the year ahead offered: “an excellent opportunity for exploratory work in curricula-making” and “history, geography, science of everyday life, music, arts and crafts – choral speaking, recitation and Dramatic work, will afford unlimited scope for originality” (1970, p. 197).

This is possibly the first reference to the use of drama within the curriculum. Drama, like Wonka’s, “fantastic pink boat” (Dahl, 1964, p. 106) begins to sail down the chocolate river not quite knowing where it might be going, creating both a sense of fear and excitement.

Unfortunately 1939 brought five years of war which “almost completely blotted out the stage footlights” (Hurst, 1944, p. 88). Afterwards there was a feeling that people had been deprived of cultural activity. Joseph Heenan, the Under Secretary to the Department of Internal Affairs in 1946, encouraged the government to create the “Cultural Fund” (Bassett, 1997, p. 138) because of his own sense that “art had an indefinable yet real contribution to make to the nation’s welfare” (1997, p. 138). This financial aid supported performances in schools and, as a result, “a new relationship between the State and the Arts had been forged” (Bassett, 1997, p. 139). The Community Arts Service Drama Unit toured small towns in the North Island to “enrich” lives and to create a “desire for further knowledge of the arts” (Simpson, 1961, p. 126). The Player’s Drama Quartet toured secondary schools throughout the country from 1956, encouraging young people to become involved in theatre through their workshops. According to Simpson:

hundreds of secondary children have tried their hand at scene shifting and examined the properties and the set at close hand. A few have been put through their acting paces, while the class out in the stalls has offered advice and criticism. (Simpson, 1961, p. 77)

In four years they performed to fifty thousand students (Simpson, 1961). Later in 1958, the Southern Comedy Players toured their first programme of plays to schools in the South Island. During this period, Clarence Beeby ensured that art was developed in schools (Foley, Hong, & Thwaites, 1999) with an emphasis on “self- expression, the appreciation of beauty and the growth of practical skills” (1999, p. 5). The arts and drama were therefore being sanctioned by the government as contributing to the lives of individuals and actively being encouraged into schools. Some of the later passionate advocates for drama education were first inspired as children through these dramatic opportunities:

Many of us who are now in our sixties remember the plays and concert of our schooldays, and remember that they were not always re-hashes of the canonical or popular classics, but sometimes new works written specifically for us by our teachers, or even – sometimes – improvised by us. (Greenwood, 2009, p. 247)

1958: Australian UNESCO Seminar on Drama in Education

In August 1958, New Zealand sent a delegation of six to the Australian UNESCO Seminar on Drama in Education at the Sydney Teachers’ College (Luton, 2010). Discussions centred on ways in which young people could be interested in theatre and the relationship between drama as an educational activity and drama as an art form. The main presenters came from England and as a result of their advocacy for drama education, gave passionate presentations. Professor H. W. Robinson declared that drama:

is not an extracurricular activity to be administered in spare time by the untrained and insensitive. I submit that the theatre is an ideal methodology for education...The theatre is an art...Theatre should be

taught in the schools...Theatre should be taught as a regular part of the curriculum...Theatre should be taught by trained personnel...it is the duty of the state and the universities to provide training for this development. These things I believe. (UNESCO, 1958, p. 20)

Robinson advocated the need for drama to be both art form and pedagogy and taught by specialist teachers, putting the responsibility for its development firmly on the state and the Academy. Likewise John Allen expressed his view that one of the biggest problems for drama educators in Britain was the emphasis put upon academic achievement which “is used as an excuse to stop making any efforts to give children an imaginative life within school hours” (UNESCO, 1958, p. 23). One can imagine the contingent of drama educators arriving back in New Zealand fired with enthusiasm; perhaps they hoped to avoid the pitfalls inherent in the British system and find ways in which children’s imaginations could be developed through drama (Fleming, 1976). However, in the years to come, examinations, assessment and the focus on literacy and numeracy continued to shape education arguably leaving little time for imagination.

1960s and 1970s

During the 60s and 70s, interest continued to grow in the creative arts (New Zealand Educational Institute, 1976) and there was a sense that New Zealand’s own identity could be expressed through them. The protests against New Zealand’s involvement in the Vietnam War used several street theatre performances to deliver their message (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2014). Theatre companies took up the challenge to develop Theatre in Education programmes and companies like Stage-Truck and Theatre Corporate brought together education and drama. In 1963, the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council was created which encouraged and supported much of the development of Drama and Theatre in Education in New Zealand (Battye, 2005, p. 15).

In 1966 the first drama handbook, *Classroom Drama for Forms 1 to 4* (New Zealand Department of Education & Osborn, (1966/1973) promotes a creative approach to drama education Eight years later, Sunny Amey was appointed by the Education Department as the Curriculum Officer for Drama. With a foot in both the worlds of professional theatre and educational drama, her appointment was “a strong statement from the Department [of Education] that this was an area that mattered” (Cook, 1984, p. 55). During her time in this role increasing numbers of teachers experimented with using drama as a learning tool, although some began to feel frustrated at the limited possibilities for its use (1984, p. 52).

Perhaps the highlight for many teachers interested in drama as a pedagogy were the two visits of Dorothy Heathcote (in 1978 and again in 1984) which brought together a “network of Drama teachers” (Battye, 2005, p. 16). Some teachers were introduced to Heathcote’s work by seeing the BBC documentary, *Three Looms Waiting* (Smedley, 1971) which “clearly showed that strong motivation, peppered with challenging questions in a sauce of confident experimentation is the recipe for deep experience and real involvement” (Fleming, 1976, p. 90). Peter O’Connor, later to become the National drama facilitator between 2000 and 2005, describes the impact the film made on his practice when he attended a teacher recruitment evening:

They played a film that night about a woman in Newcastle who was doing things with drama that seemed more revolutionary than any poetry I'd ever thought of writing. Yet its impact was as if I had read Homer for the first time. (O'Connor, 2009, p. 21)

Some teachers travelled to England to work with their charismatic mentor. Heathcote's work inspires the use of process drama (Battye, 2009b) and later the Mantle of the Expert (a teacher-in-role approach to learning which puts children at the centre of inquiry) in primary schools. Sunny Amey felt that "the time is ripe for a very big push in the use of Drama both as a learning medium and also the theatre side" (Cook, 1984, p. 53).

The big day arrives: entering the curriculum

As a result of Heathcote's visits, enthusiastic teachers began writing a sixth form certificate course (Battye, 2009a). This ensured that when the Curriculum Review (Battye, 2005, p. 18) began in 1989, drama was trialled as an "Essential Area of Learning" in the Arts which included Music, Dance and Visual Arts. In reviewing the curriculum there was a concern that it should have "a critical as well as social vision" (Foley et al., 1999, p. 20) and that it should encourage, "students to become independent and lifelong learners" (1999, p. 24). Although educators interested in drama advocated for its inclusion in the curriculum there was no unified agreement about the purpose or the form it should take (Heyward, 2006). Paul Heyward hoped that the aesthetic art form *and* the learning medium could have been integrated within the curriculum (2006). As a member of the Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum Project he was disappointed to find that teachers felt, "if [drama] did not find its own legitimate place in the school curriculum it would be unlikely children would learn anything about the art form" (2006, p. 25). This is the dichotomy that has haunted drama education in England since the 1950s and which spilled over to the New Zealand context – whether drama should be valued as pedagogy or art form (Baldwin, 2013). When the arts curriculum was first drafted, opinions were divided. Paradoxically, some teachers felt that the "content has been almost entirely dispensed with" (Greenwood, 2009, p. 253), while on the other hand some felt the document was "too vague and open-ended to inform teachers of what they should do" (2009, p. 254).

Assessment

Once drama enters the curriculum there is little way it can avoid becoming a subject accountable to assessment. Assessment in the arts causes much debate among practitioners because of the possibility that a child's work will not be seen for its inherent meaning or value but rather its ability to confirm to a set of adult standards. The inherent problem with assessment lies in the way in which the arts:

enable students to do something that is not only distinctive, but is inventive. Put another way, surprise rather than predictability is the aim. This, of course, creates certain problems, or at least challenges, for assessors. (Eisner, 2007, p. 425)

Since assessment is a vital component of the golden ticket, drama educators realised the importance of developing grade-related criteria to assess senior drama (Bushnell, 1992). The criteria, it was felt, would bring some consistency to teaching and, “legitimise the existence of Drama as a curriculum area” (Bushnell, 1992, p. 8). Paul Bushnell suggested that, “if Drama is to have a permanent place as a subject in NZ schools it must feature ways of assessment which manifest the quality of the teaching and learning the subject entails” (Bushnell, 1992, p. 40). Assessment then, is a double-edged sword which, while justifying drama as a curriculum subject, limits and constrains the imaginative and creative processes which are central to its praxis. Measurement, however, seems to have become the focus of drama education and, “as far as most Drama teachers are concerned Achievement Standard exemplars have become a type of de facto prescription” (Battye, 2009b). Is it possible, Greenwood asks that we are “more concerned with interpreting the minutiae of NCEA descriptors than with exploring the role of the aesthetic”? (Greenwood, 2009, p. 258).

While some of the language chosen to express the subject drew on the process drama work of Heathcote (Battye, 2009a, p. 3) the drama curriculum’s main statements (Foley et al., 1999) appear to be based on David Hornbrook’s concepts of drama as a theatrical product. The language of Jonothan Neelands’ “conventions” (Neelands & Goode, 1990), designed to *help* structure work (O’Connor, 2010) and the “Elements” (Haseman & O’Toole, 1986) have often become the central teaching focus (O’Connor, 2010). For some practitioners interested in drama as process rather than as quantifiable theatre skills, the criteria left them, “stone, stone cold” (Peter O’Connor, personal communication, September 19, 2012) making the subject less radical. Drama seems to have become a subject more concerned with compliance (Battye, 2009b) than with creativity and with product more than process.

The problem for drama is that it sits uncomfortably in the curriculum between being a subject with a long history and resulting theoretical base and an embodied pedagogy which challenges traditional ideas of space, methods, assessment and teacher–student relationships. National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) standards, constrain and limit its many possibilities while at the same time validates it as a subject in the curriculum as a university entrance qualification.

2000–2014

In 2002 when the NCEA was introduced, teachers had to learn how to deal with standards-based assessment. This is meant to “define what a student should know and can do as a result of the learning process” (Hood, 1998, p. 99). This approach separates “knowledge into smaller, more readily digested components” (Johansson, 2014, p. 3). In its favour, NCEA drama enables students to communicate using dramatic forms and to explore what makes it effective through their involvement as actors, directors, designers, producers, writers and technicians. They learn how to critique drama and to be members of an audience sharing a common language specifically developed for the New Zealand curriculum. However, the dividing of drama into constituent parts can mean that, for example, voice, body, movement and use of space is explored without attention to the holistic aesthetic form. It can mean expecting students to slavishly

recreate how a Shakespeare play may have been performed rather than examining how such a play can communicate to the students today. In order to safely negotiate the standards, teachers focus on teaching the task. The online drama teachers' forum, *Dramanet* (Arts Online) is filled with calls for assistance in interpreting the standards correctly. While much creative work is occurring in schools (Luton, 2010), it is a struggle to balance the needs of the golden ticket with the need for drama to be more freely expressed and to claim its role as a pedagogy which can help students and teachers "reflect on who we are and who we might become" (O'Connor, 2009, p. 24).

In February 2010, the reviewed New Zealand Curriculum was implemented which realigned NCEA Achievement standards in relation to the Arts curriculum. Fifty-one years after the UNESCO Seminar on Drama in Education in Sydney and 137 years after the Education Act 1877 was implemented, drama is now rationalised and re-confirmed as an area of learning in schools. In 2004 drama gained even higher status by its inclusion as a scholarship subject for the "highest achieving students" (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2009a). However, its presence in the curriculum is still marginalised, and although as an NCEA subject it is a university entrance qualification, it is infrequently recommended as useful or given the status of being an English-rich subject by some universities (University of Auckland, 2014). Drama in the curriculum seems to be valued more as a vocational art form rather than as a pedagogical method that could be used across and throughout the curriculum. The standards-based approach has continued to compartmentalise this holistic art form and there is a sense of a "lack of transparency" in a subject where examiners are anonymous (Battye, 2009b). Teachers often find themselves unable to experiment (Battye, 2009b) because of the need to focus on credit counting.

The Great Gum machine: All Chew and no Bite?

In Wonka's factory the great gum machine was colourful, noisy and exciting but it produced something which "looked like a little strip of grey cardboard" (Dahl, 1964). Looking at it, one of the children declared, "you mean that's *all*?" Drama educators have a tendency to describe drama as a unique and wonderful pedagogy and even Greenwood has suggested that its statement in the arts curriculum is, "a pitch that would be the pride of many car salesmen" (Greenwood, 2003, p. 119). But perhaps there is more to it than learning the techniques, elements, conventions and technologies and creating short performance to comply with a standard. It is about children being given opportunities to explore their world and to create drama for their own wellbeing and learning and that of their peers and community. In 2014, students explored a wide range of contemporary and historical, political and social issues. Some students devised and performed plays to explore issues in the Palestine-Israel conflict (TKI Arts Online, 2014), while others mark the centenary of the start of the Great War (Harrowell, 2014, p. 25). Through this involvement they come to know and understand the stories of the people and politics of the time. They speak the words of newspaper articles, poetry, letters and diaries and embody emotions and ideas. They imagine what it might have been like to be at war or on the home front. They make connections to their own world in ways that sitting in a classroom listening to a teacher might not give them. Drama and the arts are more than

compartmentalised pieces of knowledge as Adrienne Sansom, dance educator explains:

Dance education is not just about learning the elements and language that constitute the dance process – it is about addressing who we are as people, embracing difference, encountering numerous cultures, interacting and collaborating with others, and inviting response. (Sansom, 2008, pp. 215–216)

The presence of drama in the curriculum and at NCEA level has undoubtedly created a sense of drama as a subject that requires an understanding of theory and practice. However, the National Education Guideline 5, expects that “priority should be given to the development of high levels of competence (knowledge and skills) in literacy and numeracy, science and technology and physical activity” (Ministry of Education, 2009). In the last five years, drama advisors and funding for educational artistic opportunities have been withdrawn. According to Battye, “under the current system, there is no guarantee that a newly qualified secondary Drama teacher will have ever directed or acted in a play before being thrown in at the deep end of classroom teaching!” (Battye, 2009b). Without an understanding of the history and theory of drama education praxis there is the possibility that drama education’s value as a means to develop democratic (O’Connor, 2010), critical, empathic and literate children may no longer be articulated.

In 1959, when the arts were proposed as beneficial for “for our economic wellbeing” (Simpson, 1961, p. 162), little did we realise that this would become one of the justifications used to ensure the arts are taught within the curriculum. More recently the arts have been identified as industries (Grierson & Mansfield, 2003), which brings 3 billion dollars to New Zealand’s economy each year (WeCreate, 2014). Yet, for most drama teachers, few of their students will become creative artists. It is likely that they will benefit from creative and critical thinking, communication skills, development of empathy and confidence which drama can help develop. In the neoliberal desire to measure education in terms of its monetary value, students with a desire to study the arts for fun or for self-fulfilment may be marginalised. Even school productions now have to justify their existence in terms of economic value: the American musical often wins out over more powerful socio-political plays because of its power to ensure “bums on seats”. The pressure is on for drama to prove itself economically or it could face, as it has in England, the possibility of being side-lined and perhaps even disappear from the curriculum.

Not all voices rejoice at the results of drama’s inclusion in the curriculum and its requirement to conform. Peter O’Connor suggests that it may be on the edges of the curriculum where “drama will always do its best work?” (O’Connor, 2009, p. 29). Reflecting on his involvement in the implementation of drama in the Arts curriculum he suggests:

What I was doing was moving drama from the margins to the centre. In doing so I made a terrible mistake. I’ve often, only half-jokingly, said I will be remembered as the person who got drama to be taught in New Zealand – but as badly as everything else is taught. In moving to the centre, nearly all that attracted me to drama and sustained me was either compromised or lost. (O’Connor, 2009, pp. 22–23)

Perhaps he fears that drama education has lost its flexibility and freedom, its magic and surprise and its contributions to developing social justice. He certainly feels the curriculum, “is ‘outcomes-based’ and ‘futures focused’. It is essentially narrow and technicist....the preparation is all about creating compliant workers” (O’Connor, 2009, p. 23).

Any subject given the golden ticket to enter the curriculum must comply with educational goals, just as Charlie will need to do things Wonka’s way to justify his trust in him. Drama embraces the concepts of lifelong learning but in conforming and complying with forms of assessment which do not embrace its holistic nature it necessarily limits its wider possibilities and strengths. Although the curriculum advocates for the understanding, developing, interpreting and communicating of our respective arts forms:

it is important that these ideals are put into practice. These desires may become empty promises unless serious consideration is given to the larger purpose of dance from a sociopolitical and cultural perspective. (Sansom, 2008, p. 216)

The same is true for drama which needs to remember its wider purposes beyond presenting brief products for credit collecting. While drama teachers value the opportunity to create with their students, they:

see an ever growing increase in paper work that has been called ‘death by paper.’ Drama teachers regularly report their struggle to mount the school production and teach interactive and practical classes at the same time as they deal with the mounting piles of paper-based administration. (Greenwood, 2010, p. 70)

Concluding Comments

Drama educators are left finding ways to negotiate their way through the system in order to put the process before the paperwork. Should drama in schools be valued as vocational training, helping students to become actors? After all this is how drama first ventured into the curriculum in the 1980s when vocational units were “used in schools by the entrepreneurial group of drama teachers who wanted to consolidate the drama projects they had already developed” (Greenwood, 2009, p. 252). Or is it a way for children and teachers to become, “actors in, of and with the world” (personal communication, P. O’Connor, 2012). Back at Wonka’s chocolate factory, Augustus, Violet, Mike and Veruca have disrupted and confronted the rules. They are still given their truckload of chocolate and have gained some valuable life skills. After years in the curriculum, is it time for drama educators to re-examine and reconsider why drama really matters and what its purpose is in the curriculum? Must it be justified in terms of economic value and exam results or should it remember its child-centred approach? Does accepting the golden ticket to enter the curriculum have to mean compromise and conformity?

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Reading while viewing: the impact of movie subtitles as a strategy to raise achievement in comprehension and vocabulary

Ronnie Davey and Faye Parkhill

Abstract

Research into the use of subtitling of visual media texts and their impact on the literacy achievement of students, including those from culturally diverse backgrounds, is an area of growing interest in literacy education. This mixed methods study, carried out with 222 mostly Māori and Pasifika learners in five primary schools located in a very low-socioeconomic area on the east coast of the North Island of New Zealand sought to discover whether viewing subtitled films, along with carefully targeted language activities, increased student achievement. The Audio Visual Achievement in Literacy Language and Learning (AVAILLL) programme presents meaning in multiple ways – audio, visual images and written – which simultaneously serve to engage students whose achievement lags behind that of their peers. Quantitative results demonstrated significant and sustained gains in reading comprehension and vocabulary for these students. Responses from focus group student interviews reported higher levels of engagement and self-reported gains in reading fluency and motivation.

Introduction

Although several international studies indicate that most New Zealand children are high achievers in reading (Kirkham, 2012; May, Cowles, & Lamy, 2013; Ministry of Education [MoE], 2007; Telford & May, 2010), reports of low achievement for some ethnic minority students and those from low-socioeconomic schools continue to suggest that conventional and current literacy practices have not proved effective, particularly for many Māori and Pasifika students.

Māori and Pasifika students

In the 2010/11 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) data for eight to nine-year-old students, (Chamberlain & Caygill, 2012), the mean reading comprehension score of Māori (488) and Pasifika (473) revealed that these students lagged behind the international mean (500) and well behind their Pākehā/European (558) and Asian (542) counterparts. The mean score for all New Zealand students was 531. Similarly, the 2012 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which assesses a much older cohort (15-year-olds) on a three-year cycle, once again highlighted an extremely ‘long tail’ of under-achievers, with Māori and Pasifika students (particularly boys) dominating the lowest-performing group and with results that were even lower than the previous 2009 results.

Kirkham's analysis of PISA data (2012) suggested that socioeconomic disadvantage, rather than ethnicity, is the key contributor. While there may be strong connections between underachievement and low-socioeconomic status, nevertheless it is the Māori and Pasifika communities who appear to be particularly vulnerable to effects of inter-generational unemployment and poverty and whose academic achievement appears to fall behind that of other ethnic groups as a consequence.

Visual media and AVAILLL

Children spend more time with moving images than they do with school work, and through this they acquire an enormous amount of knowledge and experience which some teachers are learning to access and develop (bfi education, 2003). Whilst the use of visual media such as film, television and DVDs has grown in primary schools, the presence of the subtitle facility on most recently released films creates new possibilities for reading advancement and engagement for use in school literacy programmes. The presence and engaging nature of visual and multi-modal texts and media for contemporary students is widely reported (e.g. Harrison Group, 2010; King, 2002; Mills, 2009).

This realisation was an impetus behind the initial development of the Audio Visual Achievement in Literacy Language and Learning (AVAILLL) programme in the United States. AVAILLL had its genesis when its developer, the late Dr Alice Killackey, a science teacher educator, discovered upon returning to the classroom that many of her high school students did not have the reading skills in English to engage successfully in the study of science. She observed, however, their interest in, and deep comprehension of, visual media in science. This realization motivated her to develop a programme that would, she hoped, engage her students in highly focused reading by giving them opportunity to watch popular movies and simultaneously read the English subtitles of those movies. In an unpublished study of 387 students in their first year of high school, Killackey found that below average readers increased their reading ages by an average of 2.16 years. Similarly, a pilot study that Killackey undertook in New Zealand indicated that the greatest gains in reading literacy occurred for low-progress readers and boys from ethnic minorities (Parkhill & Johnson, 2009).

Since her death, AVAILLL has been picked up and developed considerably by a specialist in literacy in Christchurch, New Zealand. It includes a teacher's guide, the six-eighth week programme guide and the appropriate DVD and optional PD from the developer. It aims to target schools concerned about their level of reading achievement.

AVAILLL is based on the hypothesis that using popular movies with subtitles not only enhances students' reading skills but has high levels of engagement and also motivates students to read. Alvermann (2002) argues that the level of student engagement is a key mediating factor in student achievement in literacy. "Measures of behavioral engagement, including self-reported effort (Skinner, Kindermann, & Furrer, 2009), amount of time spent (Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala, & Cox, 1999), and observed concentration in reading tasks (Jang, 2008), have all correlated with reading achievement." (Guthrie, Klauda, & Ho, 2013, p. 10). Others have argued that providing relevant links between students' lives and reading instruction resulted in

higher volumes of reading engagement and achievement through enabling students to make connections and develop their understanding and meanings further (Lau, 2009; McNaughton & Lai, 2009).

Within the programme, engagement is deemed to be a result of movies with subtitles offering the “harmonious inputs” of simultaneous reading, viewing and listening (Parkhill & Johnson, 2009 p. 29). The collaborative nature of the AVAILL activities and peer interaction also align with more recent literature on the development of intrinsic motivation and active participation in learning.

Same language subtitling (SLS)

Most research on the use of subtitling has been in relation to second language learners or hearing-impaired students (see, for example, King, 2002; Koolstra & Beentjes, 1999; Jelinek-Lewis & Jackson, 2001). The common term used in these contexts is same language subtitling (SLS). Kothari, Pandey & Chudgar (2004) demonstrated subtitling can be used equally effectively with hearing students through using same-language subtitled song programmes on television in India. These researchers found that exposure to SLS educational songs improved decoding ability in formal school settings. However, it was outside of the school context, where the watching of television with song subtitles was found to more than double the percentage of viewers who became good readers, at the same time as halving the percentage of those who remained illiterate.

For struggling or beginning readers, reading speed, word knowledge, decoding, vocabulary acquisition, word recognition, reading comprehension and oral reading rates can all be enhanced through SLS. Linebarger, Piotroski, and Greenwood (2010) also argue that the use of onscreen print in the form of captions is a meaningful and engaging context to extend word knowledge and comprehension, particularly for those students who are slow to develop and use the alphabetic principle or those who experience difficulty transferring comprehension skills from spoken to written language. In a study of 76 children who had just completed second grade, Linebarger et al. reported that beginning readers recognise more words and read faster and also allowed for a strong focus on central story elements when they viewed television with captions. A longitudinal study by Koskinen, Bowen, Gambrell, Jensema, and Kane (1997) also showed that those children who viewed television with captions, scored significantly higher on both word knowledge and comprehension than those who viewed without.

Extending reading mileage, another key intended outcome of subtitle usage, appears to encourage the possibility of more students entering what Stanovich and Cunningham (1993) call the ‘positive feedback loop’, where the more they read, the wider their vocabulary, and the wider their vocabulary, the greater their comprehension and therefore likely enjoyment of reading. This strong link between the amount read and reading development, known widely as ‘the Matthew effect’ is much reported in the literature (Stanovich, 1986).

However, practice on its own proves insufficient to improve reading; explicit teaching, modelling and guided practice are also required. In a single study review of SLS using a karaoke-style experimental intervention with explicit targeted cloze

activities (McCall & Craig, 2009), 198 Hawaiian secondary school students made at least a two-year gain in comprehension and this was sustained in subsequent years.

The AVAILLL programme

Using sub-titles for popular movies to increase reading mileage and enhance vocabulary and comprehension, AVAILLL combines images and words to foster comprehension and fluency in reading. Students ‘read-watch’ subtitled age-appropriate popular movies and engage in a range of collaborative-competitive activities designed to keep them on track when reading the subtitles. These activities provide opportunities for purposeful and focused reading.

AVAILLL, a one-hour-per day for six to eight week, cost-recovery (now NZ based and developed) literacy programme, is designed to enhance rather than replace normal instruction classroom literacy practices.

The purpose for this current study was to investigate whether viewing subtitled films, accompanied by a wide range of targeted activities using multiple inputs – audio, visual images and written words simultaneously – increased the achievement of students from diverse cultural backgrounds, who have not otherwise been successful in literacy learning. An earlier New Zealand pilot study on the effectiveness of AVAILLL (Parkhill & Johnson, 2009), indicated that Māori students, in particular, responded well to the programme in terms of both achievement gains and self-reported gains in engagement and we were keen to see if this was the case in schools which had a majority of Māori and other priority learners. We therefore wanted to determine results for Māori and/or Pasifika students aged between the ages of 8 and 11 years and to see if any gains were sustained over time.

Methods

Research design

The two researchers were initially approached by four Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour (RTLBs) working in a low-socioeconomic area on the East Coast of the North Island, to investigate the effectiveness of an eight-week AVAILLL programme with all Year 5 and 6 students in five local primary schools, with school rolls ranging between 90–526. Priority learners comprised the dominant groups in all five schools (for example, school A 78% Māori and 15% Pasifika students, 7% NZ Pākehā or other). Four schools were classified as Decile 1 or 1a and one was Decile 3.

Overall, the majority of the students within the AVAILLL study of all Year 5–6 students were what the MoE now classifies as priority learners: 65.3% Māori, 21.5% Pasifika and 13.2% New Zealand European or ‘other’. In total 222 students from all 12 mixed-ability classes attended the first, second (eight weeks later) and third wave of testing (six months later). Part five of the programme is designed to use popular movies of interest to years 5–6 (8–11-year-olds) and the movies included: *Water Horse*; *Meet the Robinsons*; *Nim’s Island*; *Win Dixie*; *Tales of Desperaux*; *Power of the Planet*; *Horton hears a Who*; and *How to Train a Dragon*. Each movie is based on an age-appropriate children’s book.

This study employed a mixed methods approach. Quantitative data was obtained using first-, second- and third-wave data sets, designed to explore numerical trends in achievement in vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension. Similar to previous studies (Rand Reading Group, 2002; Guthrie et al., 2013), we measured reading achievement as the students' ability to "answer questions requiring conceptual integration of text-based content" (Guthrie et al., 2013, p. 10). McKeown and Curtis (2014) suggest that, while many authors argue that there is a substantial correlation between achievement in vocabulary and comprehension, the actual nature of this relationship remains unclear (Tannenbaum, Torgeson, & Wagner, 2006). We were also mindful that vocabulary knowledge tends to be domain-specific (Tannenbaum, et al., 2006), so shifts in achievement may not be significant or directly attributed to the programme. Nevertheless, as word meanings feature prominently in the AVAILLL group activities and a multi-choice vocabulary measure is part of the PAT reading tests, we decided to measure any changes in vocabulary knowledge.

Since teachers wished all students to take part in the programme, there were no control groups in place. In order to mitigate this, we used New Zealand-standardised Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT) (Darr, McDowall, Ferral, Twist, & Watson, 2008) in reading comprehension and vocabulary, which allowed us to determine the level of student achievement relative to other students in a national sample. Their use allowed us to compare movement against the expected shifts over the same timeframe. PAT reading comprehension and vocabulary offer comparable normed tests for Years 5 and 6, so students completed different forms each time they were tested.

In preparation for the intervention, teachers of the classes attended a one-day professional development session about the AVAILLL programme. This was designed and conducted by the NZ developer of the AVAILLL programme; the researchers had no part in the intervention, which was modelled on Killackey's earlier work. The classroom teachers taught the programme to their individual classes, working independently of the researchers over the eight-week period. The four RTLBs administered PAT Test One for comprehension and vocabulary knowledge at the beginning (February) and at the programme's conclusion (April). Students were post-tested using PAT Test Two and six months later, retested by the same RTLBs, using Test Three to determine sustainability of results.

Qualitative data included personal responses to the programme gathered during the second wave of testing. The researchers gathered this data, conducting five separate focus group interviews with teachers and students separately, which were taped with permission, transcribed and checked against the full notes taken by one of the researchers during the interviews. The interview questions for teachers included but were not confined to: teachers and students' overall impressions of the programme; changes in student behaviour and/or engagement or motivation; implementation issues; responses to scripted nature of the programme; student feedback; shifts in individual students – interest in reading, motivation and engagement in reading; synergies and differences between AVAILLL and other aspects of literacy programmes; nature and focus of activities, and relevance of the popular films for students. In terms of student questions, we explored student positive and negative impressions, self-reports

of reading progress; most/least enjoyable and useful activities and reasons; and any changes in their leisure reading outside of class.

Ethical issues

Signed permission letters from parents, students and teachers and the school management were gained. Students who missed any of the three waves of testing were withdrawn from the study results. The research itself was self-funded by the researchers.

Data analysis

Scale score comparisons across all three tests allowed a fine grain of analysis. Analysis of variance (ANOVA; significance level 0.01) was used to determine if the mean differences on the pre- and post-test PAT scale scores for each group were significant. To determine differences in responsiveness across all three phases of testing for the three main ethnic groups, we investigated whether the latter exhibited different achievement patterns in their average scale scores over time. The Wilks Lambda test allowed us to determine whether there was a relationship in progress between the groups over time.

To gain insights into attitudes towards the programme, students' qualitative responses to each of the questions were coded according to recurring and specific words or descriptions. Focus group interviews contributed detailed responses to the programme.

Results

In keeping with previous studies (Davey & Parkhill, 2012; Parkhill & Davey, 2012; Parkhill, Johnson, & Bates, 2011), gains in scale scores for both comprehension and vocabulary over the eight-week time span were significant ($p < 0.001$). Table 1 shows the increase from the pre-test to post-test. Fewer students scored at one extreme or the other with less variation from the mean.

Comprehension

National norming data indicates that the average scale score twelve-month increase from March to March is 9.20 for Year 5 students and 8.20 for Year 6 students, an overall average increase of 8.70. In this study, the increase in only six months (May to November), for these students who had received the eight-week AVAILLL programme was 8.66, which is almost identical.

Table 1: Comprehension Scale Scores between Tests 1, 2 and 3

	N	Mean	Std. Dev
Test One (May)	222	32.67	13.31
Test Two (July)	222	36.08	10.25
Test Three (Nov)	222	41.33	10.29

The difference between Test 1 and 2 for scale scores in our sample was 3.6. There was a significant ($p < 0.001$) difference in the comprehension scale score mean between Time 1 (April) and Time 2 (June). There was also a significant ($t = 12.55$, $df = 222$, $p < 0.001$) difference in the comprehension scale score mean between Time 1 (May) and Time 3 (Nov). However, between these two, the effect size of 0.72 was higher, indicating that the reading mileage, skills and increase in fluency acquired in the eight weeks of the AVAILLL programme was not only sustained but developed further in the following months. Hattie's (1999) description of normative comparison points of effect sizes indicates that anything above 0.4 would mean that an innovation is working better than expected and is therefore educationally significant. Effect sizes above 0.6 are very significant (Hattie, 1999) and therefore may indicate a large impact.

Vocabulary

When compared with comprehension scores, vocabulary gains were smaller. While the gains in vocabulary scores between Times 1 and 2 were still significant ($p < 0.001$). There was also a significant ($t = 10.49$, $df = 241$, $p < 0.001$) difference in the vocabulary scale score mean between Time 1 (May) and Time 3 (Nov).

National norming data for vocabulary indicates that the average scale score twelve-month increase from March to March is 7.8 for Year 5 students and 6.3 for Year 6 students, an overall average increase of approximately 7.0. The increase in six months (May to November) for these students who had received the eight-week AVAILLL programme was 6.3, identical with an expected gain over 12 months for Year 6 students but less than the average for Year 5 and 6 combined (7.0).

Table 2: Vocabulary Gains for Scale Scores from Test 1 to 3

	N	Mean	Std. Dev
Test One (May)	242	35.99	13.99
Test Two (July)	242	38.06	11.41
Test Three (Nov)	242	42.10	9.83

Between Times 2 and 3, the gains were also significant ($p < 0.001$), with a larger effect size of 0.38. Between T1 and T3, the effect size is 0.50. Between all phases of testing, while not as large as the comprehension scores, the vocabulary gains were also statistically significant.

Achievement differences according to ethnicity in comprehension

The comprehension results indicate that there is a significant effect over time and also a significant difference across the testing phases by ethnicity. Over time, the ethnic groups exhibited different patterns of average scale scores. The lowest-scoring group on international and national literacy tests are Pasifika students (Crooks, Flockton, & White, 2007; Telford & May, 2010). However, it was this group that made the largest

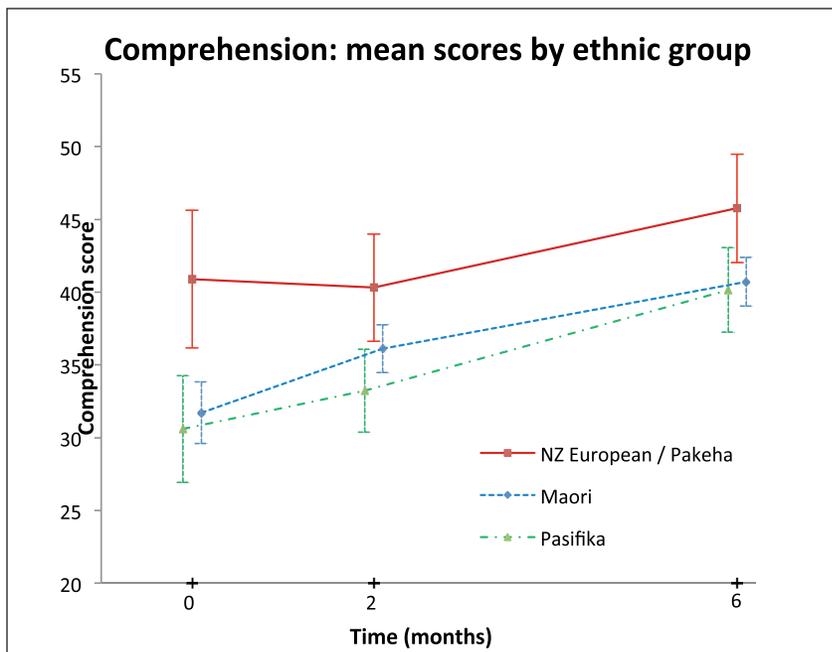
gain; they not only sustained this level six months later (May-November), but also improved on it. The average gain score for Māori students is 9.00 and for Pasifika 9.55 scale points compared with only 8.66 for the whole AVAILLL group. The norming process for the PAT comprehension test (Darr et al., 2008) did not include separate average gain scores for Māori and Pasifika students hence national comparisons for these subgroups are unavailable. However, both the Māori and Pasifika groups exceeded the national yearly average for all Year 5 and 6 students in only six months.

Table 3 compares the mean scores across the ethnic groups at each time point (test). It shows that the mean score for the NZ European group is significantly different from both Māori and Pasifika groups at Time 1, and is significantly different from Pasifika at Time 2. At Time 3, the New Zealand European is (marginally) different from Māori (Wilk's Lambda [$\nu=9.53$, $f=2.66$, $df=4.00$ $df=436.00$, $p < 0.000$]).

Table 3: Comparison of Mean Scores in Comprehension across Three Ethnic Groups

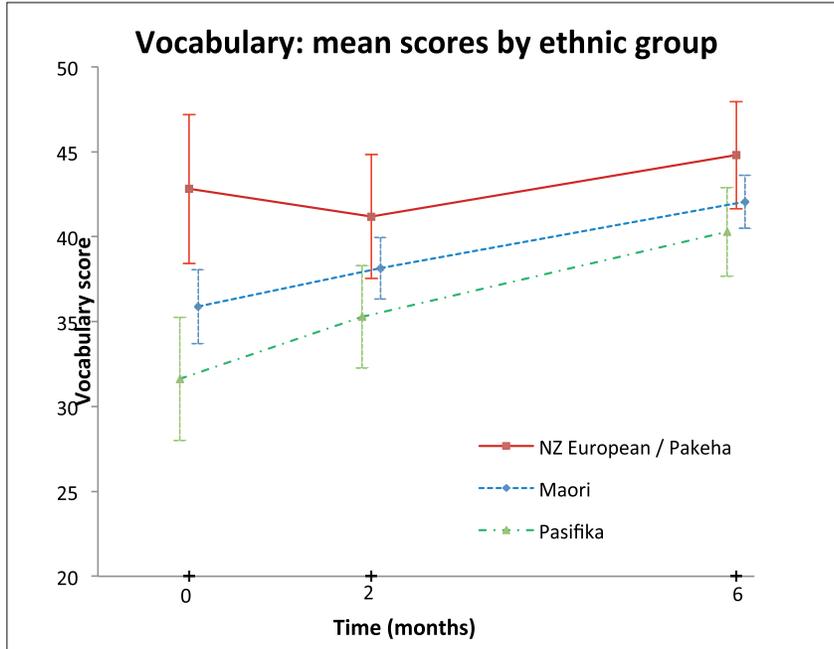
Ethnicity	Māori (n=145)	Pasifika (n=48)	NZ European/Other (n=29)
Test 1 (May)	31.71 (13.52)	30.60 (11.26)	40.89 (12.80)
Test 2 (July)	36.12 (10.32)	33.23 (8.43)	40.30 (11.44)
Test 3 (Nov)	40.71 (10.89)	40.15 (8.23)	45.76 (9.78)

These differences are also shown in Figure 1:



In Test 1, the NZ European group is significantly different from both Māori and Pasifika groups. However, by Test 3, the difference for Māori compared with the NZ European group is only marginally significant.

These differences are also noted below in Figure 2 for vocabulary gains.



The scores on vocabulary show that Māori students increased significantly from Time 1 to Time 2 and from Time 2 to Time 3. On the other hand, NZ European and Pasifika did not show significant changes for Time 1–Time 2 but did for Time 2 –T3 and for Time 1–Time 3.

Focus group interviews

Focus group interviews took place with 47 students organised in individual school groups chosen by their class teachers from those who volunteered. Responses in each focus group revealed overwhelmingly enthusiastic responses to the programme. All students interviewed enjoyed the programme, with prevalent emotional responses like: “cool”, “terrific”, “fun”, “awesome”, “easy”, “helps you learn” being the most typical responses. Reasons for their enjoyment, however, varied across several areas from: “watching the movie” to “reading the subtitles was fun” to “doing the activities” to “watching the movie and also learning too” and “we didn’t have to do normal reading”. It appears that the novelty and resulting engagement value of watch/reading popular films, instead of more typical print-based texts used in primary classrooms may have played a role here.

As well, students unanimously believed that their reading had improved and teachers also reported this perception among most of their students, even if results did not bear

this out. This self-reported improvement clustered towards gains in terms of reading fluency particularly. All believed that they were able to read faster: *“I started reading slow and when I got used to it, I started reading faster”* and *“you have to read fast to read the last word before it’s gone”* and *“the scenes change and you have to read a certain number of words in a certain time – makes eyes work faster before it changes”*. Apart from *“we’re getting more practice”*, the connection between the reading and collaborative/competitive activities appeared to support students’ focus.

Many reported a flow-on effect with their out-of-class reading. In one focus group, all the students said they were reading more, longer books. One student reported how her reading had changed: *“I used to read a chapter book a month and now I read one in a week ‘cos I’m more into it.”*

The majority also commented on their increased vocabulary knowledge – that they had learnt new words and found it a ‘fun way’ to do so. For some the visual context helped: *“I knew what the words mean because of the pictures on the movies too”*. Others reported improvements in spelling and/or pronunciation. *“Sometimes there were hard words and I didn’t understand them but when it came to AVAILLL I got really interested and I started learning those words by heart.”* While such gains are not necessarily borne out by the vocabulary gains, there appeared to be a self-reported marked shift in attitude towards learning vocabulary in the majority of these students.

Several suggested that the activities made them process things in different ways, which, in turn, helped their understanding: *“I’m understanding reading better – I can retell what’s happening now and would do it again.”* While there were things students did not respond favourably to, these tended to be technical in nature: people not listening to instructions, the varied use and success of student assistants and some students found certain activities harder, easier, or less enjoyable than others. Almost all students expressed pride in the work they had done on the programme and most seemed reluctant to return to their normal classroom programme, with the dominant word from all groups being *“boring”*, *“stink”* and *“less fun”*. As one student suggested: *“You don’t get to do fun activities, you don’t get to learn new words, you don’t get distracted by other things like in the normal reading programme cos everyone’s quiet just to watch the movie”* and the perception of several was that: *“you just get to do boring worksheets”* in their normal programmes. Perhaps such comments had more to do with the nature of their usual classroom reading programmes than AVAILLL.

Overall, the main characteristics of the programme identified by students were its novelty and enjoyment, which in their view turned led to feelings of motivation and engagement. In one focus group, more than half the students, many of whom were chronic truants suggested that they wanted to come to school because of AVAILLL. This connection between achievement, motivation and engagement with the programme is one worth closer exploration.

Teachers

The focus group interview with the 12 teachers from all participating schools also revealed a positive response to AVAILLL. Over half the teachers had noticed an increase in attendance, with one boy in a particular class coming every day while the

programme was operating but no longer attending when it was finished. A unanimous response was that the “*students loved it*”. A male teacher was particularly enthusiastic about the variety it offered: “*Was looking forward to doing it as I really love watching movies myself and I like the idea of working with the whole class as well as when you have them all levelled with reading groups they know who’s top, middle and bottom so I liked the idea of pulling them together for a term and doing some reading as a whole class so everyone’s on the same level.*”

The use of age-related popular movies in class was justified through the increase in reading, particularly in regard to the book that the movie was based on: “*Great they were fired up with links to the books or chapters and having them side by side, made them realise they should read the book and ... lots of my children asked if they could read the book afterwards.*”

The teachers addressed in different ways the structured nature of AVAILLL, which includes a very detailed teacher’s manual with DVD timings and introductory ‘how to’ scripts for the different activities. One teacher stated: “*To start with it was great as everything was done for you and then I started realising that some of the wording was a bit difficult for my kids so I changed it into my words – which was the same but easier for them to understand. As long as you read it before then you could adapt it.*” While she appreciated the scaffolding provided, once she had the “*hang of the Programme:*” she modified where appropriate.

Overall, teacher enthusiasm matched student enthusiasm, partly based on what they saw as improved achievement and motivation for those students who had previously struggled, on a positive tone in the classroom and on students’ self-reported improvements in confidence and self-efficacy. Their major concerns lay around students’ ability to transfer and maintain their gains and interest in reading.

Limitations

As described above, there were no control groups as all of the Year 5 and 6 students in the five schools took part in the six-month study. Although the progress in six months almost matched the average gains of non-AVAILLL students over 12 months, it cannot be assumed that progress is uniform for students over a period of 12 months, particularly as investigation into the ‘summer effect’ in low-income areas has recently received attention in literacy research (see meta-analyses by Kim and Quinn, 2013). Furthermore, when the normal classroom literacy programme resumed after the eight-week programme, detailed information on what was ‘normal’ was not obtained but would undoubtedly vary between the participant schools. Data on reported changes of attitudes to, and engagement in, reading six months after AVAILLL had concluded was also not obtained.

Discussion

Research into the use of media and their impact on the engagement and achievement of students, including those from culturally diverse backgrounds is attracting increasing attention in literacy education. Not only were the results from this study statistically significant but they were sustained and improved on several months after the programme

had finished. Similar to the data from pilot studies in both New Zealand (Parkhill & Johnson, 2009) and the United States (Killackey, unpublished study), ethnic minorities made the greatest gains. Interestingly, these results compared favourably with the Hawaiian SLS single study reported earlier (McCall & Craig, 2009), with a similar sustainability effect size of 0.7 for comprehension found in both studies.

A similar trend emerged in this study that has appeared in our previous investigations (Davey & Parkhill, 2012; Parkhill et al., 2011). The largest impact occurred for those students scoring below or well below, national averages (in this case 63%) before the commencement of the programme. For some competent readers, their results remained constant or even declined slightly. One explanation could be that, within an hour per day of instructional reading for six to eight weeks, these readers would be exposed to longer and more complex texts, thereby increasing opportunities for extension of more sophisticated reading strategies and engagement in deeper analyses of texts than those featured in AVAILLL.

In another sense, the use of moving image media within schools could begin to acknowledge the ways children come to language and literacy via wider and more familiar cultural, community-wide experiences. It leverages students' media habits outside of a classroom context as consumers of popular television, movies, computers, videogames and social media and serves to bridge that important gap between school and home literacies. Making links between the home and school lives enables culturally diverse students to make connections and develop their understanding and meanings further.

However, just viewing popular films in classrooms is insufficient for growth in literacy achievement. As Van den Broek, Kendeou, and White (2009) argue, what is important is using various media strategically and encouraging engagement in particular processes and concepts that the student would not normally attend to. In the AVAILLL programme, it is not the subtitles themselves that produce comprehension and vocabulary gains (Parkhill et al., 2011) but the deliberate focus on developing reading mileage and response to words and meanings through the reading of subtitles, reinforced by carefully targeted and designed, high-interest, and largely group activities.

Studies on the achievement of diverse students (see, for example, Bishop, 2010 & Macfarlane, 2010) have indicated that high engagement has a strong link with learning and achievement for Māori and Pasifika alike. Making links between the home and school lives enables Māori and Pasifika students to make connections and develop their understanding and meanings further (McNaughton & Lai, 2009). When a teacher acknowledges the experiences and values that a student brings to literacy activities, then engagement is more likely to occur. AVAILLL attempts to achieve several of these goals: it brings the familiar medium of popular film into a classroom setting, it utilises collaborative approaches to literacy activities and it promotes enjoyment and engagement in a low-risk environment, an important mediating factor in successful learning (Alvermann, 2002; Pressley, 2006; Stanovich & Cunningham, 1993).

Along with engagement, both student and teacher voices also emphasised a growth in self-efficacy as a result of the AVAILLL programme. Pressley (2006) suggests that reading self-efficacy influences a student's commitment to reading and that motivation

is connected to academic achievement in reading comprehension. It may well be the case that the high engagement generated by the programme has had some spin-offs in terms of increasing interest, confidence and self-efficacy in reading.

Conclusion

While AVAILLL is far from a panacea or quick fix for students whose academic histories have been dogged by poor attendance, low motivation and under-achievement, we suggest that it could well become part of a much-needed “cultural toolkit” for teachers (Ford, 2012, p. 33) to raise achievement for those students from cultural and linguistic backgrounds which differ from the majority culture and those who may not have responded well to a conventional, print-based culture in our schools.

We also suggest that the introduction of different media into middle primary/middle-school classrooms could provide one possible avenue for the teaching and learning of reading skills that have traditionally been hard to learn for a significant proportion of the population, especially those from ethnic minorities (Van der Broek et al., 2009). In NZ settings at least, film as a genre is not taught in primary schooling. However, from the perspective of English language learners, King (2002) contends that the intrinsically motivating nature of Hollywood films provides many pedagogical possibilities and can act as a vehicle for engaging students in literacy activities. While traditionally, in primary or elementary school settings, popular movies have been viewed as a medium for entertainment, we argue that they have the potential to provide a rich resource for developing vocabulary and meaning making in literacy class programmes which recognise the role that multi-modal nature of texts, media and 21st century technologies play in young people’s lives (King, 2002).

Research that focuses specifically on the connection between achievement, motivation and engagement in reading, using a variety of multimedia texts and digital technologies warrants further exploration.

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A different kind of buzz: Reading culture in education

Kirsten Locke

Abstract

This paper is framed as a short provocation to notions of culture and the relation different meanings and readings of culture have to ideas about education. The paper explores different meanings of culture as seen through anthropological, sociological, and philosophical ‘lenses’, and arrives at a reading of culture through the work of Friedrich Nietzsche. Of primary interest in the paper is the way in which Nietzsche offers an expanded view of culture that reaches beyond common understandings of culture as the description and naming of identity. While acknowledging the necessity for students to explore their own position in the world in relation to others, the paper offers an alternative understanding of culture as *cultivation* in the form of vital and passionate engagements in education.

Keywords:

Culture, cultivation, Nietzsche, identity, education

Introduction

...your true nature lies, not concealed deep within you, but immeasurably high above you, or at least above that which you usually take yourself to be ... your educators can be only your liberators. (Nietzsche, 1873, para. 4)

That kind of luxe just ain't for us. We crave a different kind of buzz. And baby I'll rule, let me live my fantasy (Little & Yelich-O'Connor [Lorde], Track 3, 2013).

The above juxtaposition of the 19th century philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, and the New Zealand singer, Lorde, may not at first sight seem appropriate, or even wise. Nietzsche's idea of a ‘true’ nature and the role of ‘educators’ as somehow responsible for excavating this true self, and Lorde's heavily inflected *Gen-y* blend of narcissism, rebellion, and explicit articulation of desire, seem literally worlds apart. And they are. Perhaps links could be made to the lived contexts of each; Nietzsche as the sickly, isolated, nomadic philosopher (hurtling toward a decisive and catastrophic breakdown) and Lorde, the teenager-turned-pop star, heading further inward to the rarefied and holographic world of celebrity superstardom, while simultaneously projecting

outwards onto global multi-media platforms of contemporary pop culture. Perhaps links could be made to the role each plays in the promotion of the idea of ‘genius’, and individual pursuits of excellence in which the ironic undertones of Lorde’s homonymic title can be read alongside Nietzsche’s creation of the *Übermensch* (often referred to as ‘Superman’¹) as examples of intentionally, even wilfully, rising to the top of our cultural landscape.

However, the above quotations speak to a slightly different direction to where I want to go with this paper in terms of reading and analysing the role and purpose of culture in education, and the extent to which education in New Zealand contributes to wider notions of culture as emancipation, transformation, and to bring together Nietzsche and Lorde, *liberation* (“let me live my fantasy”, demands Lorde. “Your educators can be only your liberators,” implores Nietzsche). The key dimension to education that I want to focus on specifically in this paper is the extent to which the complex unfolding and engagements with the educational endeavour can be seen as liberating in the context of a *creative* enterprise. Where both the philosopher and the singer have further purchase in the context of this paper is a search for something ‘better’. For Lorde the “luxe” of late-capitalism can be interpreted as having lost its appeal and relevance, and instead, “a different kind of buzz”, a different avenue, needs to be found. Reaching “immeasurably high above” for Nietzsche signals a more complex move that talks to the role education plays in the sustenance of culture in which cultivation of self and society are promoted. To combine the thoughts and lyrics of the philosopher and the singer, the search is on for an enhanced articulation of culture that is both creative and aspirational. This is a direction in the paper that will focus primarily on Nietzsche’s examination of nature and culture as issues for current educational institutions in a reading that takes cognisance of Lorde’s eschewing of the luxuries of capitalism, and her ambivalence toward an already-defined cultural milieu. The paper seeks a reinterpretation and reinvigoration of the relevance of Nietzsche’s nineteenth-century critique that educational institutions are engaged in producing ‘currency’ (Fitzsimons, 2007) rather than culture, reinterpreted in today’s context as human capital, and that there is a need for a new type of institution that can focus on the development of culture in ways that escape appropriation by economic and political agendas.

While the term ‘culture’ is most often referred to in relation to creative human endeavours and the ideas and customs of groups of people, this paper briefly traverses articulations of culture through anthropology, sociology and philosophy that further complicate the notion of culture in ways that have a bearing on how we view this term in education. My use of Lorde in this introduction is to demonstrate a multi-faceted view of culture: I utilise her sentiment and creative impulse in ‘finding a new buzz’, whilst also being aware that the creative impetus to her image and musical packaging is somewhat anathema to the version of creativity as cultivation and freedom that the discussion on Nietzsche will reveal. The paper begins with a discussion of the different conceptualisations and meanings that are informed by notions of culture as the practices

1 It is not my intention to enter the debates as to the exact meaning as Nietzsche intended and, darker reinterpretations aside, a simple description of *Übermensch* is Nietzsche’s idealised human form, capable of overcoming challenges to achieve what can be neatly described as a form of cultural leadership.

and beliefs that form the self-identity of a group of people. This is followed by a brief exploration of how the word ‘culture’ appears in the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007). The second part of the paper traces a philosophical view of culture as a kind of cultivation, drawing on the work of Friedrich Nietzsche to elaborate a different purpose of education that encompasses a vibrant and vital engagement with knowledge. The intention of the paper is to explore the benefit in opening up space for the inclusion of a notion of ‘culture as cultivation’ as a genuinely empowering form of educational endeavour.

Culture as word and deed: Clay in our own hands

When exploring the meaning of culture an exact definition is difficult. In its simplest form, culture can refer to what we do and how we understand what we do, but it can also refer to a broad range of topics, processes, differences and paradoxes (Jenks, 2005) making it, according to Raymond Williams (1983) one of the most complicated words in the English language. In the eighteenth century, the word ‘culture’ went from being associated with agriculture (‘cultivation’) to become part of a much more complex cluster of ideas which included ‘art’, ‘civilisation’, ‘development’, ‘science’ and ‘community’ (Williams, 1983). The notion of cultivating, crafting, and changing the environment was extended metaphorically at this time to the process of crafting and improving the self through education to attain a ‘higher’, more cultivated and cultured human nature. Like the radically altered landscape and urban spread that grew out of industrial and imperial political and societal forces, the shift to a form of culture that considered these changes alongside their implications to the lived condition of human existence, broadened the conceptualisation of culture even further.

Adding to these wider notions of culture, Eagleton points out the paradoxical nature of culture as a word with meanings that “face both ways” (2000, p. 5) in that culture points to what is “around us and inside us ... a matter of self-overcoming as much as self-realisation” (pp. 5,6). This manifestation of culture looks at the links between what is natural and already determined, and the development and promise of ever more refined human ideals. “If it celebrates the self”, continues Eagleton, “it also disciplines it, aesthetic and ascetic together” (p. 5). This dynamic relationship between passivity and action, stasis and fluidity, brings us closer to the exciting potentiality of the ‘new’ that Lorde may consider to be worthy of her ‘buzz’. However, Eagleton’s analysis of culture extends this dynamism further by exploring the agentic possibilities embedded in the term. He continues:

*“We resemble nature in that we, like it, are to be cuffed into shape, but we differ from it in that we can do this to ourselves, thus introducing into the world a degree of self-reflexivity to which the rest of nature cannot aspire. As self-cultivators, we are clay in our own hands, at once redeemer and unregenerate, priest and sinner in the same body”.
(2000, p. 6)*

This malleability and dynamic version of culture is in contrast to familiar conceptions of ‘culture as identity’ that have become a dominant articulation of culture in modern

contexts, and which can be analysed in the context of post-war American cultural anthropology. The original definition of culture within anthropology is generally agreed to be that provided by Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917). “Culture or Civilisation, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Tylor, 1889, p. 1). This definition entwines culture with the idea of ‘civilisation’ and as such invokes a state of intellectual and moral development in society. ‘Evolutionism’ as this approach came to be known, was underpinned by a view that all human history is unified and traces a grand human tradition following a sequential manifestation of progress from savagery to civilisation (Jenks, 2005). A paradigm shift occurred when powerful new ideas about history emerged, disentangling it from notions of ‘natural progress’ and linking it instead with material interests that were essentially human. As described by Jenks (2005), “Culture, then, came to be seen not as a sequential manifestation of an inevitably unfolding saga, extending from savagery to the heights of civilization, but rather as what people collectively ‘do’ in their different ways, in different places and at different times” (p. 34).

The understanding of culture as historically particular led to a swing to ‘relativism’ in the 1920s (Kuper, 1999). Relativism refers to a belief in the particularity and situation-specific meaning of all aspects of culture and social action, necessitating a rejection of the idea that there could be universal standards by which cultural principles and practices could be judged. Following the period of relativism, a new understanding of culture began to emerge out of the field of post-war American cultural anthropology. Culture shifted from something to be described, interpreted and perhaps explained, to being a source of the explanation itself (Kuper, 1999). Here, culture as defined by Tyler’s ‘complex whole’, is multiplied into many different ‘complex wholes’ that acknowledge plurality, yet do not necessarily provide the space for contestation between the borders and boundaries of each cultural entity.

When the word ‘culture’ appears in the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) it often implies the more static culture-as-identity dimension defined as practices and beliefs of a particular group” This is apparent in statements such as ‘the curriculum reflects New Zealand’s cultural diversity and values the histories and traditions of all its people’ (p. 9), and “students will be encouraged to value... diversity, as found in our different cultures, languages and heritages” (p. 10). Deaf culture, Māori culture, Pacific culture, musical cultures, the multicultural character of New Zealand, visual arts cultures, and cultural knowledge in the ‘Learning Languages’ section, refer explicitly to the culture of particular groups of people, but there is very little to suggest a version of culture that extends beyond identity or the explanation of identities. This idea is supported by the statement of intent in the curriculum “that students’ identities ... are recognized and affirmed ...” (p. 9) and that students are “positive in their own identity” (p. 8). These phrases are good examples of the way the curriculum document often conflates ‘culture’ with identity. While it is worth acknowledging the conflicting and difficult milieus from which curriculum statements emerge, the point being made in this paper is that culture is, more often than not, defined in ways that seem bounded and static. A problem with this static articulation of culture is the negative

political consequences of freezing, defining, and anchoring cultural groupings, beliefs and practices as ‘named concepts’ in such a way where movement, change and transformation become stultified. According to Lines (2003):

To appropriate the idea of culture-as-identity is to de-emphasise change or movement in culture, to predetermine it and objectify it as a static entity with a given configuration. While culture-as-identity promotes certain central interests, figures and political forces, it also obscures and erases dynamic, border identities from view. (p. 169)

The next section explores this notion of culture in more detail, as a dynamic reciprocity between the self and the world, the given and the changeable, in the development of the notion of culture as cultivation.

Culture as cultivation

The discussion at this point explores an alternative to the understanding of culture that is arguably passed over in the spirit of an egalitarian, mass education in the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007). This ‘other’ version of culture that the paper would like to include is Wilhelm von Humboldt’s model of culture as cultivation as a development of the above discussion of culture. Humboldt viewed culture not as untended growth but as *cultivation*. This ‘growth’ is very much tied to learning about oneself and about the world one inhabits, leading one beyond the world of your immediate experience (Scruton, 2005). When the word ‘culture’ appears in the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007), the idea of culture as cultivation seems to be absent. The purpose of this section of the paper is to explore the importance of culture as a cultivation that provides a window to worlds both known and unknown, travelled and yet to be discovered. Culture as cultivation requires of the self to leave the self, to leave what one holds so dearly and knows so well. Recalling Lorde’s sentiments, culture as cultivation is to search, to ‘crave’, and requires you to be both a foreigner and foreign to your *self*. This understanding of culture still provides the opportunity for participatory forms of engagement that uphold traditional democratic ideals, while also serving to revitalise the educational space. The intention here is not to replace one version of culture, culture-as-identity, with culture as cultivation. Rather, this paper is interested in ways to complement the existing use of culture in ways that broaden the meaning beyond its current use.

Schooling in New Zealand has a strong tradition of serving the democratic ends of the nation-state. Peter Fraser’s famous dictum in 1939 that every child is entitled to an education regardless of class, location and ability was perhaps the defining moment that placed education at the centre of this democratic project (Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives [AJHR], 1930, E-1). Education from the 1940s took on the progressive principles of John Dewey with gusto, and New Zealand state education, to most outward appearances, continued along this democratic path well into the 1980s. The educational reforms of the 1980s headed by the Fourth Labour Government reconfigured the purpose of education along economic lines, while still maintaining the importance of education as serving democratic ends. However, the realignment of

educational aims in the 1980s was also accompanied by a new emphasis on culture-as-identity in ways that overshadowed notions of culture as expressed through the creative arts as manifestations of human intellectual and creative achievement.

With an easy fit to the outward appearance of New Zealand's 'classless' and egalitarian identity, the growth of identity politics was easily harnessed into discourses around deepening the democratic project of the education system. Curriculum mirrored the growing interest in local identity and culture, with a renewed emphasis on the importance of making enough knowledge from the disciplines accessible and within the achievable grasp of all students. The historical link of education to universal participation resulted in a breaking down of disciplinary boundaries to include more modern and contemporary material for study within these subject disciplines (McPhail, 2011). Anything considered too 'elitist' or exclusionary was heavily worked over in the spirit of egalitarian mass education, with the aim of achievable outcomes for all. Education began to play an important part in affirming student identity as primarily a *cultural* identity. Subsequently certain conceptions of culture identified with elitist individualism were rejected in favour of the celebration of the local experience of the learner.

The idea of culture as cultivation is a broad term, and it is the purpose of this section of the paper to explore what this version of culture could mean. The philosopher who looked at the role of culture and the role education plays in disseminating and renewing culture was Nietzsche (1844-1900), who spent his productive life as an academic and writer in Western Europe. Culture involves the experience of foreignness with the self in order to disclose potentiality. This potentiality is "not concealed deep within you", but according to Nietzsche, "immeasurably high above you, or at least above that which you usually take yourself to be" (Nietzsche, 1873, para. 4). Nietzsche's understandings of culture and the role education plays in contributing to growth and potentiality, provide useful insights when considering the purpose of education in New Zealand.

Nietzsche's ideas about culture were intricately tied to his theory of knowledge and encompassed what he described as a "reversed Platonism" (Nietzsche, 1988, p. 119) in which the appearance and immediate vibrancy of the world is more important than any theoretical explanation of the world. The sensorial and affective potential of humans to touch, feel and experience the world around them is of primary importance to Nietzsche. This disposition towards affectivity is necessary to engage with what it means to be human, and for Nietzsche an important role of education is to cultivate this open disposition. The project of modernity was to rationalise all experience in the shift from faith to science as a means of making sense of the world. While Nietzsche did not advocate for a return to religious faith, he did want a reinvigoration of a dynamic reciprocity to the human experience that is generated by intense engagement with the sensing world. This engagement, for Nietzsche, generates a joyful exuberance that serves as the precursor to intellectual growth. According to Fitzsimons, "the joyful and creative existence requires more than scholarly grinding and scientific certainty" (2007, p. 70). This energetic engagement is the essence of a healthy and vibrant life, and can be learnt in the educational space.

Not only does this affective disposition lead to a deeper understanding of the human

experience, Nietzsche suggests this open disposition enables students to better critique the conditions of their lived existence. Critique, as Nietzsche would have it, is nuanced and requires care as one learns to 'see'. Learning to see requires "[a]ccustoming the eye to calmness, to patience, to letting things come up to it" (Nietzsche, 2010/1888, p. 161). This is a subjective reticence that Nietzsche advocates as necessary in order for the world to reveal itself to you. It is a gentler version of critique that Nietzsche advocates, one in which the subjective will does not bend the world to fit its purposes. This reversed notion of critique parallels the reversed Platonism of affect, allowing the experience of the sensorial engagement with the world primacy over any attempts to mediate that experience through subjective will. This requires the disciplined suspension of immediate reaction to not simply "react to a stimulus, but to have the inhibiting excluding instincts ready at hand" (Nietzsche, 2010, p. 162) {Nietzsche, 2010 #432}. Criticality, for Nietzsche, is a knowing of when to judge and when to act. In education the practical application of having learnt to 'see', is that the learner "will have become rather slow, mistrustful, resistant. One will let strange, new things of every kind approach with hostile calm, keeping one's hand back" (p. 162).

Nietzsche's other contribution is his insistence that education must not be hijacked for purposes other than the development of cultivation and discipline. For Nietzsche, the educational endeavour is at risk whenever its aims are captured by outside interests (Nietzsche, 1873, 1909). Nietzsche refers to the encroachment of business interests into the education system, and critiques the influence of the state in demanding that education serves the economic imperative to provide workers for the economy. While I acknowledge the inevitability of state and business interests in contemporary education settings, Nietzsche's advice to strive to keep these influences to a minimum is worth heeding. Instead, the role of education for Nietzsche is to provide everyone with the powers to emancipate themselves through strengthening the vibrant links between knowledge and life (Nietzsche, 1909).

How are the vibrant links between knowledge and life created? Nietzsche's ideas about culture as a sense of cultivation demands of the educational space the imperative for rich and energetic engagements with knowledge that 'push the self to growth' (Arendt, 1961). In order for knowledge to be considered either vibrant or vital, it must in some important way shift the subjective disposition of the learner. This shift occurs through sensorial affectivity, but Nietzsche is interested in the transformative function of education to mediate this shift towards ever-more generative forms of knowledge engagement. Emancipation lies in the way this transformation and shifting of disposition enables students to reach beyond the conditions of their immediate existence, be they class, gender or ethnicity, towards a deeper understanding of what it means to be human. The violence of this transformation is in part where the freedom lies, but this is mediated through the powerful forms of knowledge that ensure this shift occurs in the realms of concepts rather than through lived experience. Engagement with the unknown is what culture provides in the way it cultivates the self towards new ways of being and knowing. The power of the unknown is in the potentiality of where this shift in disposition takes you. According to Nietzsche, this type of movement is a cultivation that leads the subject to newer forms of the self. Education, in Nietzsche's

view, should offer “opportunity to break free from conventionality, to be responsible for creating our own existence, and to overcome the inertia of tradition and custom” (Fitzsimons, 2007, p. 13). This is where the emancipatory power of education lies.

Certain kinds of knowledge generate a healthy, creative approach to life and promote the active productive forces that Nietzsche identified as giving meaning and richness to the lived experience. Education is the space where this engagement must take place, and cultivation as learned growth and potentiality, is the aim. This contrasts with the paler expression of culture as the practices and beliefs that form the self-identify of a group of people. The intention is not to advocate the ignoring of this understanding of culture or its importance; instead, attention must be drawn to the exuberance and vitality that Nietzsche argues is an essential dimension to the educational endeavour. If education is about vitality, exuberance, and potentiality, then it stands to reason that most people would be open to the inclusion of this dimension to culture that Nietzsche espouses. However, in order to offer Nietzsche’s form of education, the educational space must remain pristine, that is, free from outside agendas that capture education for other purposes. It is at this point that I suggest that the co-opting of culture by identity is being used to serve aims other than the purely educational, and in Nietzsche’s analysis, this threatens the essence of education in its capacity to transform and emancipate.

Concluding comments: A different kind of buzz

This paper has outlined different understandings of culture from the perspectives of culture as identity and culture as cultivation. To return to the opening passage of the paper, the juxtaposition of Lorde and Nietzsche as proclaiming a search for something ‘new’ (Lorde) and something aspirant and to be reached for (Nietzsche), also highlights a central contradiction to any notion of culture in contemporary educational contexts. While Nietzsche could rebel and dare to suggest a different kind of cultivation, Lorde rebels against the already-established ‘luxe’ of her cultural milieu but is herself cocooned as a corporate consumer product; one is ignored for most of his life, the other marketed globally. However, there are sentiments from both that speak to the expanded notion of culture that I am signalling in this paper, and in a way, the contradictions and multiple ‘faces’ of culture constitute part of the messy dynamic that ascribe elements that move beyond simply naming and identifying characteristics of a group or identity. In this reading of culture, it is Nietzsche who provides the impetus and direction for where this takes us in the educational space where affectivity and creativity are considered alongside a dynamic and vibrant engagement with the possibilities and potentialities provided by this space.

While acknowledging the necessity for students to explore their own position in the world in relation to others, the paper has offered an alternative understanding of culture as cultivation in the form of vital and passionate engagements in education. The aim is to offer avenues for the cultivation of this identity in ways that enable personal growth and understanding of the complexities of the surrounding world. Through exploring Nietzsche’s ideas about what I refer to as a ‘pristine’ education space in which education is kept clear of hidden agendas, the paper identifies the way in which these aims have been put to use in the service of economic viability and

productiveness. This paper suggests this understanding of culture is too narrow because it limits potentiality. If potentiality is limited, the emancipatory potential of education is also limited by diverting the focus from truly transformative practices to simply the practices and beliefs of a particular group. This diminishes the possibilities for deep engagement with the unknown. The paper suggests layering current notions of culture/identity with culture as cultivation in education discourse. Finally, the purpose of this paper has been to broaden and expand conceptions of culture to provide space for students within education to engage with passion, will, and determination in order to cultivate their powers to transform themselves and the world around them. Recalling Lorde's demand at the opening of this paper, it is the responsibility of education to provide the space to crave the new, whilst also nurturing the disposition to want to crave and desire the right and political agentic power to transform. It is only then that true emancipation, 'a different kind of buzz', in education may be found.

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Trick or Treat: The educational value of the trickster tale

John MacKenzie

Abstract

This paper explores the potential educational value of two trickster folktales namely the Māori folktale *Hatupatu and the Bird Woman* and the Indonesian folktale, *Si Kecil, Tiny Boy*. Trickery and deceit of various sorts are employed by the protagonists of these tales in order to overcome an ogre/ogress. The use of a structural analysis template invites educators to identify a range of dualisms (as determined by the nature of the narrative conflict) and, for each dualism, explores issues that relate to that which is particular to the text and that which is universal for all readers. Additionally, the template enables identified issues to be critiqued and enables learners to construct positive social action. Central to a curriculum is the necessity to both recognize the hope and resilience that can be learnt through the trickster tale and critique the real-world ethics of the trickster tale itself.

Keywords: trickster, carnivalesque, structural analysis, education, ethics

Introduction

Recently, the author submitted a review for a collection of folktales by M. Joslin (2013) entitled *The Lion Classic Wisdom Stories* for the Australian Children's Book Council's journal *Reading Time*. Here is part of the review:

Mostly a collection of folktales, fables and literary fairytales, this is a ... volume that contains a range of stories from across the world that collectively speaks of what it is to be wise. Central to many of the stories ... is the role of the trickster. [In the first story] Kwaku Anansi, the spider, who self-identifies as a trickster, desires to collect all of the world's wisdom and keep it to himself but the pot is too large and too obvious and Anansi fears it may be stolen. He tries many ways to climb a tree holding the large pot and hide it there, but there are limits to what a spider can do. It is his son Ntikuma who solves the problem; but however, father slips, and the pot is broken. Thunder, lightning and pouring rain occur, and, with the consequential flood, wisdom is scattered across the world. This is a good story to start the journey of discovering what the nature of wisdom actually is. There is a difference between wisdom and egocentricity; the powerless and the powerful. Often it is the foolish and the poor who are wise rather than the seemingly clever and the powerful. It is the son (the youngest, smallest and less powerful) who was wise, though father is nominally the clever trickster. (p.24)¹

What is fascinating is how central the trickster tale is to this idea of wisdom. Trickster tales are found throughout the collection. Is the trickster tale truly a source of wisdom? Is it ethically acceptable to extol the virtues of trickery? Are these stories just entertainment or do they really matter and potentially impact on children's emerging sense of ethical behaviour? What then is the educational value of these tales?

Trickery, broadly defined, is a real social issue. For example, in a Colmar-Brunton poll of over four hundred 18-30 year olds in New Zealand², it was found that 87% of these young people were satisfied with their personal ethics and character. This is despite many having indicated that they had cheated, lied and stolen. For example, 71% had 'confessed' to cheating in games, 52% had cheated at school (homework/exams), and 25% had cheated 4-5 times in the previous year. In terms of lying, 60% had lied to their friends, and 28% of 25-30-year-olds had lied to their partners with 48% arguing that it was justified to protect their feelings/interests. The poll noted that there is a high acceptability of lying with self-interest being a dominant rationale, even though 72% felt guilty. In terms of stealing, 48% had stolen from a shop, and 42% had stolen from their parents (with 66% of males between 18 and 21 believing that it was not stealing if they were given too much change). It was noted that the younger group (18-21-year-olds) had a more casual attitude to what is to be considered stealing than the older group.

Indeed, the poll concluded that 92% of participants have cheated in one form or another and that "this high (and expected) percentage was well summed up by one of the participant's answers to why they thought cheating was common [the argument being that] "every person is constantly pressured by the media and the society to bend the rules. The image of a person who is successful due to not playing by the book is extremely popular, so everyone gives in to it at some point". The poll finally concluded that the vast majority of people cheat, steal and lie despite being satisfied with their ethics and character and indeed believing themselves to be better than others in discerning right from wrong. Crittenden, Hanna, & Peterson (2009) assert that cheating is a global societal phenomenon evident in business students.

From a Social Darwinian perspective, deceit can be argued to be as natural as camouflage. We hide behind it as carnivores-in-waiting and employ deceit to avoid being the victims of other carnivores. If the trickster tale then is about this evolutionary reality, is it reasonable to argue that trickery is a valid strategy against the powerful who would consume the individual? Alternatively, most religious/moral/legal systems tend to abhor deceit or trickery (namely, cheating, lying, and thievery) especially for egocentric purposes, be it in relationships (as, for example, in strictures against adultery), property (for example, in stealing), official matters (for example border security) or business practices (for example in deliberate false representation in marketing of goods or financial ponzi schemes). The question needs to be asked: are we using texts in the classroom that encourage or interrogate such practices?

One of the most ubiquitous tale types found across time and cultures is the trickster story. Whether it is a traditional story like *Anansi the Spider* told around the fire, or a contemporary story like *Home Alone* on a cinema screen, the trickster tale seems to intrigue us all. Yet, if we extol the trickster folktale as a source of wisdom, are we

potentially misleading our young people by indicating that deceit is okay when faced with life's hurdles? This is a tough question.

This paper proposes that the educational value of these tales is not so much in the content of the tales which are problematic from an ethical perspective. From a positive perspective, they arguably act as a form of emotional release, through carnivalesque humour, for those children who are vulnerable and feel a lack of agency in their lives and, in identifying with the trickster as a 'hero', the powerless child is given the opportunity of building mental resilience in the face of personal difficulties and therefore the tales enact wish-fulfilment fantasies. However, it is also proposed that these tales offer the possibility of deeper critical thinking about ethical systems, moral values and consequential behaviours when faced with difficult choices. This paper will demonstrate the possibilities of a meaningful critical literacy curriculum where the potential negative aspects of the trickster tale can be scaffolded and productive change made possible.

What is nature of the trickster tale?

Defining what constitutes and defines a trickster story is, as to be expected perhaps, tricky. Different cultures have different histories that contextualise the development of their stories so that a universal definition is highly problematic and is perhaps, an act of colonisation (Aguilar, 2000). Furthermore, given that folktales are not fixed, and given that ideologies of childhood have changed over time, what is a trickster figure in a children's story today may not be the same as in the past, in that overt descriptions of sexuality, the lewd and the profane that perhaps defines an element of the trickster in past folktales would not perhaps be seen as essential in defining the trickster in children's literature today (McKenzie, 2014). Indeed, the notion that a trickster is a *cultural* hero (Carroll, 1984), because 'he' brings benefit to humanity through his behaviour (as for example in the story of Maui and the gift of fire), orientates the trickster story to 'high culture' of the adult and the mythic rather than the 'low culture' of the folk, the child and the mass media. Is it sufficient for the trickster to be defined as a *clever* hero (Klapp, 1954) though 'he' is a character who routinely employs lying, deceit and stealing for self-preservation? Does the term 'hero' imply an ethical quality whereby good behaviour (processes) as much as good outcomes (products) are prerequisite?

Bahktin's idea of the carnivalesque (see McKenzie, 2004)³ is perhaps a more useful paradigm to explore in defining the nature of the trickster tale, not only concerning the trickster's character but also the nature of the reception to the tale. It is arguable, given the oral sources of the folktale as genre, that the definition of the trickster as type lies not only in the nature of the tale itself but also in its reception. The carnivalesque refers to those literary *experiences* that resonate with carnival as a socio-cultural event. As Bahktin (1941) puts it:

Lower- and middle-class clerics, schoolmen, students, and members of corporations were the main participants in these folk merriments. People [who] belonged to none of these social groups and which were numerous at that time also participated in the celebrations. But the medieval culture of folk humour actually belonged to all the people. The truth of laughter embraced and carried away everyone; nobody could resist it. (p. 82)

In the carnival event, normal social order (social class hierarchies, gender relations, power relations and social values) are disrupted, inverted and parodied in an orgiastic time of liberating freedom. For Bakhtin, carnival laughter is first of all, a festive laughter. Therefore it is not an individual reaction to some isolated comic event. Carnival laughter is the laughter of *all* people against the notion of absolute power, wherever located. To a degree, it is a form of venting anger against being subject to others. This is the essence of the trickster tale: the high are made lowly and the fool seen to be wise (or given the incongruity of life itself where the unpredictable happens, even the fool is seen to be more foolish inviting further laughter).

However, when the carnival is over (the cover of the book shut and the teacher hush-hushing the class), order is restored and, after a collective sigh of relief, normal social relations and discourses resume. And so, given its institutionalised nature, the community is given, for the time of the carnival, permission to explore those paradoxes that construct human experience. For the time of the carnival, joyful relativity reigned supreme (Toohey, Waterstone, & Bonnie, 2000). In this sense, the laughter of the carnival was an emancipatory laughter where dominant discourses of the powerful were brought ‘down to earth’, revelling in the pleasure of dirt, mud and the body!

Thus, in the telling of trickster tales in the classroom, there are two elements to note. Firstly in the nature of the narrative, there is a play of oppositions where the trickster crosses socio-cultural boundaries to create new possibilities. Secondly, this playfulness with borders creates in the audience a laughter that is not only focused on the foolishness of authority and the normative but also invites a degree of empowerment (“I don’t have to be always subject to the powerful but I too can overcome the bully through trickery, even if it is only in my imagination for the period of the carnival/story”). What are these oppositions that are explored in the trickster tale?

This paper proposes that the following are particularly pertinent to the trickster tale, depending on the cultural context and the particular tale: the creative *versus/within* the destructive; the powerful *versus/within* the powerless; the sacred *versus/within* the profane; order or stasis *versus/within* chaos; the female *versus/within* the male; the community *versus/within* the outsider; the human *versus/within* the animal, and the clever *versus/within* the foolish. Note the use of *versus/within* in the above descriptions of oppositions. The *within* of these oppositions is the heart of the trickster whereby the oppositions are seen as malleable and a marginal space of playfulness for the trickster (Babcock-Abrahams, 1975).

Two picture books that highlight the play with these specific oppositions will now be examined in detail, namely the Māori folktale *Hatupatu and the Bird Woman* from Oceania and the Indonesian folktale *Si Kecil, Tiny Boy* from SE Asia. Both seem to fit within the Aarne/Thomson Tale Type 327 The Children and the Ogre (Aarne, 1961/Thomson, 1977).⁴ One well known example of tale type is the story of *Hansel and Gretel*. It needs to be noted that this tale has often been associated with the trickster tale both as a type and motif (Blume, 2007 p. 142; Ziegler 1973). *The Children and the Ogre* has the following key plot structures based around causes for, and consequences of, action:

- Children (number and gender vary) leave home because of family difficulties (incest, hunger)
- They arrive at an ogre's dwelling (gender varies) who has cannibalistic intent
- One member (often the youngest/weakest) overcomes the ogre through trickery
- The ogre (or members of the ogre's family) is destroyed
- The children escape and find peace/treasure and return home.

Two focus texts of the Tale Type 327 from Indonesia and New Zealand

Firstly, it needs to be noted that folktales that are adapted for children often have significantly different details compared to their original oral/written source. Retellings of *Hatupatu and the Bird Woman* are many, and though the tale originally comes from the Te Arawa iwi, the common written source of the text would be A. W. Reed's *Raupo Book of Maori Mythology*. In contrast to all the versions adapted for children, this written source clearly indicates two key episodes. The first is well known: the story of the Hatupatu's capture and escape from the Bird Woman. The second episode follows on from this event whereby Hatupatu is again confronted by sibling rivalry when the brothers are challenged by the father to seek revenge for a long-standing family grievance and Hatupatu further shows his trickster capacity. Hatupatu in this episode reveals his true mana or status and sense of presence. This second episode is generally absent in picture-book versions of the tale.

The version that is detailed here is R. Bacon's (1979) version. This version is close to Reed's (revised) version (minus episode two) and the illustrations are presented in a style that enhances the tension between myth and the real. The watercolour naturalist style (as opposed to the more common cartoon style of other versions) gives more historical truth to the story: it grounds the story in realism. Indeed, given that monstrous birds actually existed in the early New Zealand eco-system and were part of Māori experience (the giant herbivore Mōa that could reach four metres high and the carnivore Haast Eagle that had a three metre wingspan; both being the largest birds ever), the distinction between myth and reality is highly problematic. In some Māori legends, Pouakai or eagle kills humans, which scientists believe could have been possible, given the massive size and strength of the bird (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haast's_Eagle).

In contrast to the many textual variations in the representation of *Hatupatu and the Birdwoman*, M. Bunanta (2001) *Si Kecil, Tiny Boy* reflects more stability in the recording and translation of the story (Bunanta; pers communication, March 2013). Clearly, there is educational value in comparing and contrasting re-visions of a particular folktale (especially by senior students) in order to determine which version is more authentic and also allows a more complex negotiation of what the story might mean. The following chart gives a brief outline of the similarities and differences between these tales. Variations from the source text (Calman, 2004) in the story of Hatupatu are noted in brackets and italics.

Table 1: Comparing Type 327 tales

Arne Thompson (A/T) Tale Type 327 Children and the Ogre			
	German/European	Maori (Pasifika)	South Sulawesi/Indonesian
Title Sequence	Lesser & Zelinski (1984) Hansel and Gretel	Bacon & Woods (1979) Hatupatu and the Birdwoman	Bunanta & Hardiyono (2001) Si Kecil, Tiny Boy
Stasis	Poor woodcutter family and two children (older brother/younger sister).	Family and four brothers.	Poor farmer family with seven children.
Crisis	Famine causes loss of food. Wife persuades husband to abandon children in forest. The parents attempt to deceive children as to their intent but the children overhear them and plan accordingly.	Lack of food through unsustainable practices. Brothers told by father to go to a distant forest and catch birds and store for future. They do so.	A flood destroys their food source resulting in abject poverty. Father intends to abandon the older four boys; wife sadly agrees. His intention is enacted.
Consequences	The children are resourceful (using pebbles and then bread to illuminate path home) but are defeated by birds. A bird leads them deeper into the forest. They arrive at an old woman's home and are deceived by outward appearances (the cottage and the welcome) to enter. They are captured and Hansel is caged by the witch/cannibal for fattening. Hansel deceives the ogress (bone) and prolongs the seeming inevitable and Gretel finally uses her wits to trick the witch into climbing into the oven and she is caught (and burnt).	Younger boy Hatupatu is mistreated by older brothers and left hungry. He attempts a trick that backfires: he consumes the stored food yet asserts that enemies have done it having wounded himself. Brothers see through the deceit, beat him up and Hatupatu runs away. Wanders alone. <i>(He is killed by the brothers. The brothers return home and the parents immediately suspect the brothers and send forth a magic blowfly to rescue Hatupatu. He wanders home alone).</i> He is captured by a giant bird ogress who desires to fatten him and eat him. He is placed in a cave with many treasures (birds/cloaks etc). He is hungry and kills the birds. One bird escapes and warns the Ogress who returns and chases Hatupatu who flees. Almost captured but is saved by a powerful karakia/chant. A rock opens and shelters him. Eventually the ogress is self-deceived about the environment and is killed by falling into a hot mud pool.	The oldest brother Si Kecil though smallest (who was also brave and smart) shows leadership. Whilst brothers rest, Si Kecil spies a distant light that is a hut and how to get there. They go and discover it is a giant ogre's hut who has cannibalistic qualities. They retreat and hide. Si Kecil devises a trick and organises his brothers to collect resources and gives further instructions. The giant ogre arrives and a verbal exchange begins. The trick has three parts. The giant is persuaded that he vulnerable and the giant flees.
Transformation	They find treasure in the witch's house and set off for home.	Hatupatu returns home and tells parents his story (not the trick) and seeks revenge/utu. He is given a valued weapon (taiaha) and hides. Brothers return and tell their story (but not the beating they inflicted). Hatupatu re-appears and enacts revenge. Brothers run away.	There is treasure to be found in the cave and all eventually return home victorious.

Stasis	Father delighted to receive them and mother meanwhile had died. Lived happily ever after.	Hatupatu reunites with parents and is recognised as powerful. Brothers now absent.	Parents delighted with their return and with the wealth brought home, they lived happily.
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The educational value of these trickster tales

There are a range of opportunities to develop a critical literacy curriculum based on these tales. Such a curriculum is about scaffolding readers to see how they are being positioned to take up different ideological positions as they read/watch a text and to critically examine such positioning. I propose to look at three possibilities: firstly, one can examine the moral dilemmas evoked by the trickster tale; secondly, one can explore the monstrous in our imaginative lives and the problem of subject positioning; and finally, one can deconstruct the art of ‘persuasion’.

Firstly, note that, in each of these stories, it is the lack/need and desire for food that begins the story. What we are talking about here is not a desire for great wealth, kingship or romance (power in all its guises) that motivates action but a basic necessity to survive. This is the reality for many families, then and now. There are no insurance policies, charitable organisations or social welfare agencies here, only the ugly face of hunger.

In *Hatupatu and the Birdwoman*, the parents, though they were arguably aware that the siblings were jealous of the youngest (given the parent’s immediate assumption of the brother’s guilt when they return without Hatupatu as found in Calman’s revised version), they nevertheless send them forth into the wilderness without any apparent strictures or warnings. Faced with the ‘monstrous’ behaviour of both his brothers and the ogress, Hatupatu, like many small animals in a carnivorous world, uses trickery (literally camouflaging his theft by deceiving his brothers and creating a diversion by deceiving the ogress). Trickery by deceit is also found in *Si Kecil* where it is the father (compared with the step-mother in *Hansel and Gretel*) who, when faced with abject poverty and possible death, decides to abandon four sons and deliberately conceals or camouflages his actions when he leaves them (pretending to be concerned for their welfare by getting them water).

The issue of parental abuse of trust and the lack of an ethic of reciprocity and togetherness when faced with disaster is evident in both stories. The common drive in each of these tales is the individualistic ‘survival of the fittest’ ethic. Is natural law then, the basis for morality in these tales? Are we, in the end, just animals? What other responses could the parents/brothers have enacted that could have maintained a sense of secure attachment and trust in the children? In the classroom, students could invent other possible actions and develop a rating scale (good versus bad actions).

The first possibility for an in-depth curriculum could therefore be a critical examination of the basis of ethics. What is the right thing to do when faced with (natural) disaster and how do we know that we know what is the right thing to do? Is rightness determined by egocentric or community needs? One can, for example, modernise the story so that the moral dilemma matches children’s reality. For example, a current social issue in New Zealand is the abandonment of children in casinos whilst the parents gamble. Get children to imagine this scenario:

Parents are facing major financial problems and stand to lose their homes. They don't leave their children at home and they take them to the casino. They leave the children to wander around alone (and this includes the children choosing to wander the busy city streets at night). They spend what little they have left and hope to win the big prize. They do. Their problems are seemingly solved. How would students assess parenting skills during (before the outcome of consequence of this gambling is known) and at the end of this story (when seemingly all is well)? What are their expectations of parenting in the face of overwhelming hunger and the lack of food?

What could be introduced to older students at this stage is the difference between consequentialist and non-consequentialist ethical systems. Is good intention sufficient? If a good consequence is being sought (but may not necessarily occur) then is this sufficient for acting in a particular way (consequentialism)? Or, are there behaviours that are wrong in principle whether a good outcome occurs or not (non-consequentialism)? Do folktales in general and trickster tales in particular orientate to either one of these positions? Do endings that have treasure at the end for the parents/family where they all live happily ever after (suggesting a good consequence) mask the inherent evil that is enacted in the tales and the lack of accountability (non-consequentialism)?

This is a curriculum that will invite endless debate!

Secondly, in both *Hatupatu and the Birdwoman* and *Si Kecil*, the enemy is the giant ogre, both female and male. Typically, the seemingly powerless trickster has to face the physically more powerful villain. However, rather than accepting at face value the monstrosity of the giant, a critical literacy curriculum invites us to dig deeper and to critique how we are positioned to read the world in the word. The giant is as natural as you and me. What if we were to assume a more empathetic stance towards the giant? There is a wonderful possibility of integrating a literature and science study here as gigantism is a reality in nature and a brief excursion into natural gigantism is bound to fascinate.

What the giant evokes in the imaginative realm however, is the idea of the monstrous, the outsider, that strange freak who is found on the periphery of society. This is evident in the text entitled *The Giant Book of Giants* by Quarto Books (2012). On the cover the giant is clearly positioned as an outsider, a monster that is out to consume the reader. Yet there are real people who are giants. Gigantism is usually caused by a tumour on the pituitary gland of the brain. Indeed, it is fair to say that any variation of the normative body that is obvious (cerebral palsy, dwarfism or excessive obesity) invites the 'gaze'.

The second possibility for a critical literacy curriculum is to focus then on insider/outsider tension when it comes to positioning the other as villain through the gaze. The gaze, in the context of body variation (as opposed to sexual interest), reinforces difference (me versus the other, the other being the outsider). *The Giant Book of Giants* reinforces the idea of the gaze as a legitimate form of human behaviour that is designed to emphasize the grotesque and evoke the laughter of revulsion at otherness. This reader positioning is also presupposed in our two focus texts. We are invited to gaze at the images of the ogre(ss) as an outsider and consequently express relief and delight in its comeuppance. This is particularly the case with the cover art of *Si Kecil* where a grotesque and distorted body position is presented using a frontal close-up design.

Furthermore, we laugh at the paradox of the monstrous giant being frightened by bodily parts as it were: tortoises as lice!

Of course, there are monsters in the world and folktales often warn the small child about wandering from the narrow path and stranger danger (as in *Red Riding Hood*). There is therapeutic value in these tales as children are able to vent their anxieties about the monsters that inhabit their dreams and lives. But there is also the possibility for a critical literacy curriculum here that focuses on the relationship of literature, subject positioning towards the Other and our consequent behaviour. What is the impact of our gaze on the self-esteem of the Other who, in our gaze, is constructed as monstrous? Clearly there is a good critical literacy curriculum here in exploring how folktales position us to read difference, often in negative ways.

Thirdly, how do tricksters do their work? One of the techniques used in many tales is in the art of persuasion, the business of enticing another to their way of thinking, inducing them to do what the trickster needs or desires (that is not necessarily in the other person's interest). Persuasion can come in many forms: rhetoric (the art of using effective language), psychological manipulation (the art of playing with emotion), hypnosis (the art of altering states of consciousness with heightened receptivity to suggestion and direction), and plain deceit. Paul and Elder (2006) examined the art of mental trickery and manipulation and identified 44 'foul' ways to win an argument. Si Kecil uses six of them! The value in this third focus in a critical literacy curriculum is in the empowerment of students as they examine the different ways that people can be manipulated and reflect on their own weaknesses both as agents and as subjects.

Table 2: Si Kecil and the art of persuasion

<p>Appeal to experience: Si Kecil knows who the giant is and reflects on common knowledge</p> <p>Appeal to authority: Si Kecil assumes an authoritative voice and gives instructions</p> <p>Appeal to fear: Si Kecil focuses on the giant's worst fear: powerlessness</p> <p>Question your opponent's conclusions: Si Kecil plans increasingly persuasive baits so that the opponent doubts his previous conclusions</p> <p>Create a straw man: Si Kecil ignores the reality of the giant's power and creates a straw man (false image of power)</p> <p>Make your opponent look ridiculous: Si Kecil masquerades tortoises as lice</p>
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It is evident that there is educational value in sharing the trickster tales and using different critical perspectives to question hidden ideologies or world views that may or may not be useful in the social, cultural and ethical development of the students. One strategy to scaffold this learning is to use a structural analysis template as detailed below.

Scaffolding deeper layers of meaning through structural analysis

Earlier, we noted the significance of oppositions and the liminal space where the trickster has much fun. He can dress as a woman, overturn power and become king and though small and weak, be the most powerful. Let us use this idea of oppositions as a scaffold. A series of binaries or oppositions (and the space betwixt and between) are located in any given text based on the conflicts that are evident in the story. Then questions are designed using the following template as a scaffold. To scaffold is also to introduce these questions in a way that is partially age-appropriate and clearly in a language that communicates. However, this does not mean that children's capacities to think outside the square are negated (a persistent problem with developmentalism as a structuring principle in curriculum development). Quirky readers do not need to be put into a box called 'age appropriate' or 'my beliefs about what it is to be a child' but need the opportunity to engage actively in the world that surrounds them, both in their homes and neighbourhoods and both lived experientially as well as mediated through the media. The following dimensions are then explored specific to each opposition:

- P:** Questions that relate to how this *particular narrative* deals with the focus dualism (and the space betwixt and between) grounded on the conflict found in the story.
- U:** Questions that touch on *universal ideas* evoked by the focus dualism grounded on personal/shared experiences of socio-cultural, gender, economic and environmental issues.
- C:** Questions that provoke *critical thinking about the text* inclusive of circumstances of media production, hidden ideologies and/or theories about (human) nature that the text proposes or seemingly ignores, and possibilities of media effects.
- P:** Questions that inspire *productive action* to make a difference in the personal, local and global dimensions.

For the purposes of this article, we will focus mostly on those oppositions that are relevant to the trickster tale.

Table 3: A structural analysis template of Hatupatu and the Bird Woman**Focus text: *Hatupatu and the Birdwoman***

Dualism: crisis <i>versus/within</i> stasis	<p>P</p> <p>U</p> <p>C</p> <p>P</p>	<p>What caused the brothers to leave the safety of the nest?</p> <p>What happens to children's behaviour when an adult leaves children on their own?</p> <p>Does hardship bring out the best in people or the worst?</p> <p>Design a poster: 'When the going gets bad, the good get going.'</p>
Dualism: powerlessness <i>versus/within</i> power	<p>P</p> <p>U</p> <p>C</p> <p>P</p>	<p>What trick did Hatupatu play on his brothers when they were mean?</p> <p>Have you ever been picked on? How did you cope?</p> <p>What is better: brains or brawn?</p> <p>Make a chart of good and bad tricks you can play on friends. Can you decide what "good and bad" means in this context?</p>
Dualism: the sacred <i>versus/and</i> the profane	<p>P</p> <p>U</p> <p>C</p> <p>P</p>	<p>In what way did prayers/karakia help Hatupatu?</p> <p>Can you think of other folktales where prayers/priests/God(s) helped a character? What type of character usually gets help?</p> <p>Do you think people who use tricks (lie, cheat and steal) should get supernatural help?</p> <p>How important are sacred places in your community? Interview a person who is involved and find out what makes a good person and what makes a bad person.</p>
Dualism: the clever <i>versus/and</i> the foolish	<p>P</p> <p>U</p> <p>C</p> <p>P</p>	<p>Do you think Hatupatu was really clever or a little bit naive?</p> <p>Who was the most foolish person in this story?</p> <p>Is wisdom the same as being clever?</p> <p>Who is the cleverest person that you know (about)? What makes him/her clever? List the qualities of a clever person.</p>
Dualism: the outsider <i>versus/within</i> community	<p>P</p> <p>U</p> <p>C</p> <p>P</p>	<p>What made Hatupatu lonely?</p> <p>Would you want Hatupatu as a friend? Why? Why not?</p> <p>Who are the people who others see as weird or odd in our community? Is this 'outing' good or bad?</p> <p>Find out what community organisations try to help people to integrate into our communities. Give a talk.</p>
Dualism: the human <i>versus/within</i> the animal as monster	<p>P</p> <p>U</p> <p>C</p> <p>P</p>	<p>Who is the most/least monstrous: the parents, Hatupatu, the brothers or the Bird Woman?</p> <p>Can you tell a story when you or another person acted like an animal? What do you mean by the word 'animal' here?</p> <p>Find out how animals can act like humans. In a group, make up a picture book.</p> <p>Find out about the SPCA. Why do their workers care about animals?</p>

Table 4: A structural analysis template of Si Kecil**Focus Text: *Si Kecil, Tiny boy***

Dualism: crisis <i>versus/within</i> stasis	<p>P In what ways does the beginning of this story describe a 'perfect storm'?</p> <p>U Can you recall a time when 2 or 3 bad events happened almost at the same time? Were there any hard decisions that had to be made?</p> <p>C When you make a hard decision, do you try and guess the likely outcome first or just make a decision on what you think is right and just wait and see?</p> <p>P Listen to someone else's hard decision they had to make. What good advice could you give them?</p>
Dualism: powerlessness <i>versus/within</i> power	<p>P What the difficulties a tiny boy like Si Kecil might have? Does size make a difference to success in life?</p> <p>U To what extent are heroes/heroines in folktales smaller, younger, weaker, poorer and uglier than others? Make a chart.</p> <p>C Do folktales stereotype some children?</p> <p>P Would you want to be the most powerful in your class? Identify the advantages and disadvantages.</p>
Dualism: courage <i>versus/within</i> cowardly	<p>P In what ways was Si Kecil a courageous young person?</p> <p>U What was the most courageous action that you have ever done?</p> <p>C When do heroes 'fall off the rails' and become anti-heroes?</p> <p>P Find out about the life story of a sports/war hero. Are heroes in folktales or films similar or different</p>
Dualism: the clever <i>versus/and</i> the foolish	<p>P In what way was Si Kecil clever in tricking the ogre to run away?</p> <p>U Find out about other clever and/or foolish people in other folktales. Are these qualities the same in other cultures?</p> <p>C Was Si Kecil clever or just plain lucky? What is the difference between a good risk and a foolish risk? Can a hero be a trickster?</p> <p>P Write a list of risks that young people should not make if they are to be healthy and safe.</p>
Dualism: the outsider <i>versus/within</i> community	<p>P Is part of the ogre's problem the fact that he doesn't belong in the community?</p> <p>U Have you ever stared at a person whose body is different? How did this make you feel? How do you think this stare made him/her feel?</p> <p>C When do lonely outsiders become dangerous to themselves and to others? What can we do to help people who are marked as outsiders in our school?</p> <p>P</p>
Dualism: the human <i>versus/within</i> the animal as monster	<p>P In what ways has the illustrator made the ogre more/less monstrous?</p> <p>U What would you want to add/delete/change if you were the illustrator?</p> <p>C What is the worst monster you have seen in books and films? What made this monster so scary?</p> <p>P Can nightmares about monsters be helpful/unhelpful when growing up? Design a poster: 'Beat the Monster...(name the monster e.g. alcohol)..!'</p>

Conclusion

One of the educational values of this approach to scaffolding text is the recognition that, though we come from different socio-cultural backgrounds, we all face dilemmas, some of them similar and some of them different. How we respond to them is sometimes informed by culture, gender and social class and sometimes our responses arise from rich shared experiences and personal choice. This template recognises the particular aspects of the tale grounded in difference as well as the need to recognise the universal tensions that construct our life stories; it invites a critical analysis of the themes that potentially can be read into the tales and the necessity for productive action within the local as well as global space. Within the carnival space of book event, as the normal world is turned upside down by the trickster, there will be the laughter of recognition, of need, desire and relief perhaps but additionally, the paper argues that there is a need for critical and productive reflection, once the book is slammed shut, that seeks to unlock the mysteries and marvels of the tales.

Endnotes

- 1 *Reading Time* 57(2), 24
- 2 The Colmar-Brunton poll is well recognized as a media-based poll that meets the MRSNZ code of practice that ensures there are no misleading aspects in the final publication and where margins of error are clearly given in public presentations. <http://www.colmarbrunton.co.nz/index.php/news/lying-cheating-stealing>.
- 3 See McKenzie, J. (2004). Bums, poos and wees: Carnavalesque spaces in the picture books of early childhood. Or has literature gone to the dogs? *English Teaching. Practice and Critique*, 4(1), 81–94. The body as a space of the carnivalesque is detailed here. The grotesque body is an important consideration in terms of the focus texts in this article.
- 4 Note that, in the motif-index (as opposed to Tale Type) the author M. Bunanta has identified the motif numbers as L311 Weak (small) hero overcomes large fighter and G520 Ogre deceived into self-injury. The author is comfortable with the classification of *Si Kecil* as Arne/Thompson Tale Type 327. The A/T index is the primary tool of folklorists when it comes to classifying the folktale as a genre. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arne%E2%80%93Thompson_classification_system
- 5 Here are some amazing websites that detail how nature employs trickery (deceit) to survive:
<http://webcoist.momtastic.com/2010/02/15/deception-trickery-in-plants-12-masters-of-disguise/>
http://www.rsc.org/images/Iridescence%20In%20Nature_tcm18-182769.pdf
<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/07/100708141620.htm>
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/camo/mati-nf.html>
- 6 Children will really be excited when they look at the following websites that detail natural gigantism:
<http://webcoist.momtastic.com/2010/08/02/animal-gigantism-13-real-life-godzillas/>
<http://dinosaurs.about.com/od/dinosaurevolution/a/bigdinos.htm>
<http://www.unexplained-mysteries.com/column.php?id=232744>
<http://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/current-exhibitions/whales-giants-of-the-deep>
- 7 This approach to scaffolding narrative text is grounded on literary theory (the notion of post-structuralism emerging from and grounded in structuralism given the emphasis in this article on both binary oppositions in structuralism and liminality in poststructuralism). Whereas dominant teaching strategies focus on articulating thinking processes (e.g. visualising, predicting, summarising), this methodology focuses on the deeper layers of meaning that can be read into and emerging from the text based on Rosenblatt's (1978) transactional theory of reading.

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Manuscripts: should be between 3000 and 7000 words and preceded by an abstract of 100 – 150 words.

Intending contributors should submit **one hard copy and/or an electronic copy** of the manuscript to the Editor, and ensure that they retain an electronic and hard copy. Manuscripts should be typed in a standard 12 pt font, left aligned, double-spaced and on one side of the page only. Please do not submit as a pdf file.

Authors' names should be included on the title page but not on the manuscript. A brief (2-3 line) biographical note about each author should be provided on a separate page and should include full contact details (i.e. postal address, phone and facsimile numbers, and e-mail address).

Manuscripts should meet high academic standards and be written in clear English. Avoid using complex formatting programmes and turn off bibliographical and endnote functions before submitting.

Intending contributors should consult the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.) to ensure that articles conform to the guidelines including the use of up to three levels of headings, citations, references, tables, figures, etc.

For books: FitzGerald, S. (1997). *Is Australia an Asian country? Can Australia survive in an East Asian future?* St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin.

For article: Baumgart, N., Halse, C. (1999). Approaches to learning across cultures: the role of assessment. *Assessment in Education* 6(3), 321-337.

For chapters: Long, M.H. (1996). The role of the linguistic environment in second languages acquisition. In W.C. Ritchie & T. L. Bhatia (Eds.), *Handbook of second language acquisition* (pp. 413-468). San Diego: Academic Press.

Tables must be typed on separate pages and not included as part of the text. The approximate location of tables should be indicated in the text.

Figures should be submitted on separate pages, in finished form, correctly labelled and their approximate location in the text clearly indicated.

In addition to consulting the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.) authors should note the following **conventions** must be used in preparing a manuscript for submission:

- Either British English or American English spelling should be used consistently throughout the
- text.
- Footnotes should not be used. Endnotes should be kept to a minimum.
- All pages should be numbered consecutively.
- Do not use more than three heading levels.
- Do not use double spaces after full stops at the end of sentences.
- Do not use full stops in abbreviations: USA not U.S.A.
- When referring to the title of an organization by its initials, first spell out the title in full followed by the abbreviation in parentheses, e.g. Curriculum Development Council (CDC). Thereafter refer to it as CDC.

Refereeing of articles takes approximately three months although this may vary according to the availability and commitments of referees.

Proofs will not be sent to authors. It is important to be as careful as possible with the final manuscript.

Final manuscripts should be double spaced and accompanied by a 100-150 word abstract, a brief biography and full contact details. Authors should submit an electronic copy of their final manuscript and accompanying details. An e-mail attachment should be clearly labelled with the author's name, title of the article and the type of programme used. Editorial staff may modify the manuscript to improve the readability of an article.

Book reviews should be between 500-750 words and follow the format outlined in regular issues.

