SYMPOSIUM
The potentially transformative power of theory when put to work in professional practice contexts: observations towards a 'pedagogy of change'.

OVERVIEW
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Diverse contemporary perspectives regarding what education is and what it is for, combined with a general sensibility that change, rather than continuity, is a relentless and irreversible feature of professional life-experience 'in postmodernity', can be evidenced through a range of discursive themes and research modalities pertaining to life in higher education institutions currently reverberating across the globe. Collocations such as inclusive education, widening participation, reflective practice, lifelong learning, quality assurance, audit culture, have been constructed or co-opted– as is the way with language – via aspirant agendas of accountability, improvement, excellence, impact and so forth, to keep everyone permanently on their toes; an assumption behind these being that administrators and academics are part of a more general populous characterised as 'the learning society', with higher education ('HE') acting as a vehicle through which substantial portions of this populous will eventually pass. Well-worn metaphors and models of social science research, such as 'Mode 2' (Gibbons et al, 1994) 'Triple Helix' (Etzkowitz & Leyesdorff, 2000), 'Third Space' (Whitchurch, 2008), further reveal and reinforce the notion that former boundaries and divisions have indeed collapsed, HE workers now being juxtaposed variously as administrators, teachers, researchers, policy makers and most recently business folk; conduits for the generation, transferal or mobilization of knowledge 'in new times' (Quicke 1998).

A visible response to the multiple expectations of HE and the perpetual motion of postmodernity more generally has been the proliferation of research modes and methodologies that seek to articulate the variously imbricated positionalities and subjectivities of HE workers: institutional research, higher education research, educational development, the scholarship of teaching and learning, academic development all constitute efforts to describe, interpret and influence what HE is, what it is for, what HE workers do and the matrix of relationships between HE and wider society - but often with very scant dialogue between them.

The papers in this symposium illustrate distinct pedagogic practices, here tentatively characterised as pedagogy of change (Perselli, 2013), which productively inform and shape the various problematics posed in – and on – higher education as an inhabited, experiential and professional reality. They represent the challenge of how to be, how to do and how to make, as a community of scholars, in the contradictory and at times politically quixotic environment that constitutes Western interpretations of the university. They constitute a resistance to the theory-austerity that is arguably being imposed on learners and teachers by central government in England specifically, whereby 'what works' is king.

Supporting Statement
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In the second decade of the twenty-first century, Western academe has been hijacked by publishers, ministries, and departments of education. The academic conversation, which previously underpinned curricular development, pedagogical engagement, and scholarship has become a frenzied concern over completion and attrition rates, auditing, accountability and surveillance, and international rankings. Syllabi and software are designed by committees of marketing consultants and self-proclaimed experts who stand in league with the political swing of governmental whims. Ideologically, it is neither Right nor Left which influences higher education requirements and benchmarks, but a neo-liberal notion of what is and isn't needed in a knowledge economy (Steinberg, 2010).

And clearly, what isn't needed is theory. Theory does not raise test scores, ferret out and level a classroom, indeed theory has become the forgotten ingredient in a continuously failing Western education of competition, goal-based, busywork-laden, teacher-proof notion that students must be schooled in minutia, non-aesthetic classrooms devoid of inquiry and criticality (Downs, 2013). Naturally, in order to follow the hegemonic curriculum design of marketers, politicians, and publishers each time the human, the intellectual, the aesthetic is further removed from learning, it is labeled "core," "critical thinking," and "inquiry based." What we hear from educational corportized "experts" screams critical, yet rolls out as exam-driven, outcome-based and direct instruction; mediocre and atheoretical.

Publishers and politicians chant the mantra that theory is not what our students need, demanding the empirical data-driven and teacher measured "research," designed to create more and more results…only to end up producing populations that are barely literate, pushing Western countries lower in the all-too-important global educational rankings. Theory is eschewed as esoteric and the produce of detached scholars who have no idea what must be demanded of our students.

In the academy we struggle in our own faculties, which repeat the same demands as our schools. We are continually barraged by the latest ruling party's agenda in state education and the insidious pressure created by the ever-lobbying and changing textbook industry. In these arenas, theory is smothered, the notion of academic and pedagogical rigour lies buried under the demand for global competition and a student population ready to work, not ready to think (Giroux, 2011).

This symposium will open a conversation into the need, and pedagogical obligation to reinstate theory as pedagogical essential.

References:

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PAPER
Critical Discourse Analysis from a post-perspective: Challenges and possibilities of a 'Pedagogy of Change'
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As a result of a critique of the moral and political agenda of de-mystification in critical discourse analysis, I write within a theoretical framework which sets out the limits of a problematising, critical approach according to which there is no possibility of an unproblematic access to the object under investigation and an unmediated knowledge of truth (Foucault, 1980; Pennycook, 2001). Such an approach means disavowing the belief in transparent language, enlightenment or emancipation, and rejecting the idea that the vicissitude of language can be transgressed towards a state in which we can see reality independent from our historical enculturation and modes of categorisation.

Critiques of postmodernist and post-structural approaches to critical discourse analysis within the Left have expressed strong scepticism towards the claim that anything politically progressive can come of its premises. Instead of a 'real' pedagogy of change, writing from a post-perspective is sometimes misunderstood as the desire to play with language. This is because analysis may remain tentative, context-related and ambiguous, but I argue that it gains in depth when the critical goal is to keep the process of disagreement open (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, O'Regan and MacDonald, 2007).

The possibilities of taking such an approach to critical discourse analysis are based on the attempt to avert homogenisation and totalisation through emphasising difference, incommensurability and discontinuity. The approach is based on the desire to rethink the possible and problematise the discursive constraints of hegemony and consensus. This means that a pedagogy of change and the progressive potential of critical discourse analysis from a post-perspective are based on the way in which they expand discourse and debate through 'making facile gestures difficult' (Foucault, 1988), offering a 'problematisation of the given' (Dean, 1994) and through that an alternative optic on the real.

In this symposium I discuss the possibilities and challenges of a pedagogy of change which is not based on a notion of emancipation that presupposes the elimination of power and the abolition of the subject/object distinction. The consequence is not the nihilistic result that emancipation is impossible, but that a radical politics require the acceptance of the ineradicability of antagonism. I argue that the objective of a pedagogy of change must therefore be to restore the centrality of the political in an attempt to create spaces for new discourses of emancipation and political discourses of the Left.

PAPER
Diana Moehrke
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Critical hermeneutic theory and its potential for change as regards intercultural learning

This research project has been driven by an agenda of change to foster a pedagogy of recognition, whereby students are regarded as 'resourceful peers' (Moehrke and Perselli, forthcoming) from whom everyone can learn. Critical pedagogy warrants the theoretical positioning of the project, which is situated within a distinct political context of curriculum internationalisation, that is, a private sector college in London. The project aims to explore the lived experiences of intercultural learning among international students and staff, and is in the final stage of analysis. The research setting is characterised by neoliberal practices and discourse (such as income generation, the marketisation of education and an ever-changing immigration policy which 'otherizes' international students as 'bogus'). Critical pedagogy, which seeks to unveil and address forms of power in educational settings (Giroux, 2010), has thus been put to work to examine instances of (mis)recognition with regard to the students' and staff's lived experiences of intercultural learning. This is expected to alert participants and policy-makers to ways of change towards greater social justice within this context.

In the project, critical pedagogy could however not simply be 'applied' to pursue this change agenda; and hermeneutic phenomenology was used to support the study of lived experiences methodologically (van Manen, 1997). The construct of the bricolage (Kincheloe, 2001; Steinberg, 2012) enabled this dynamic relationship between critical pedagogy and hermeneutic phenomenology, and allowed for an active research practice in which two competing theories interconnect to promote change. Consequently, a theory seeking and developing process unfolded, which has led to a practice-based understanding of intercultural learning. In this symposium, I will illustrate this process and discuss opportunities for change as these have become apparent through the driver of critical hermeneutic theory.

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PAPER
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A narrative account of context and how theory informs and sustains professional pedagogic practice

My histobiographical baggage weighed heavily on me as I commenced my doctoral studies in 2005, having failed to get to grammar school (at age 11) or achieved sufficient Advanced Level grades to go to university (at age 18). As a Study Advisor supporting art and design students with the theoretical content of their degrees, I experienced a further sense of lack because in that pedagogic context I had no practice or theoretical reference points from which to draw. However, through increasing familiarisation with cultural theory, its potential to contextualise not only art and design practice but also my own study of education emerged, since the same social, political and economic contexts from which artefacts are derived are also arguably the catalysts for educational and policy change. Thus within an educational theoretical framing, the constructivist paradigm acknowledges the power of social contexts to inform and influence cognition, making reality a subjective representation constructed by individuals. This brings the ontological-epistemological inter-relationship into sharp focus, and resonates with theorists who view the shift within modernism towards postmodernism as a 'condition' (Lyotard, 1984; Harvey, 1990) which simultaneously disavowes all meta-narratives, including individual subjectivity, and proffers new ways to challenge, deconstruct and reconstruct the world. In my doctoral thesis, whilst seeking to improve my professional practice as an academic developer, I used a postmodern methodology - the bricolage - to do just that. By employing a range of methods: a Foucauldian approach to analyse policy and institutional discourse; heuristic devices derived from the literature to reflect the concerns of higher education; portraiture to turn interviews of participants into visual narratives of lived experience; I flirted with post-colonial metaphors of otherness and hybrid states of in-between, whereby a narrative account of my professional context slowly emerged.

When technical rationalist mechanisms for professionalising teaching in higher education came into view I was able to challenge my assumed function as an agent of normalisation. The 'realisation of oppression…. makes oppression more oppressive still' (Friere, 1996:33) but it can also serve to emancipate. Nowadays, adopting from Noddings (2003) an 'ethic of care', I seek to reveal the oppressor-oppressed subjectivity and to guide staff as they self-author their teacher identities.

PAPER
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Responding to the changing political and social landscape of radiography education: how new educational theory has influenced the radiography curriculum and its enactment.

Relentless changes in healthcare policy, professional and social expectations of radiography practitioners have resulted in a curriculum which is buffeted, confused and questionable. Such conditions demand new and creative ways of developing the radiography curriculum and its enactment.
In this seminar I proffer an account of how my research has engaged and developed education theory within the context of radiography education. At an institutional level the findings have motivated a radiography education community to take a wider view of their curriculum. Historically there had been a clear focus on knowledge content and curriculum as a product which failed

to take into account praxis and the social context in which learning takes place. Specific curriculum developments include: (i) placing a greater emphasise on the vocational relevance of radiography knowledge; (ii) gaining a better understanding of tacit radiography knowledge; (iii) raising awareness of cultural competence. At a national level the findings have been used in a professional body guidance document which aims to enhance the standard of clinical supervision of radiography students.

The conceptual framework was developed via a critical review of the literature and via reflections on my experiences of being a radiography student, radiography practitioner and radiography educator. I concluded that radiography knowledge and skills derived meaning in the act of practice, and this chimed with Wenger's (1998) rejection of a theory/practice divide in everyday practice. Wenger likewise acknowledges that its historical and social context gives meaning and structure to the act of performing that practice, thus emphasising that practice is embedded in social activity.   From these premises I made two propositions: Firstly, the 'ideological' function of a radiography curriculum and secondly, that radiography education is located and develops within a community of practice (CoP). The findings evidenced both convergence and divergence with Lave and Wenger's (1991) theoretical constructs of situated learning, legitimate peripheral participation and community of practice. In addition the project also highlighted the consequence of power relationships, the complexity of learning in and across multiple communities of practice and the importance of individual learner biographies, all of which are underdeveloped in Lave and Wenger's theoretical discourse.   My story facilitates a reflection on the nature of radiography practice, its relations with theory and how pedagogy can act as a vehicle for change.