
EDITORIAL

Intervention: Inaugural arts forum

A.-Chr. Engels-Schwarzpaul, E. M. Grierson and J. Mansfield

The inaugural ARTS FORUM: The Draft Arts Curriculum and Teacher Education in the Postmodern Context was presented at the University of Auckland, 1 September 2000. The publication of the Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum: Draft (1999) followed by The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000) provided an opportunity for discussion and debate as the document was being introduced into teacher education. Educators in the arts, from primary, secondary and tertiary backgrounds presented papers at this twilight forum. The focus was on music and visual arts. At the time it was not possible to include analysis from all fields of the arts. The contacts established since simply did not exist then, and attempts to present more diversity would have been no more than token gestures. Despite any specific limitations the inaugural forum opened up possibilities for further interaction between the different fields of arts education. This, in turn, will lead to increased attention to interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary networking.

While most contributors at the forum engaged critically with *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum*, the written curriculum document is only part of the whole process of curriculum change. The debate and conflict that were undoubtedly part of the policy-making process have meanwhile become obscured. However, through the written document, interpretative spaces have now been opened for further critical attention. The arts have undoubtedly been invested with a new intellectual weight through the professionalism, passion and dedication of those involved in the curriculum writing process. Now is the time for educators and researchers in the arts to strengthen this visibility. The co-operative and consultative processes that have occurred following the publication of *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* (2000) are further reducing the distance between the policy-making process and the teachers, principals, and others required to action the policy requirements and recommendations.

The papers of the inaugural forum, to which this particular issue of *ACCESS* is devoted, are situated in newly opened interpretative spaces. Most have emerged during the process of doctoral research and are written from the positions of practitioners in the visual arts, design and music education. The issues raised, however, go beyond those particular disciplines and we hope that they will engender debate amongst teachers, principals, teacher-educators and those involved in curriculum research in arts education in the widest sense. Contributors were concerned about the entitlement of student teachers for the arts, in a tertiary setting, where globalisation and internationalism have changed the conditions under which the arts are taught and interpreted. Thus, they identified the tension between the rhetoric of curriculum policy in the arts and the reality of practice and curriculum space. Underpinning the six position papers presented at the ARTS FORUM was an interrogation of the taken-for-granted assumptions within the ministerially constructed notion of "the Arts". Participants demanded a genuine space for philosophy, theory and critical pedagogy that takes education in the arts beyond assumptions of the "beauty full" classroom, the "creative self-expression", developmental or skills-based paradigms.

Forum papers were presented by Professor Michael Peters (Chair of Education, University of Glasgow and University of Auckland), Dr Janet Mansfield (University of Auckland), Dr Elizabeth Grierson (School of Art and Design, Auckland University of Technology), Carole Shephard (Associate Professor, Elam School of Fine Arts), Ted Bracey (HOD, Ilam School of Fine Arts), David



Lines (Senior Lecturer, Music Education, University of Auckland). Following the papers, the plenary debate was chaired by Elizabeth Grierson, with summing up by Chris Naughton (Lecturer, Music Education, University of Auckland). In this issue of *ACCESS - Intervention: Inaugural ARTS FORUM*, five papers are profiled from the Forum with the inclusion of additional essays by Dr Tina Engels-Schwarzpaul and Christopher Naughton.

ARTS FORUM provided a visible and viable space for debate in cultural policy and curriculum issues, both theoretical and institutional, to ensure that the collectivity and individuality of these endeavours were heard, along with their differences and similarities, intersections and divergence, agreements and antagonisms. The curriculum field is today, according to Pinar et al (1996: 6), concerned with "understanding curriculum" rather than merely "developing" curriculum. While the particular emphasis is on the specifics of curriculum in visual arts, design and music education, we hope that *INTERVENTION: Inaugural ARTS FORUM* will open the space for future critical debate amongst dance and drama educators, to include researchers and policy-makers in all the arts.

Insights from postmodern and poststructuralist theories challenge art educators to create a liberatory, critical curriculum able to contest hegemonic and universalist discourses of knowledge. We may therefore create forums for the affirmation and exploration of the playful arabesque of musical and artistic imagination in all its uncertainty and unpredictability. Simultaneously, neo-liberal policies and rhetoric embroil us in what Peters and Marshall term "a new meta-narrative of development" (2000: 5). We are charged with answering the questions of how visual arts and design knowledge, musical knowledge or dance knowledge, for instance, fits the "knowledge economy". This suggests that such knowledge, in terms of both its procedural and theoretical dimensions, must be conceived of in terms of economic commodity. Departments of music, art and design, drama and dance education are thus positioned to ask whether the knowledge generated by their particular fields has the ability to "innovate", to be a "national determinant of wealth", a "contributor to comparative advantage" (Peters and Marshall, 2000: 1). Departments and programmes are, contradictorily, under pressure to promote and market themselves as economically advantageous, at a time when they are marginalised within curriculum policy (see Mansfield 1995; 2000, 2001).

In this context, Michael Peters re-opens questions which, it appears, the curriculum document has temporarily closed. In his discussion of the postmodern condition and its relationships with various forms of modernism, Peters takes as a point of departure Lyotard's account of the changed status of knowledge under the impact of new technologies to investigate the conditions under which knowledge is disseminated and administered today. The "predominance of the performativity criterion" (Lyotard, 1988: 47) leads education to the production of skills that are indispensable to the social system. This results in the training of a counted number of specialists "capable of acceptably fulfilling their roles at the pragmatic posts required by its institutions" (48). But an acknowledgement of instability and difference in knowledge production, and its relationships with factors such as global communication and technology, requires a critical examination of the accustomed certainties implicit in the curriculum.

Peters comes to the conclusion that we are no longer able to predict the future needs and abilities of current students. The way in which we package knowledge in education may well be redundant, given the emerging overlaps between disciplines and professional and social practices. Peters presents the philosophical changes referred to by "the postmodern condition" as a cluster of concepts and combines them with snapshot scenarios of various social and theoretical areas, such as: globalisation, economic change, knowledge production and formation, ecology and cultural change. He surmises that the arts are perhaps particularly capable of dealing with the crossovers and instabilities of the postmodern condition, since they have preserved within their field some ways of thinking, doing and experiencing that were in other areas reshaped into functionalist skills. Art's "ability to hold its own *qua* mimesis in the midst of rationality, even while using the means of that rationality, is a response to the evils and irrationality of the rational bureaucratic world." (Adorno, 1984: 79ff).

If, however, art's specific subject matter and kinds of mediation through different concepts, modulations of experience and relationships, and intellectual tools is to provide alternative models in education, then art education has to resist the urge to assimilate to conventional approaches that remain blind to their own assumptions and naturalise, for example, terms such as "disciplines" and "skills". The term "discipline" implies notions such as order, rationality, development, and certainty, thereby creating the illusion of a coherent, stable body of knowledge. On the other hand, if art since modernism has also been associated with experiment, transgression and a search for the new, how would such contradictions be accommodated in a curriculum for the arts?

Janet Mansfield sets out to examine the implications arising from such assumptions and their embedding in *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum*. It is precisely its own internal tensions that the document fails to examine. Within the larger context of the *Curriculum Framework*, "art" - despite the diversity of the activities and theories included in the category - is further reduced to a seemingly neutral, generic area of practice. The arts curriculum replicates nineteenth century aesthetic discourses where art is produced by a specialised few and contemplated by (some of) the rest. This cultivation of passive art appreciation is then paired, contradictorily, with performative "skills" essential to rationalist capitalism. Within the limited space that arts education is given in the disciplining document of the Curriculum Framework (Ministry of Education 1993) mixed messages are bound to occur. Thus, what might be, in another context, an invitation to explore the multiplicity of art practices and theories that students from different cultures might bring into the classroom, is here likely to lead to a functionalist rather than a critical literacy.

The latter would require teachers, together with their students, to question the rules determining the images and narratives with which they are confronted in everyday life, and through which they explore and make meaning in their own art practice. Art is not free from representation, and art education needs to address the full implications of art's involvement with wider visual cultures and significations. There is "no value-neutral, let alone value-free, place" for representation in the arts (see Hutcheon, 1989: 46), and if culture is "separated from its material core [it] turns into a reference for ideology" (Semsek & Stauth, 1988: 704).

To eschew these issues, merely because the arts curriculum document fails to make them explicit, would be unethical in the process of education. To consider race, class, gender, and other aspects of difference and dominance as "dealt with", and thus resolved by a rhetorical and unproblematic absorption of diversity into the curriculum document, would close down a critical discussion of the political in art before it even began to take a wider hold in art education in New Zealand. It would amount to censorship of all those views and positions that resist being absorbed and neutralised. Only if we engage with the vested interests that stimulate image-making, and approach these questions through a well-informed critical and theoretical stance, can we provide students and beginning art educators with the means and tools for their participation in a true cultural democracy.

Elizabeth Grierson urges us as educators to be cognisant and critical of the conditions of discourse and the ideological context of power relations under which art education contributes to the constitution of subjectivities. Whom does the pedagogy of current art education serve? Is this pedagogy legitimated and made explicit in the policy and practices of art education and, if so, how? As long as the theoretical assumptions underpinning arts education remain unrecognised and unquestioned, a workable politics of difference will be neither accessible nor applicable in the contemporary conditions of education. For example, approaches basing representation on convention are principally open to differences, whereas approaches relying on a definition of art as an essence, shared by all human beings alike, lead to appeals to sameness and universality. Too easily, assumptions are formulated which marginalise certain practices in art education. Whatever approach is adopted in education, be it through appeal to sameness or the inscription of difference, it will have a bearing on the conditions of practice. There is no neutrality in these matters. Educators' choices and actions in this respect will have individual and social consequences.



Art educators need to be critically aware of the conditions of discourse through which knowledge is considered and constituted and through which they speak. Grierson argues that we must exercise a theoretically well informed criticality in order to be able to meet our ethical obligations and to pay adequate attention to questions of justice. Part of that responsibility is, for each of us, to open political spaces for further questions. The publication of the curriculum document ought not to be regarded as a final event that closes discussion, but rather as another occasion to ask important questions about the way in which the document is politically framed. We must consider which theoretical assumptions it makes, whose interests it is likely to serve and, most importantly, where marginalisation will announce the need for further attention.

In the context of examining the conceptual structure of *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2000), Ted Bracey calls into question the truth claims of the document. He identifies a number of assertions made by the document as "unaccompanied by explanation or illumination", placing them in an historical context. There is a need for critical reflection by teachers on the nature of their enterprise, which is not met by forms of teacher education that deny beginning teachers "the means, opportunity or incentive" to engage in such interrogations.

In raising questions of epistemology and ontology in connection with questions of knowledge selection, Bracey argues against the notion of the arts as "languages". Although specific reference to the arts as "languages" has been removed from the final document (2000), there is no question that a central and unifying idea of "literacy" remains. This is in itself language-based. What started off as an analogy between language and art, he observes, has in the meantime become a "reality in the minds of those who drafted the curriculum statement". The theory choice of using a language analogy in the interpretation of art will, however, almost automatically "shape, perhaps to a greater extent than is often realized, our consequent conceptions of the communicative, expressive, and meaningful dimensions of art" (Hagberg, 1995: 31). Bourdieu (quoted in Arnold & Siebert, 1995: 143) has described this process as "the sneaking transition from the model of reality to the reality of the model". Bracey questions therefore the curriculum aim of "enabling students to become literate in those languages".

In some instances, the curriculum opens questions which are then left unanswered and, unwittingly perhaps, points to areas of conflict which it then avoids. Why is it spelt out, for example, that the arts "develop the artistic and aesthetic dimensions of human experience"? What is meant when an instrumentality is assumed for the role of art in the development of this dimension? A relationship between those aspect/ is suggested through their juxtaposition, "which is not explained and which is contentious to say the least". Bracey also debates contentious questions of categorisation of "the arts" drawing attention to values and definitions of art and craft, art and visual culture, and other cultural practices which may or may not be included in "arts" education. Lacking theoretical justification, the conceptual ground of the curriculum document is thus muddled.

There is far too much focus on classroom practice in teacher education, says Bracey, and not enough critical reflection on the art teaching enterprise. The result of this exclusive attention is merely "training" rather than "art teacher education". Critical of proposals for art education, which focus on an assumed future rather than the present, Bracey detects a disjunction between the concept "art" and its future function or use value. He notes that "art education" has been repackaged in various forms which defer from the real attention to "an art education for now". Sceptical of eclectic inclusions of a diverse range of visual cultures in the name of "art", Bracey makes a case for a "theory of art education" in which the "epistemology is consistent with its function, axiology and ontology".

It is perhaps unavoidable to attempt to classify and define the phenomena with which a curriculum document is concerned. However, classification is inherently hierarchical and "always begins with an implicit but powerful act of exclusion; to define categories is to assume the kind of superiority necessary to make such distinctions" (Crawford, 2000: 85). Not surprisingly, classifications become the object and instrument of struggle (Bourdieu, 1989: 169) when

subordinate groups try to unsettle what goes without saying, and to develop resources to say what was hitherto unsayable. In crises, the common order is challenged and confronted with opposing claims to knowledge and authority (170). For questions about the natural or conventional character of social facts to become possible, however, the "immediate fit" between subjective and objective structures needs to be broken and self-evidence practically destroyed (168-9).

In an attempt to provide such an opportunity to ask questions of knowledge and authority, Tina Engels-Schwarzpaul explores from the perspective of a tertiary educator in design the connections between art and design education and the social contexts within which they take place. Using ornamentation as an example of marginalised aesthetic and signifying practices, Engels-Schwarzpaul interrogates the divisions created by classifications such as high / low art, or Western / ethnic art. An assignment given to design students at a tertiary institution demonstrates the consequences of a lack of theoretical knowledge and reflexivity for the constitution of subjectivity in design education. While some subjects are encouraged to avail themselves of others' cultures, other subjects become "tokens lacking any significance beyond that of a fragmentary and unrepresentative ... insularity" (Guest, 2000: 85). In this circumstance the material core of their cultures is made irrelevant. Through appropriation, "the living people and culture" are reduced "to the status of objects" (Root, 1996: 72).

Similarly, in the relationships between cultural elites and the lay public, users are placed under the censorship of experts who consistently ignore their practices as part of their life-worlds. Moreover, the transitions to which art forms and practices are subjected under the rules of market economies are mirrored in educational settings and curricula. Strategies of distancing and differentiation (between system and lifeworld, theory and practice, or ethnicity and repressive multiculturalism, see Žižek, 1997: 45; 1998: 997) will be replicated in schools and universities, unless their underpinning ideologies are put into question.

The packaging of culture into "profitable resource" becomes too easily privileged through cultural branding and valorisation in the global market thrust whereby notions of identity are displaced and the significance of *praxis* eradicated. Engels-Schwarzpaul calls for critical interrogation of the conditions of practice rather than accepting a repetitive "turning of culture and art into objects of palliative consumption". An orientation must be sought in art education if we are to avoid the inverted self-referentiality of "multiculturalism" whereby our "Thou" is ill-considered and theoretically ignored. In this conceptual, ethical, and practical terrain lies our responsibility as art and design educators.

The instrumentality Bracey observes as problematic in current art education has been described by Adorno and Horkheimer (1944) as instrumental (or technological) rationality. They criticised the culture industries, in particular, for subjugating aesthetic experience to the administrative and economic imperatives in capitalist cultural production.

To the detriment of both it forces together the spheres of high and low art The seriousness of high art is destroyed in speculation about its efficacy; the seriousness of the lower perishes with the civilizational constraints imposed on the rebellious resistance inherent within it as long as social control was not yet total. (Adorno, 1967)

Their analysis, however, assumed an autonomy of (high) art that has since been widely criticised. While their insights are still useful to contextualise instrumental strategies in art production, we are able, today, to see different contexts and different agencies. In a similar vein, debate in music education has sometimes centred around the idea of "absolute authenticity" and "compromise" (see Palmer, 1992) in terms of presenting music of different cultures to students. For Palmer (1992: 33) there are "chances that authenticity will be in jeopardy" in such instances. But a discussion steeped in talk of "original values", assuming a "presence", an "essence", and a "purity" of a culture's musical representation implies also that musical meaning is final. Conversely, poststructuralist discourses (see Derrida 1988, 1982) question the idea of "essence", which is implied in the notion of "authenticity". Departure and deferral are located within everyday practices of music



and constitute the very affirmation of that practice. As Ho-chia Chueh (2001: 197) argues with reference to Derrida's performative notion, what is important is to affirm the realities of the present in the accidental and the contingent through the various plays of difference.

In relation to these issues, and in particular to the representation of music from different cultures or "world music", Chris Naughton describes in his article a one-year community-based research project in music education concerning "Free Samba". He highlights the tradition-bound definitions of music practice and philosophy, problematising the expectations that students ought to have a grounding in the origin and "meaning" of music of a particular culture. "Performance" of music becomes then not a singular pedagogical aim. Knowing and understanding the context of music is implicated in how and what we teach. The examples Naughton gives of the students' reactions to the "Free Samba" project reveal the musical subject as a site of interesting, conflicting, and multiple realities. As students in this project referred in their comments to "listening and maintaining a better sense of pulse and being able to cope with more complex cross rhythms [through] samba on Latin percussion instruments", hybridity was celebrated as the play of difference. In questioning whether the mere *experience* of music of another culture is sufficient, Naughton questions also whether it is enough to just "empathise". He suggests that we should teach the cultural context of music in a collaboration of teachers from music and the humanities. Furthermore, he envisions a broader scope for music education, which includes the musical practices of many cultures, as he outlines a gap between what educators and ethnomusicologists promote in terms of desirable practice, and what teachers and lecturers can be expected to achieve.

To further the project of rethinking music education, David Lines draws upon Gilles Deleuze (1988) and Jean François Lyotard (1984) to elaborate the meaning of the "musical moment" within educational and community sites of practice. To introduce the concept of the "first musical space" and to articulate the "'space' of this musical moment" - an often disregarded aspect of music-making, Lines utilises Deleuze's analysis of the earlier Foucault. Deleuze's comprehension of Foucault's "statements" assists Deleuze in the articulation of his notions of discourse and knowledge. To understand the concept of music-in-action, Lines draws an analogy between the temporal spoken "statement" and "the musical moment". The complexity, unfixed and dynamic play of discursive forces and their impact upon the "decentred" subject are acknowledged and explored within a broader poststructuralist critique, and therefore, claims Lines, music may draw on their rich theoretical usability. What is articulated is a new, affirmative notion of the "temporal, moving and changing 'statement'" in which the "value, character and positivity of the statement" emerges, only obliquely linked to the speaking subject and "constantly changing in relation to a decentred subject". The first musical space, suggests Lines, is "temporal, active, improvisational, of the moment, intentional" and "affirmative in music".

Lines terms the emphasis on formal properties - the "ideologically dominant musical canon of the great composers" - as the "second musical space", and he notes the challenges that have been brought to bear on this hegemonic tradition. He calls for affirmation of the forces constituting "the first musical space" exemplifying this idea from his work with jazz/rock bands in community contexts, pubs and clubs. Here Lines articulates, in his own words, "interactions that work at the edge of the first musical space".

In the course of a classical work's harmonic journey, use is made of the "imperfect" and the "interrupted cadence". Both cadences leave a phrase unresolved and introduce an element of uncertainty, neither returning to the "home" key. Both cadences open music to further possibilities by their interventions. Transitory in nature, these interrupted cadences "occur especially at the midpoint of phrases or periods. They fulfil only half their cadential obligations since ... they fail to provide full release from previously generated harmonic tensions. In fact, it is the residual tension ... that gives full impetus to the remainder of the phrase or period ... " (1997). At this point, our sensory and emotional experiences are altered in anticipation, opening us through uncertainty for that which is starting to evolve. Just as the "imperfect" and "interrupted" cadences create the potential

for varying harmonic resolutions in music, so in any exploration of the arts curriculum interruption and intervention oscillate and await a shaping dynamic.

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