The Curious Schools Project: Capturing Nomad Creativity in Teacher Work

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Abstract: The Curious Schools project is a teacher professional learning initiative that aims to provide an insight into – and resource for – creativity in Tasmanian schools. It offers an alternative to conventional models of teacher professional learning by engaging teachers in multi-modal methods of documenting and reflecting on their work as the basis for an online community of practice and public showcase for creativity in education that takes place 'behind the scenes'. The authors, as coordinators of the project, describe the rationale behind the project and the ways it embraced discourses and practices of curiosity as a means of making visible the creativity of teachers and classrooms. Drawing on the concept of nomadology in the work of Deleuze and Guattari, as well as diverse scholarly perspectives on curiosity, the authors describe how the Curious Schools Project sought to capture the 'nomad creativity' of teacher work via a process of documentation and question-seeking that countered complexity-reduction in teacher professional learning and sustained teacher curiosity in their work. Reflecting on an evaluation of its 2013 pilot, the authors suggest that the project's explicit emphasis on curiosity avoided limiting conceptualisations of creativity in education and will inform future plans to more appropriately document and support the processes of emergence in teacher professional learning.
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Introduction

As arts educators and researchers, it is concerning to hear colleague teachers in schools underestimate, and sometimes undermine, their capacity to 'be creative'. While creativity is an amorphous and sometimes weighty construct in campaigns to make students industry-ready (Harris, 2014; Peters & Araya, 2010; Robinson, 2010), many teachers and pre-service educators shy from describing themselves as such. From our own experiences facilitating arts-based workshops with educators not specialised in the arts, this reluctance to self-nominate as creative appears particularly acute with those for whom creativity has become synonymous with being artistic; and whereby artistic is in turn perceived as foreign or elitist - something that 'other people are'. In Australia at least, this reflects a curious tension between lingering social and generational attitudes of national cultural cringe and the (contrasting) widespread public support for the teaching of the arts in schools (Australia Council, 2014). But our focus here is not primarily on arts' relationship to creativity, but on an underlying concern that teacher reticence to identify as creative could be contributing to a broader reluctance to recognise and integrate creative practices in education.

This paper reports on a teacher professional learning initiative coordinated by the authors that sought to address this concern. Piloted in 2013, the goal of the Curious Schools Project was to profile teachers' creative practices in education through an online platform. The intention was to devise a project that would give insight into quality teaching and learning behind the scenes and be both a professional learning experience for a small cohort

of eight participating teachers, as well as a lasting resource for colleague teachers and the public. The significance of the project lay in the fact that commonly employed discourses of creativity in education were not the primary discourses used to discuss teacher work with the teachers themselves. Rather, the Curious Schools Project attempted to capture the creativity of teacher work through the lens of curiosity. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's notion of nomad thought – as without "closure or measure" (Deleuze, 1968) – this approach to capturing 'nomad creativity' shuns closed equations for, or investment in, creativity and teacher identity. It instead seeks to open multidimensional understandings of creative practices in education, beginning with the question-seeking question: "So, what am I curious about?"

In this paper, we reflect on the findings of the 2013 pilot by providing further background to the initiative before discussing how its employment of perceptual and diversive dimensions of curiosity generated a question-seeking approach to teacher practice. We consider how this approach reflected contemporary developments in teacher professional learning while contributing to an understanding of the complexity and materiality of teacher work.

Background: Questions of creativity

In 2012, a series of national and state-based arts education events, school visits, and teacher professional learning activities were hosted by the University of Tasmania Faculty of Education in partnership with Arnold Aprill, founder and former lead consultant of Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE). Aprill visited the University as a Fulbright Senior Specialist to work with the Faculty's arts education team to consider the potential of arts partnerships in school and community settings. Aprill's work with CAPE had spanned 22 years, centring on the facilitation of professional learning opportunities for educators and artists in inquiry–based teaching and learning across the curriculum.

During the extensive program of activities associated with Aprill's visit, teachers were initially informally asked about their own creativity and how creativity was manifest in their classrooms. Teachers' responses were often self-deprecating and conveyed frustration about limited time and capacity to fully integrate creativity in daily teaching work due to pressured demands to 'cover the curriculum' and satisfy increased levels of reporting. At the same time, from our in-school observations, it was evident that these teacher perceptions were not necessarily indicative of a lack of creative intent or practice in schools, particularly given the wide range of meanings inferred by teachers' use of the term. Rather, we became aware how these informal conversations conveyed a weariness about the promise and the place of creativity amongst the day-to-day demands of teacher work. But it did become intriguing to us that when we reoriented our topic of conversation from creativity to curiosity – 'what are you curious about in your teaching?' – teachers became far more open and interested to talk with us about what they actually did, why they did it and how they did their 'teacherly work' in creative ways. Ironically, much of what they discussed resonated with our understanding of creative practices in education (as defined below), as well as processes of *teaching creatively* and *teaching for creativity*, two terms used by Sefton-Green, Thomson, Jones & Bresler (2011) to define creative learning. Most importantly, we felt these teachers were offering us myriad examples of creative practices in education that were usually veiled by preoccupations with standardisation, compliance and testing for student 'achievement', as well as limited opportunities to profile and share their 'behind the scenes' work. We felt these informal discussions revealed a lot about creative practices in education that are rarely visible to peers or the public in teacher work.

By creative practices in education we mean encounters and engagements with learning that embrace diversity and change, but eschew standardisation. This is an intentionally broad definition that encompasses curriculum and pedagogy as well as social and personal dimensions of learning. It extends our understanding of Sefton-Green et al.'s (2011) conceptualisation of creative learning and acknowledges ACARA's (2013) definition of *creative thinking* as a capability in the Australian Curriculum. Furthermore, it is informed by Harris' (2014) problematisation of creativity (and rendering of Massumi (2008)) that considers the realm of creativity more broadly: an acknowledgment that "creativity rhizomatically reproduces itself, and in so doing, *reimagines* the system in which it occurs" (Harris, 2014, p. 26, emphasis added). As a feature of quality education, creativity, via these influences, does not solely suggest a goal orientation of making or doing something original and different. Rather, it is generated by and evidenced in "new modes of experience" (Massumi, 2008, p. 9). Creative practices in education are therefore defined in this paper as those that enable teachers and students to both enter into and co-generate such experiences – allowing for expansive encounters of imagination alongside deepening development of disciplinary knowledge that can both make the strange familiar (Semetski, 2006) and the familiar strange. Following Massumi (2008), these are educational encounters that explicitly encourage processes of becoming and change. This is a view of creative practice that unapologetically embraces complexity and emergence – aspects that we, like others (Biesta & Osberg, 2010; Semetsky, 2006; Somerville, 2007), believe are overlooked and undervalued in a national education system that currently seeks complexity-reduction (Biesta, 2010; Gough, 2012).

While colleague researchers such as Harris are exploring creativity in Australian schools more extensively, the Curious Schools project was a community engagement initiative motivated by conversational undercurrents in encounters with teachers and pre-service educators on creativity. With the weight of expectation that the new Australian Curriculum general capability of critical and creative thinking brings (ACARA, 2013), it continues to be a concern to us that creativity – however variously defined – is foregrounded in policy and curriculum mandates, yet rarely finds confident expression in teacher discourse (Hunter, 2011; Hunter, Baker, & Nailon, 2014; Imms, Jeanneret, & Stevens-Ballenger, 2011). Engaged in initial teacher education and teacher professional learning encounters, we therefore became motivated to shift from a deficit to a strengths based approach when working with educators – reorienting common questions like 'What do I need to do as a teacher to be creative?' and 'What do I need to do to implement the new curriculum?' to more critically engaging questions of 'What am I curious about in my teaching and how does this lead to creativity in thought and action?' and 'How can curriculum scope and sequencing emerge from my curious and creative thinking on classroom practices?' Our overarching desire has been to catalyse more critical questioning and guided reflection as a way to avoid the mystification of creativity as a disposition on the one hand and the simplification of creativity as a commodity or acquisition on the other. Our aim has been to open its parameters as an integral but multifaceted and contested feature of quality educational practice. To value these dimensions of creativity, we employ Deleuze and Guattari's nomad thought to our perceptions and understandings of a teacherly nomad creativity that challenges closed representations of creativity in the classroom and, instead, "synthesises a multiplicity of elements without effacing their heterogeneity" (Massumi in Delueze and Guattari, xiii).

Our interest in coordinating a community-engaged initiative like Curious Schools was to allow space for teacher-led recognition and representation of their own creativity through the lens of curiosity. At the same time, we wanted to provide a platform that enabled teachers to gain insight into their own and others' teaching practices in the context of curriculum change. We were aware that when it comes to schooling, there are many public

faces to student 'achievement' – test scores, public prizes, exhibitions, concerts as well as tertiary entrance scores and job or apprenticeship success. But what are the creative practices of teachers that underlie these artefacts or assessable achievements of learning? What if teachers' creative processes and that of their students became more publicly visible? What would happen if creativity, encompassing all its diverse manifestations and definitions, became explicit in everyday classroom practice? Curious Schools was a response to these concerns and interests.

Curiosity and enquiry: Methods of capturing nomad creativity

The Curious Schools pilot project in 2013 was one of a number of ongoing projects that resulted from Aprill's visit. The aim was to provide an online public platform and an associated gallery exhibition and forum that would showcase processes of teacher and student work in creative learning activities: that is, teachers' own mapping of learning in action, not just the material (and measurable) artefacts of student achievement. The Curious Schools Project involved inkind use of CAPE's online software to develop a number of pilot sites and was augmented by ongoing mentoring from Aprill on working collaboratively with teachers in inquiry-based documentation and reflection. The Curious Schools Project differed from CAPE's existing process (with its focus on supporting artist-teacher collaboration), by specifically seeking to support teacher curiosity within and beyond the arts. While three of the Curious Schools sites did document teacher-artist collaborations, this was not characteristic of all Curious Schools sites.

Over three months, we secured the involvement of seven school partners and a family day care program from a range of Tasmanian regions. These partners were purposively selected, given their prior participation in events associated with Aprill's visit, as well as our general knowledge of their existing work in arts-informed settings more broadly. We met with participants, offering varied levels of online training, consultation and support according to their familiarity and skill-level with online tools for documentation and processes of critical reflection of their own work. During this process, the participant teachers and carers were invited to articulate a curiosity/question they had about their work and to explore that question more thoroughly through documenting their existing practice via digital means. Teachers' own questions often did not come immediately, nor did they come easily in all cases. Seeking questions that were rich enough to sustain a longer enquiry into their work led participants to playful encounters with their own early tentative questions before honing and refining as the inquiry progressed. This process entailed teachers capturing and uploading images, written text, and digital audio and video to convey their own observations and narratives, as well as those of students and other stakeholders.

The next stage was to curate the online presentation of these texts using the software provided (in partnership with CAPE). In this way, teachers self-organised their documentation beyond conventions of writing and sharing lesson plans or journal reflections. Instead, the project aimed for teachers to capture and convey their sensory understandings of their curiosities and own practice – via visual images of themselves, their students, their students' work in progress, and their physical environment, as well as video interviews, sound bites and recorded excerpts from lessons. Much more than a collecting of data, this was about assemblage: a form of curation about the materiality of teacherly work. While the original CAPE software was intentionally designed to navigate teachers through step-by-step enquiry-based documentation of their work, the Curious Schools project refined the descriptors for each section of the online site to provide more of a harness than a prescription for sharing curiosity and investigating practice. These sections included: an *Overview* (entry

page); *Context* (identifying the who, where, what); *Inquiry* (articulating questions, big ideas, enduring understandings); *Story* (mapping learning steps, stages and activities); *Findings and Reflections* (indicating what was learned, assessed and noticed by students and educators); *Resources*; and *Curriculum Links* (links to relevant standards and sections of the Australian Curriculum, Tasmanian Curriculum and/or Early Years Framework).   The participating teachers were supported in their decision-making about what to convey and how to convey it in these sections. This structure also made the sites more accessible as a resource to non-participants, such as colleague teachers, initial teacher education students, parents and the public.

We facilitated these processes of teacher self-organisation (or curation) individually, utilising an intentionally open-ended process of conversational critical reflection to suit each teacher's own degree of skill and confidence in digital documentation and processes of inquiry-based critical reflection. This ranged from a two-hour familiarisation and training session with one teacher, to up to five meetings with ongoing online curatorial support for another. It is important to note that teacher choices in the representation of their work was motivated by their enquiry question (their curiosity), not by a conventional understanding of how to frame a unit or lesson plan. The curiosity questions that emerged in the pilot were therefore diverse: "How do we develop a sustainable model of work that connects families to the school and their community?"; "How can students connect with their community through arts explorations of place, space, time, and wood?"; "How can children engage with multiple perspectives of Australian colonial history through drama in ways that enhance their literacy learning?"; "How do stories of people leaving their home to make a new one effect students' own ideas of home?"

A feature of the Curious Schools sites was their double-purpose: to provide a guided process of professional learning for participating teachers, as well as provide a resource for teaching colleagues and the public. The intention of the project was – for participants and 'audience' – to both pique curiosity and document creativity. As we suggest in the following, the opportunity for teacher self-organisation using a platform that provided subtitled sections, meant the project offered multiple entrypoints for teachers to understand and represent their own creative practices in their own ways: an approach that did not prescribe what and how to be creative, but that invited teachers to cultivate and chart their own creativity from "in the middle" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 21)   using a far less culturally-overladen discourse of curiosity. Some teachers did choose to document a full unit of work (see Bringing the World In "The Preps Go to the Olympics'", University of Tasmania & CAPE, 2013) while others chose to document whole of school approaches ("Arts Integration", University of Tasmania & CAPE, 2013) and the principles of community-based partnership ("Billy", University of Tasmania & CAPE, 2013). So, rather than determine models for best practice or provide explicit exemplars on how to teach creatively, or teach for creativity, the Curious Schools project sought to engage teachers in self-reflexive, place-based and peer-enabled professional learning that emerged from the "restless practice" (Zuss, 2011, p.85) of curiosity. In some respects, the goal was to actually let go of goals: to let definitions and parameters of what constitutes creativity and curriculum emerge from teachers' own curiosity about their practice, rather than the other way around. In this process, there were multiple practices of curiosity as well as creativity at play.

Curiosity, question-seeking and assemblages for intensive thinking

Curiosity, like creativity, has been variously defined, researched, measured and problematized in various disciplines, including psychology, philosophy, and education.   In

terms of human development and learning, it has been linked to play (Berlyne, 1960; Kreitler, Zigler, & Kreitler, 1984; Engel, 2005); the leisure of adults (Reio, 2003; Reio & Wiswell, 2000); identity formation (Bowlby, 1988; Erikson, 1968); and motivation and exploratory behaviour (Spielberger & Starr, 1994; Voss & Keller, 1983; Engel, 2011). One of the major distinctions in the psychological literature regards curiosity's stake as a "state and/or trait" (Boyle, 1983; Loewenstein, 1994); with researchers investigating further distinctions between *epistemic* and *perceptual* (Berlyne, 1954), *specific* and *diversive* (Berlyne, 1960; Day, 1971; Litman & Spielberger, 2003); *depth* and *breadth* (Ainley, 1987; Langenvin, 1971); and *information* and *experience* seeking (Spielberger & Starr, 1994) curiosity.

Acknowledging curiosity as a multidimensional construct problematized by issues of definition and measurement, Reio et al. (2006) propose a three-factor classification whereby:

> Individuals express curiosity through information seeking (cognitive) and physical and social thrill seeking behaviours. Thus, humans are motivated by a combination for the need to answer questions in their daily lives and the need for new, diverse, intense, and complex physical and social sensations and experiences (2006, p. 132).

Reio et al.'s conceptualisation provides a useful touchstone for capturing the multiple practices of curiosity at play in the Curious Schools Project. In the first instance, the act of documenting classroom practice was conducted for the purpose of seeking and providing information about teachers' own practice. The curiosity engendered in this was a cognitive and specific curiosity: a gap in information about what was taught 'behind the scenes' was filled. Augmenting this was also a less goal-oriented, more diversive and perceptual (Berlyne 1954 & 1960) pursuit. By providing opportunities for self-organisation, teachers were encouraged and supported in to engage in their "thought's freedom" (Zuss, 2011, p. 91) by tapping into the perceptual or sensory aspects of their work – what teaching this looked and felt like – and allowing that to motivate more diversive open-ended questioning of their practice: that is, questions to ponder and sustain further curiosity, not the kinds of questions one can immediately answer. This was manifest in the Curious School's approach to processes of question-seeking (as distinct from question answering) when it came to reflecting on and investigating work. For instance, discussions with one teacher led her to iteratively formulating her curiosity question. What began as 'How did we engage with the community?' developed over the time of her exploration to become 'How can students connect with their community through arts explorations of place, space, time, and wood?'. This gave the teacher (and her site's 'audience" of colleague teachers and public) far more insight into the creative connections she was making in her work to concepts of 'place, space, time and wood' with students – wood being particularly significant here as a key resource in the school's rural and economically struggling community. This question-seeking approach acknowledged the agency in both her teacher work and her professional learning (about her teacher work) as her comments revealed, "The benefits are really amazing both professionally for me, for the school being involved and for the students. I think it can only improve their learning." Articulating a curiosity question enabled more motivated and directional decision-making on the part of the teachers about how to articulate, understand and represent their practice via the multiple modes of communication on offer (image, video, text). As another participating Curious Schools teacher commented, "that inquiry approach really opened up thinking."

Drawing on Rajchman (2000), and Deleuze and Guattari (1994), Zuss' perspective on curiosity in education is that "theoretical and conceptual growth can only occur in the flows, turns, and circuits of thought and becoming" (p. 140). He argues that curiosity provides the "kindling" for these "intensities of thinking" to occur – kindling that is arguably lost in acquisitional approaches to teacher professional learning. In this respect, we agree with Hatcher (2011), citing Hodkinson & Hodkinson (2005), in suggesting that a default

professional learning pedagogy (limited time, distribution of lesson/unit plans, simplistic role-modelling) is the product of "'a deeply technical rational audit culture'" (p. 404). In a context of higher accountability, greater compliance, and high-pressured everyday work conditions, many teachers are removed from quality ongoing reflection and learning. Professional development is therefore often anchored in the demonstration workshop based on 'knowledge acquisition'. As Hatcher warns,

> In order for professional learning to generate new practices by teachers, not simply the replication of imported practices, it requires not just procedural and performative knowledge – 'practical knowledge' – but also theoretical knowledge (p. 404).

The pilot Curious Schools Project process actively discouraged the reproduction of lesson plans and the suggestion of reproducibility of case-study projects in different contexts. Instead, the sites encouraged open documentation of practical knowledge as a means to begin integrating theoretical knowledge. While the kinds of formal theoretical engagement (in terms of readings or texts) implied by Hatcher above were not an explicit part of the project's remit, the broader integrative potential of practice and theory was encouraged via the site's resistance to "complexity-reduction" (Gough, 2012). These sites mapped, not traced, learning in action via a question-*making* about practice that embraced diversity and change. The Curious Schools sites are not standardised representations of best-practice teaching validated by standardised measures of student achievement. They are a sharing of assemblages, of teaching in thinking and action, and the materiality of teacher work.

A case in point is the Projecting Memory site devised by a teacher who also worked closely with an established digital media artist as part of an Artists in Residence program. This site captured a project with Year 9 students from from a regional city high school. The curiosity question in the teacher's mind was 'How can students explore their sense of place through photography and film production'. In the teacher's words,

> Students were invited to photograph places that were important to them in some way. Some students photographed local places where they had holidayed before, while others depicted places they felt were scenic.

The teacher was curious about these student choices. Almost without exception, the students had chosen their 'important' places as ones that were far from their everyday life. What could they do to encourage a reframing of everyday sites as important, particularly given many of these students didn't appear to view their school and local everyday life as particularly positive? Again, in the teacher's words,

> The artist then invited students to explore places around the school grounds, to consider its potential as a film set location. A decommissioned school building at the adjacent primary school became an intriguing focal point which inspired students' curiosity, particularly as it was soon due to be demolished. A few of the students had spent some of their primary school years etching their initials in the desks of that very building. Exploring the abandoned space brought back memories, giving students opportunities to reflect on the meaning of the everyday places in their lives.
> Students explored the aesthetic dimensions of the old school building, experimenting with lighting, sound and the qualities of the building's abandoned spaces. Through technical instruction from the artist and experimentation with production techniques, students developed their film and photography skills as they created short videos and photo essays in the local school landscape.
> In preparation for the culminating event for the project, students curated the images from their photography and filming sessions, capturing their personal connections to their school now and their memories of school back in their primary days.
> Released from classes for a full day, the group gathered at the old school building for the culmination event. During this day-long shoot, students projected into the

abandoned classrooms their films, photographs and soundscapes representing their memories of their primary school days.... Projecting Memory.

Via the images and soundbites on the the teacher chose to put on the Curious Schools site, the teacher's creative practices with regards to their decision-making are revealed. Shifts in, and qualities of, emergence are apparent in the teacher's and the artist's process as they interpreted and responded to the students' engagement with place, and thus co-generated new conceptual knowledge about the importance of memory and everyday spaces. In particular, the teacher engaged with their own kind of nomad creativity in response to students' processes of 'territorialising' their old school buildings and recapturing their own primary school memories. His teacherly work in this context involved harnessing and opening opportunities for the students to create and recreate (or restage) territorial motifs and counterpoints (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, 317): students took images of the dirt path to the old school, their old etchings on the desks, the faded glory of the buildings. With these images then projected on the original buildings – projections on projections - a collaborative creative practice was at play. This was a learning encounter of creativity and immense change for students in their understanding of their worlds and their own histories: a learning encounter impossible to distill in a lesson plan or similarly reducible professional learning resource or workshop, yet important to share as a creative practice in education.

The teacher's documentation of his and his students' curiosity, did enable a further connection to conventional representation of curriculum compliance, student achievement and evidence of change (that is, change valued as learning, following Biesta, 2010). On the Curious Schools site, the teacher chose to chart these connections in this way:

Through exploring places and spaces in their everyday lives through photography and film, students:

- **reflected** on places in their local area that were important.
- **developed skills and techniques of photography and filming** to help them explore and express their sense of place.
- **curated images** to create an audio visual presentation developed around the concept of place.
- **manipulated images** using photography and film software to create an intended effect.
- **created soundscapes** of spaces as a way of exploring what a place is like.
- culminated their digital media exploration with a **collaborative installation artwork** which involved combining and coordinating projected images, performance, sound and lighting effects.

In this way, the teacher's mapping also afforded connections to the curriculum. Alignment with new curriculum scoping and sequencing was revealed in their creative practice of education, rather than their classroom experience being directed from the other way around.

Struggles of representation and emergence in teacher professional learning

The diversive and perceptual curiosity encouraged by the Curious Schools pilot project, was not solely about driving 'intensive thinking' *about* practice. It was also engaging reflective thinking and self-organisation about *how to represent* practice. Through guided enquiry and the sub-titled structure of the Curious Schools sites, teachers were encouraged to tap into the *sensations* not just the *operations* of teaching – what it looked like and felt like for themselves and their students. By making choices about how to represent

their practice in these sensory multi-modal ways (visual, textual and aural), teachers were engaging with some of the more affective aspects of teaching. In such an approach, the wider "structure of feeling" (Williams, 1961, p. 64) around the experience – such as the institutional context, the demography of students, the regional context, the politics of place – were as highly valued as dot-point lists of what activities were planned in and implemented in the classroom space. This was not solely a cognitive dimension of curiosity (that may be satiated by 'filling a gap' in information about teaching), but a more sustaining curiosity based on opening and diversive enquiry to see and represent practice differently and in new modalities ('what does my practice look and sound like in this context?'). To do this for an 'audience' added a further layer of teacher investigation – a productive "struggle of representation" (Somerville, 2007, p. 225) for what teacher practice is and what it achieves. As another participating teacher commented,

> That you were…explaining your process was really important. That was what helped. I think documenting practice is really important because it allows me to reflect on it. It's much better to reflect for an audience.

The task of collating and curating visual data on their teaching so that their own thinking became visible, was important to the participating teachers in this process. Each teacher approached this task differently and engaged in active decision-making about how to represent what they do and how they do it in ways that are an alternative to more instructional teacher professional development or learning. In this way, Curious Schools became a platform for *reimagining* teaching practice in creative ways and allowing for new understandings to emerge. But, like the productive 'mess' of education, emergence can be difficult to capture if it is to be communicated to a wider audience. As Somerville notes, "Emergence occurs in the space between data, representing grounded (but unknowable) material reality, and analysis, as the act of meaning making" (Somerville, 2007, p. 230).

As coordinators of the Curious Schools Project, our own act of meaning making took various turns following the completion of the pilot project. While as spiriting as it was to evaluate the ways in which the project impacted on the thoughts and practices of participating teachers, the project gave rise to new insights about a productive dynamic of *making the familiar strange* and *making the strange familiar* in teaching and learning contexts. Teachers experienced their own *familiar* classroom practice in surprising (*strange*) new ways by reflecting on it with a lens of curiosity and documenting practice by digital means. At the same time, that documentation needed to make sense to a public outside the class community in a process of making of what is normally hidden (or *strange*) about teaching, known (or *familiar)*. We saw that this dynamic tension gave value to the complexity of teaching, by providing opportunities to look both inside and out of practice and to champion useful encounters with emergence and adaption.

As indicated above, to share teacher practice through the vehicle of lesson plans and structured units of work is a necessary act of complexity-reduction in teacher work. To state the obvious, plans provide an important framework for the management of teaching practice to achieve desired goals and outcomes. But their offering as the basis for professional learning ('this is a lesson or unit I've taught and this is how I taught it') can be limiting to the development of teacher curiosity and creativity in their own work. Role-model or best-practice workshops, while valuable and necessary in certain contexts, risk limiting participant curiosity to a specific kind – a goal-oriented endeavour to acquire pedagogical content knowledge for the purpose of replicating practice. Particularly in initial teacher education, this approach has its place: it helps to make the uncertainty of inexperience more manageable, and make the integration of pedagogy with curriculum visible. But if we agree with Hatcher

and others that deeper learning and new practices come not from *acquiring* knowledge but by generating new experience, then further dimensions of and capacities for curiosity and creativity need to be opened up. By reorienting professional learning in this way, quality teacher work becomes valued for adaptive practices and professional agency it both fosters and demands (Timperley, 2011; Hatano & Oura, 2003; Staber & Sydow, 2002). In Curious Schools, this centred around a core recognition that creative practices in education counter the contexts and discourses of educational standardisation that appear to be limiting the potential of learning encounters for students and teachers (Wrigley, Lingard, & Thomson, 2012). By offering a multimodal format and one-on-one support for teachers to curate their own sites, the Curious Schools Project communicated the 'spaces between the data' of student achievement, school leagues tables, and definitions of what creativity is and how it should be taught. Curiosity in this case became, in Zuss' words, 'thought's freedom' – to inhabit those spaces and enter into productive struggles of representation of teaching and learning beyond student (and public) artefacts of assessable achievement. Importantly, this approach does not sever the vital link between teaching effectiveness and student outcomes, but positions standardised outcomes as just one dimension among many more in the quality learning experience.

As Biesta notes, "educational processes and practices tend to be characterised by nonlinearity and unpredictability and by a fundamental gap between 'input' (teaching, curriculum, pedagogy) and 'output' (learning)" (Biesta, 2010, p. 6). Yet certainty and simplicity via input/output equations is what we observe in educational discourse at the political level and is what many time-poor teachers may crave in current contexts of curriculum change and new reporting requirements. The Curious Schools Project attempted to play the middle ground by giving participating teachers a structure (certainty) to be self-reflexive, but in ways that valued agency and emergence (uncertainty) in open systems of representation for what creativity practices in education could be. One teacher participant valued and interpreted this approach as a kind of "PL mashing": "You can cherry pick from concepts and mash together something that works for you. It has appeal in that regard – in terms of PL [professional learning] mashing what there is and how you can use it". While offering some structure via the use of standardised subtitles for each site, and agency in that teachers had final sign off on their sites before they went live, the Curious Schools Project invited reflection and insight into the productive mess of teaching, the emergent complexity and diversity of teacher practice, and restless practice of curiosity.

Limitations and Future of the Project

One of the limiting factors of the project, reported by participants, was the quality and useability of the software associated with the Curious Schools sites. A frequent criticism related to how it was clunky to use ("too many steps") and that participant teachers still needed to devote extra time outside class to upload images and text after the teaching encounters. A number of participants indicated that this added to already critical time pressures around student reporting and other administration required after school hours.

As an aspect of the partnership exchange with CAPE, the use of this software allowed for our project focus to be on the concepts and processes of professional learning discussed above, without the added IT demands to design an online platform. This partnership also allowed for unique professional exchanges on teacher professional learning, particularly as they related to enquiry-based teaching practices and arts education. Yet, as Aprill has noted, the software was designed exclusively for CAPE ten years ago, prior to the evolution of more

user-friendly Web 2.0 online sharing applications now available and is ready for updating for use in CAPE's own contexts as well.

Drawing on teacher participant feedback and further theorisation around the role of emergent education in the teacher professional learning sphere, our next phase of the Curious Schools Project is to design online software that is streamlined for use in the 'realtime' of classroom work. Our aim is to encourage multimodal capture of classroom work *as well as* prompted opportunities for simultaneous upload and reflection; such that participating teachers do not experience a segregated process of planning, thinking, reflecting, doing and documenting. Rather, through use of a game-like structure, we hope to encourage the kinds of playful emergence and curiosity in teacher professional that we see in quality arts engagement and, to some extent, social media. Our goal is the celebration of nomad creativity in an online documentation platform that reveals the 'space between the data' and demonstrates the virtue of making the familiar strange and the strange familiar as a basis for meaningful learning and change.

Conclusion

The Curious Schools Project was devised as a teacher professional learning initiative to profile creativity in Tasmanian schools. It intended to provide an online platform for teachers to question, document and critically reflect on their own work and that of their students, and to allow for greater understanding of creative practices in education 'behind the scenes'. It is now an ongoing project that, unlike the provision of unit plans and 'how to' resources for teaching new curriculum, seeks to engage educators in deep thinking and open-ended enquiry about their practice. It utilises a process of encouraging teachers to articulate and express their own curiosities and 'ways of seeing and knowing' to others. In this way, curriculum and national professional standards can be revealed from within their practice, not the other way around. In conjunction with the provision of quality role-modelling and resources where required, Curious Schools may help teachers be more critical and creative themselves in how they plan, teach and sustain confidence in their own growth and work in times of uncertainty and change.

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