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DESIGNING FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING

UNLEARNING PEDAGOGY

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Abstract

Our teaching and learning habits are useful but they can also be deadly. They are useful when the conditions in which they work are predictable and stable. But what happens if and when the bottom falls out of the stable social world in and for which we learn? Is it possible that learning itself - learning as we have come to enact it habitually - may no longer be particularly useful? Could it be that the very habits that have served us so well in stable times might actually become impediments to social success, even to social survival? This paper explores reasons why we may need to give up on some of our deeply held beliefs about teaching and learning in order to better prepare young people for their social futures.

Keywords

Pedagogy, deadly habits

Unlearning Pedagogy

There's an old joke about teaching that tries hard to be off colour. It is about a brothel in which ex-professionals now ply a new trade. It soon becomes apparent that, of all the professions represented in the brothel, the teacher is by far the most sought after by the brothel's clients. When the brothel owner decides to eavesdrop to discover the secret of the teacher's popularity, he hears a very no-nonsense instruction: 'I don't care how many times we have to do this, you're going to stay until you get it right!!"

Now while this is a somewhat lateral entrée into matters pedagogical, it does nevertheless get us quickly to the idea that pedagogy is characterised by *well-rehearsed habits*. Success in formal teaching and learning has depended, in large measure, on the acquisition of certain routinised patterns of thinking and behaving. As effective teachers, whatever our technological tools, we habitually prepare and review our curriculum documents to ensure coverage and relevance. We update our reference lists. We organise our assessment tasks so that they evaluate overall performance by requiring students to respond in a range of formats and even to have some degree of choice about a preferred format. We set up assessment criteria that make the judging of quality as transparent as possible. We provide feedback. We praise the positive.

By re-enacting such pedagogical habits, we make a culture of teaching and learning that parallels a predictable and regular social world. When supply is linear and stable, when labour is shaped by relatively simple patterns of time and space, when consumption is a passive activity, then such behavioural and attitudinal habits make sense. In fact, they are the most likely means of achieving success. Get the routines right – the routines of thinking, of engaging, of problem-solving – and they will equip you well both now and in the future. If you have a complex problem, break it down into its component parts or into a number of simple tasks. Plan your project systematically before you start work. Introduction-body-conclusion. Tell them what you are going to say, say it, and then tell them what you just said. Begin with lower order questions before moving to higher order ones. If Plan A doesn't work, move to Plan B. Make a 'to-do' list. Seek feedback. LHS = RHS. Quod erat demonstrandum.

In a relatively predictable social world, pedagogy – ie, teaching, learning and the social relations that such engagement produces (Lusted, 1986) – has had as its enduring purpose, at least since the advent of Carl Rogers, the fostering of *effective learning habits*. It was Rogers who, in the 1950s, insisted that formal education erred in focusing on the skills of the teacher, when it was the learner who ought to be the centre and focus of pedagogy. "*I have come to feel*", said Rogers, "*that the only learning that significantly influences behaviour is self-discovered, self-appropriated learning…I realise that I have lost interest in being a teacher*" (In O'Neill, 1983, p.257, author's emphasis). This idea, unpopular as it was at the time, has spawned a vast body of scholarship that foregrounds *the nature of learning* rather than the art of teaching. How learners might learn more effectively has become an entire discipline in itself. Within this discipline, what counts as effective are those learning habits that are themselves learnable, portable and lifelong. We can all now chant the mantra: *good students are lifelong learners and good teachers are facilitators of such learning.* One rhetorical effect of this 'post-Rogerian' commitment to learning and to its facilitation has seen the words 'student' and 'teacher' becoming somewhat passé. The distinction between them has blurred. We should all be learners all the time, and those of us who teach students should also understand ourselves to be *facilitators of learning*.

It comes as no surprise, then, that 'lifelong learning' is a much loved knowledge object in contemporary pedagogical work. As self-regulating professional experts (and we should all now see ourselves this way), we must not imagine an end to learning. Professional teachers are supposed to accumulate new skills and knowledge throughout the entire lifespan, and expect that others will want to do the same. There are those, however, among whom I include myself, who pose the question 'Why lifelong learning now?' and those whose answer is less than wholehearted endorsement. For sceptics like Chris Falk (1999), lifelong learning – "sentencing learners to life" – works as a vehicle for selling commodities and as a profitable commodity in itself. To Falk, life-long learning "is largely a project of economic, social and epistemological recuperation dedicated to delimiting rather than expanding the subjectivities of learners exposed to it" (p.7). He claims that life-long learning has departed from its original intent to make learning more attractive by disassociating it from formal educational institutions. The net effect is to make education more intrusive and more damning of those who choose not to engage in it (p.8). As Falk argues it, lifelong learning is suspect for its "headlong pursuit of relevance as defined by the Market" (p.1), and its complicity in the production of the "malleable-but-disciplined" individual that is so necessary to enterprising culture. While I would not be as fanatical as to spell market with a capital M, critiques like Falk's do useful work in preventing us from the habit of consuming pedagogical ideas in 'bird-throat' fashion.

Habits are useful but they can also be deadly. They are useful when the conditions in which they work are predictable and stable. But what happens if and when the bottom falls out of the stable social world in and for which we learn? Is it possible that learning itself - learning as we have come to enact it habitually - may no longer be particularly useful? Could it be that the very habits that have served us so well in stable times might actually become impediments to social success, even to social survival? According to Zigmunt Bauman (2004), this is not merely a future possibility – it is the contemporary social reality.

I want to flesh out Bauman's thesis more fully in terms of its implications for pedagogical thinking and the implications of such thinking for doing pedagogical work. In doing so, I am not speaking of pedagogy *before* or *after* digitalisation, as though 'going digital' somehow marks a neat divide in the whole nature and purpose of pedagogical activity. Certainly new computer-centred network technologies and their capabilities have impacted powerfully on social systems and social relationships. And it is also true that the resultant 'prosthetic culture' (Lury, 1997) of social engagement has radically extended limits of the pedagogical body. Thus we can no longer speak of *the social* without speaking of *the technological* (Castells, 2001). The point is, however, that these impacts *may or may not* result in a new or improved set of social dynamics. As Saskia Sassen (2004) points out, digital technologies cannot be depended on to produce new dynamics – they may well be simply derivative or reproduce existing social relations. So I want to consider those pedagogical habits or routines that we retain within and despite the potential of 'cyberspace' as a pedagogical habitat. In this paper I will address seven of these habits – what we might call the

seven deadly habits of pedagogical thinking that are ripe for unlearning. And predominant among these is *the idea that learning is the key to social success.*

Deadly Habit No.1: The more learning the better.

The predominant value that attaches to learning, according to Bauman (2004), has its antecedents in the rat-in-maze experiments of half a century ago. Bauman argues that the firmness and fixity of the maze parallelled the "firmly fixed division of labour, career tracks, class distinctions, power hierarchies…marriages…[and] social skills" that characterised a "solid" social world (p.21). Thus "it seemed sensible" to measure the rat's intelligence (and to extrapolate social intelligence) by a demonstrated capacity for adjustment, adaptation and habituation (p.21). Bauman returns us to those experiments to 'unfix' the rat's maze and in doing so to throw out a challenge to learning itself:

> What, however, if the maze were made of partitions on castors, if the walls changed their position fast, perhaps faster yet than the rats could scurry in search of food, and if the tasty rewards were moved as well, and quickly, and if the targets of the search tended to lose their attraction well before the rats could reach them, while other similarly short-lived allurements diverted their attention and drew away their desire? (p.21)

For Bauman, this 'unfixed maze' is a metaphor for the new set of social conditions that he terms "the liquid-modern setting of the social" (p.21). In this setting, he argues, adjustment, adaptation and habituation – the capacity to learn and reproduce appropriate social behaviours – is no longer the key to success. Instead of opening up possibilities, such learning may be unhelpful because it assumes a fixed or predictable social world. Bauman elaborates:

> Just as long-term commitments threaten to mortgage the future, habits too tightly embraced burden the present; learning may in the long run disempower as it empowers in the short…. 'Your skills and know-how are as good as their last application'. (p.22)

In this liquid social setting, *forgetting* (or what Bauman calls "de-learning"), becomes as important as learning. For Bauman, it is "the interplay of learning and de-learning" (p.22) that is crucial here.

Many contemporary learning theorists, would I suspect, want to express concerns about the limitations of Bauman's definition of learning. If to *de-learn* is to forget, then learning is, by implication, remembering. Indeed, Bauman makes this explicit when he goes on to define 'learning and de-learning' as synonymous with "memory and forgetting" (p22). There is much more to learning than memory, we would want to insist, and we have known that for a long time. Behaviourism – learning theory born from rats in mazes – is old hat, and certainly the bete noir of any self-respecting constructivist.

Bauman's thesis remains nevertheless an interesting one – that, in a "liquid-modern" social world, the work of assembling and structuring new social relations is no more important than the work of "keeping them eminently dismantlable" (p.22). His focus moves beyond the individual and the cognitive to incorporate the moral and the aesthetic, and the interplay among these various social elements. So Bauman's 'remembering' and 'forgetting' have more profound significance than one individual's mind or brain. They connote a cultural and ethical disposition to knowledge that is relational, unfinished and revocable, and an imperative to processing that serves the purpose of assembling and dissembling social relations.

Having opened up the space of pedagogy as an interplay between the cognitive, the moral-ethical and the aesthetic, Bauman is less clear about the principles for getting the right mix of learning and de-learning as interplay. For him, "…how to mix them in the right proportions is anyone's guess" (p.22).

If we are to entertain Bauman's thesis about the value of de-learning for the context of "liquid modernity", we begin to de-stabilise what is the apparent Truth of our time-honoured pedagogical mantra – that *learning is all that matters*. Instead we have to come to grips with the idea that some

learning is unhelpful, and thus that *in certain circumstances ignorance might be better than knowledge*.

Deadly Habit No.2: Teachers should know more than students.

One of the most difficult issues for contemporary teachers is the deeply embedded notion that teachers ought to know more about their subject matter than their students. It is not just that those outside the profession have this expectation; teachers themselves expect to know enough to provide considered answers to student questions. Since the days of Peter Abelard, there has been a heavy social investment in the idea that teachers deliver wisdom to students who sit – either physically or metaphorically – at the feet of the wise one. While we have removed most of the platforms that literally raised the teacher's body above the student body in classrooms, the ghosts of pedagogues past return from time to time in the urge to stand and deliver.

So whether or not we view teachers as the sage on the stage or the guide on the side (or a bit of both), teachers are still generally expected – and expect themselves – to earn their keep by being 'ahead' of their students in terms of their overall knowledge base. It is interesting to see what happens when this expectation falls over, as it tends to do more frequently. At a recent forum in my university, one student commented that he was getting sick of having to go down to the front of the lecture theatre and get the technology working for hapless lecturers demonstrating their ignorance when it came to operating from their pedagogical cockpit. 'Whatever they're earning,' he said, 'I deserve at least half of it!'

Now I am not about to advocate that it's okay for teachers to be ignorant; I do think it is reasonable that university lecturers be familiar with their technological tools, ghosts in the machine notwithstanding. To put it in Charlie Leadbeater's (2000) terminology, I don't think teachers should be *uselessly* ignorant. But I do think Leadbeater is right to make a distinction between this sort of ignorance and the *useful* ignorance that can add pedagogical value. I want to look more closely at what Leadbeater has to say about knowledge and ignorance in order to challenge the habit of thinking that teachers *should know more*.

In *The Weightless Society* (2000), Leadbeater challenges the myth that lurks behind habitual thinking about the teacher as knower, ie, the myth that we are becoming a more and more knowledgeable society with each new generation. If knowing means being intimately familiar with the workings of the technologies we use in our daily lives, then, Leadbeater asserts, *we have never been more ignorant*. He reminds us that our great grandparents had an intimate knowledge of the technologies around them, and had no problem with getting the butter-churn to work or preventing the lamp from smoking. I expect that few readers of this paper would know what to do if their mobile phone stopped functioning and I certainly have no idea what is 'underneath' or 'behind' the keys on which I am typing. Nor, I confess, do I want to know. But that means that we are all very quickly reduced to the quill and the lamp if we lose our power sources or our machines break down. Thus we are much more vulnerable – as well as much more ignorant in relative terms – than our predecessors.

But Leadbeater makes a further important point which turns our assumptions about the usefulness of knowledge itself on its head. It is not simply that we are ignorant about the knowledge embedded in the technologies we use – we need to put this ignorance to work – to make it *useful* – to provide opportunities for ourselves and others to live innovative and creative lives, because, as Leadbeater puts it, "[w]hat holds people back from taking risks is often as not …their knowledge, not their ignorance" (p.4). *Useful ignorance*, then, becomes a space of pedagogical possibility rather than a lacuna. 'Not knowing' can be put to work without shame or bluster. This sort of thinking has its parallels in Guy Claxon's (2004) notion of *resilient learning* as "knowing what to do when you don't know what to do". Claxton makes the valid point that our highest educational achievers may well be aligned with their teachers in knowing what to do if and when they have the script. But as indicated earlier, this sort of certain and tidy knowing is out of alignment with a script-less and fluid social world. Out best learners will be those who can make 'not knowing' useful, who do not need the blueprint, the template, the map, to make a new kind of sense. This is the new habit that teachers need to acquire – *the habit of being usefully ignorant*.

Deadly Habit No3: Teachers lead, students follow.

A corollary of the idea that teachers ought to know more than students is the idea that teachers should provide the starting point for learning activities, and that students should engage in the tasks set by the teacher – ie, that students should follow where teachers lead. There is some interesting work currently being done about the knowledge economy itself which can help us re-evaluate this potentially deadly thinking habit. I refer in particular to public policy analyst Gregory Hearn's (2005) work on the shift to value ecology thinking. Hearn maps "an emerging fundamental shift in the way that value creation is thought about in business" (p.1), and the conceptual architecture he provides in his analysis is very helpful for re-thinking the idea of a teacher as the starting point and the student as 'following'.

Central to Hearn's thesis are a number of specific shifts that he describes as characteristic of "value ecology thinking" (p.1). Among these shifts he includes the shift *from consumers to co-creators of value*, and the related shift from *value chain to network*. Hearn makes the point that consumption is no longer essentially passive in character – that after a generation or more of 'couch potato' inactivity at the end of a supply chain where the product to be consumed arrives as a final product, we are now seeing patterns of distribution and consumption being developed that allow consumers to add value or finalise and so value-add to the product.

As a cultural phenomenon, IKEA represents an example of this shift. Together IKEA and IKEA clients *co-create valu*e, the former producing packages of materials, the latter assembling materials in cardboard boxes into trendy furnishings for funky pads. Scion.com is another good exemplar of an invitation to engage in this new sort of consumption. The message on the website "we relinquish all power to you" is an invitation not simply to buy a Scion car but to *create* one, to *edit* it, to *assemble* it according to your specific requirement and desires. This moves way beyond colour preference and 'extras' to numerous design features that count as 'standard' elsewhere. Moreover, the scion.com website is a multi-platform that hooks users up with a host of services not traditionally connected with the car industry – music, art, clothing, films, wet parties and the like. Users of scion don't just buy, they co-create in order to manufacture a product and a self. In Lawrence Lessig's (2001) terms, the user becomes the producer.

Concomitant with this shift in consumer-supplier relations is the changing configuration of supply itself. In a supply or value chain, according to Hearn, "traffic throughout…is one-way, with a fixed path with choice points" (p.8). The shift to a value network is consumer-centric rather than linear, and "does not respect industry boundaries in search of value", being enabled instead to "co-create value…at multiple points of exchange" (p.9). Crucially, the value network can quickly disconnect from nodes where value is not added, and connect up just as quickly with new nodes that promise added value. Put another way, networks can 'go round' or elude a point of exchange where supply chains do not.

If we consider pedagogical exchange as a form of value exchange and value creation, then what Hearn opens up are new possibilities for thinking about pedagogical supply and demand. First, the idea of teacher and student as co-creators of value is compelling. Rather than teachers delivering an information product to be consumed by the student, co-creating value would see the teacher and student *mutually involved in assembling and dissembling* cultural products. In colloquial terms, this would frame the teacher as neither sage on the stage nor guide on the side but *meddler in the middle*. The teacher is *in there doing and failing* alongside students, rather than moving like Florence Nightingale from desk to desk or chat room to chat room, watching over her flock, encouraging and monitoring.

Second, the new value ecology raises the possibility that the teacher who does not add value to a learning network can - and will - be by-passed. The rhizomatic capacity of networks to flow around a point in a chain means that teachers may be located in a linear supply chain of pedagogical services but excluded from their students' learning networks. That would be an effect of being perceived to be delivering content but not adding value. Once again, this is not a matter of how much take-up of technology is evident in the pedagogical work, but whether or not

pedagogical processes bring student and teacher together in their shared ignorance and mutual desire to make new sense of their world.

Deadly Habit No. 4: Teachers assess, students are assessed.

If the rethinking of pedagogy as co-creation of value re-positions teacher and student as project partners, as *co-directors and co-editors* of their social world, who then is the rightful assessor of the value of that cultural assemblage? The work is no longer clean of fingerprints, but is tainted by co-direction and co-editorship at every level. So what does it mean to make judgements to credential individuals on the basis of the quality of the co-creation? And what new dilemmas does this set up around 'objectivity' and assessment?

It has been fashionable since the 'crisis of legitimacy' that began with the 1960s, to advocate a more democratic relationship between teacher and student. Feminists in particular have questioned 'every eye on me' as both patriarchal and unhelpful in the quest to experience learning as personal and political empowerment. But tension remains between the 'democratic classroom' as an ideological ideal, and the role formal educational institutions continue to play as credentialers and reporters to industry and the professions. Experiments that involve students deciding their own curriculum and evaluating their own work have in general remained just that; Neill's Summerhill was never likely to become every future employer's dream.

But apart from the desire of external agencies to know what a particular set of credentials guarantee, there exists within pedagogical relationships a strong resistance to the idea of self or peer assessment. Students – especially high achievers – are very likely to resist any apparent move to 'downgrade' the quality assurance that 'objective' assessment purports to afford. Such students are likely to share with many in the community a belief that, in its purest form, 'democratic assessment' is oxymoronic. Don Lebler, a lecturer in popular music at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, is one university teacher who has worked extremely hard to overcome the barriers to peer assessment that students and management continue to set up. "You're the experts", he tells his students, "this is your music so you're better placed to assess its quality than your teachers are". But the business of working with students to help them share responsibility for assessment has not been easy (Lebler, 2005). In the words of G.B. Shaw, "power is responsibility; that is why most men dread it".

While speaking of student reluctance to take peer assessment seriously, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the reluctance of many teachers to advocate peer assessment. The reasons for this are not only driven by the imperatives to objectivity and transparency at the level of policy. As Jane Gallop (1982) cryptically puts it: "I suppose not all teachers experience as I do a diffuse yet unmistakeable pleasure when calculating grades at the end of the term" (p.128).

The imperative to co-create value may be empathic, but not synonymous, with the call for more democratic relations in pedagogical work. Indeed, many of the writers who challenged the authority of the Master Pedagogue would be disquieted by the language of 'value-adding' as an undesirable import from the tainted world of business. As Marilyn Strathern (1997) points out, we are quick to forget that many of the practices of business, including the passion for audit, are imports from education rather than the other way round. It was educators who first developed the technologies of audit that were then taken up by the business sector, rather than the reverse. What we now have, as Strathern puts it, is a nice example of cultural replication, rather than an inappropriate colonising of one 'pure' sector by a 'tarnished' one.

Whatever about the ideological struggles that persist in educational scholarship, the matter of assessing a co-edited and co-authored work remains an ethical challenge. While the rhetoric of team building is ubiquitous in universities as it is in other corporate organisations, assessment remains stubbornly individualistic. We assess and promote individuals and then we ask them to be effective members of teams. Many students resist being asked to work in teams at all, and especially if they have had the experience of a 'sleeping partner' in their team project in the past. Academics have tinkered on the edge of this issue, and have noted one or two brave innovations as though these point to a radical change in the pedagogical culture of schools and universities, but

there seems to be little wiggle room around this issue at present. Indeed, space seems to have been lost in relation to experimentation with assessment in a post-welfare climate dedicated to the quantification of quality, and any space for engaging in 'non-assessable' learning has all but disappeared. What's counted counts, and in this logic, the counters and the 'countees' must be seen to be constantly measuring performance, and always at a safe distance from each other.

Of course, students have always subverted out best plans for objective assessment and continue to do so. I note Simon Kitto's (2003) compelling work on a new ethics of cheating being developed in teams of students completing individual on-line tests. By taking it in turns to guess answers to on-line multiple choice tests, four or five students can 'balance out' their results over a semester, and ensure that they all pass. Somewhat confounded by this practice, their university's Dean of Learning commented in this case (*not* ironically) that it was a demonstration of the value of peer learning. It is at least heartening to know that, while students continue to cheat as they always have, on-line environments are assisting them to do so more collaboratively!

Deadly Habit No.5: Curriculum must be set in advance.

If pedagogy might be rethought as the co-creation of value, then curriculum cannot be 'fully formed' and set in place in advance of pedagogical activity. This of course flies directly in the face of the heavy investment in National Curriculum Frameworks for schools in both the UK and Australia. While this does not imply that teachers have a new licence to be unprepared for pedagogical activity, the nature and purposes of *what counts as preparation* must change. From fixed and immutable, curriculum needs to be conceptualised as *content for meddling with*. And this means a significant shift in what many teachers prioritise in their teaching. While the written text remains important, *the remixable curriculum* demands that the contribution of other 'non-text' media – visuals, animation, sound – be elevated from their currently marginal status in an overwhelmingly text-dependent curriculum. In Lawrence Lessig's (2005) terms, we need to come to see "redaction" as *central to* education, *not lesser than* education.

If the curriculum is to meet Bauman's (2004) criterion of "eminently dismantlable" (p.22), the capacity to edit reality – to organise it and re-organise it by mixing form and content, to juxtapose through display, to compare texts to understand difference – must be valued as a genuine skill. Yet according to Lessig, far from understanding the usefulness and cultural importance of remix, we have criminalised it as 'breach of copyright' where popular copyrighted materials are involved. The new terrorists are not only Islamic extremists but kids who mix four seconds of *The Simpsons* into their home movie. Of course, schools and universities can neither teach nor be seen to endorse criminal behaviour, so it is currently prudent to steer clear of some of the dangers that the re-mixable curriculum represents. What this condemns us to is a tired set of habitual cultural practices and a narrow form of cultural 'writing'. Thus, while digital technologies have enormous potential in terms of a newly subversive politics and a new flowering of cultural life, that potential remains locked up within the context of Law-meets-Technology; this in turn increases the likelihood that formal education will be excluded from the learning network of many young people.

With changes being mooted to copyright laws[1], it seems appropriate that parallel shifts can and ought to be made in teacher education. If the curriculum is always 'unfinished business', then time-honoured practices of curriculum design and implementation must be challenged. In mainstream teacher education, teacher trainees are made aware from the outset that they need to demonstrate evidence of curriculum design and implementation in the form of lesson preparation - and lesson preparation must *look like something*, usually a pile of notes and a plan for the development of the activities in logic sequence. (Gone are the days when a teacher could lower his head to the headmaster's table when a headmaster demanded 'your preparation on my desk' – I am aware of this occurring in the sixties!)

[1] I note the importance of the idea of a Creative Commons in pushing for legislative and cultural change in this area – see www.creativecommons.org/learnmore

Once the plan is written, care is usually taken not to stray too far from it or to be distracted by students with other agendas. This logic, in large measure, runs counter to the requirements of a remixable curriculum. The predictable or planned experience gives way to genuine experimentation, with outcomes neither known nor guaranteed. As a co-creator of value, the teacher shares with students experimental tasks in which failure is both likely and anticipated, where students and teachers fail without shame or disappointment. Bauman's dictum that: "[y]our guess and know-how are as good as their last application" (p.22) applies equally to teachers and students. Put bluntly, where the stability of the plan is the hallmark of good pedagogy, then the experimental culture that is a corollary of the remixable curriculum is virtually impossible to achieve.

If our higher education institutions have a deadening effect on experimentation, the same cannot be said about the excitement of university managers around technology uptake. As Strathern (1997) points out, technology "comes with the friendliest of epithets" (p.317) in the university culture – the more of it used in ways that the university management approves, the better. Thus the self-managing academic demonstrates improved teaching performance by pointing to the use of more and newer ICTs. (The converse is also true – a teacher is unlikely to make a satisfactory case for demonstrating enhanced performance without this claim.) The number of 'hits' on website can thus come to count as a measure of teaching effectiveness, just as the offering of subject content in multiple modes comes to count as a measure of the academic's capacity to be responsive to student diversity. The problem here lies in the naïve hope that more and newer ICTs will mean a more exciting set of learning possibilities. Where curriculum remains fixed and immutable, however, these good intentions remain just that. There is no doubt that new information and communication technologies offer all sorts of new possibilities for remix – but, as Sassen reminds us, they cannot of themselves be *relied on* to change anything.

Deadly Habit No. 6: The more we know our students, the better.

If failure is to become an integral part of our pedagogical processes, then there is work to be done to uncouple the snug relationship that currently exists between education and personal therapy. I have written at length on this topic (See Chapter 3 of *Pedagogical Pleasures*) and I do not intend to reiterate that entire argument here. However, because this paper imagines a newly emergent pedagogical process, the relationships and identities that such processes produce call for comment. There is a unique dilemma when pedagogy is confused with – and then conflated with – therapeutic work. (Evidence of this conflation, I would argue, is rampant at all levels of education, from childcare to doctoral studies.) The central dilemma is between the imperative to *take risks in order to learn and unlearn*, and the imperative to *minimise psychological harm* by refusing to subject individuals to 'negative' personal experiences.

As I have indicated above, failure is crucial to the culture of experimentation that "the right mix of learning and unlearning" demands. What we have seen, however is the unintended effect of an ethos of learning focused on a personal psychology of growth and development. The more success that is experienced, the higher will be the self-esteem and the student will thereby be a better learner and a happier person. To endorse confusion, failure and unresolvedness as central elements of the pedagogical process is to put the personal well-being of students at risk. This might not only reduce 'student satisfaction' levels, but militate against the trend to shorten timelines for successfully completing formal qualifications.

There are a number of difficulties with this set of propositions, not the least of which is the inflation of marking that goes together with fear of causing students anxiety or psychological stress. Student opinion and students effort must always be approved – indeed, revered - regardless of usefulness. I note with interest Frank Furedi's new book, *Where Have All The Intellectuals Gone: Confronting 21st Century Philistinism* in which he sets out the thesis that educators have turned schools and universities into "all inclusive theme parks where the customer is always right, where no-one is allowed to fail where no distinction is made between the good, the bad or the indifferent" (Dillon, 2005: 11). 'Stretching' the intellectual and imagination becomes risky when student self-esteem is sacrosanct.

The fact that most Western universities now offer free therapy sessions to both teachers and students to help them cope with the stresses of performing their teaching and learning roles is one effect of the extent to which pedagogy has been successfully rewritten as "emotional labour" (Adkins and Lury, 1999). As counsellor, the teacher loses the authority to punish, but wins the opportunity gently to require a much greater level of personal disclosure from the student. So the confessional work of the 'getting to know you' session has become one of the more predictable start-up moments for progressive tutorials. Resistance to such disclosure marks the defensive or inhibited student. 'Guessing' at students' inner life has indeed become an art form in some quarters, with early childhood teachers now on red alert for the tell-tale signs of suicide ideation in children who have an apparently excessive passion for using black crayons.

In *Governing the Soul: The shaping of the private self* (1990), Nikolas Rose provides some background to help us understand how pedagogy and psychology have become inextricably intertwined. He explains how, since World War Two, "psychologically inspired techniques of self-inspection and self-examination" have come to be utilised "in every area in which human action was to be shaped up", with the result that we now see "the problems of defining and living a good life…transposed *from an ethical to a psychological register*" (p.viii, his emphasis). This has meant, among other things, a growing fascination on the part of teachers and organisational leaders with the inner workings of the self, and a growing commitment to personal psychology as the key to education and social success.

Among all the knowledge objects that Rose draws our attention to in the post-war period, the rise of 'self-esteem' is among the most powerful in terms of its pedagogical effects. Steven Ward's *Filling the World with Self-Esteem: A social history of truth-making* (1996) explains how 'self-esteem' has been able to plug into social and political agendas once it had been discovered, well after it had been invented by Maslow in the 1940s. Evidence of its importance to education became clear to me when I asked a group of Masters and Doctoral students in my faculty about the nature and purposes of education. 'Raising self-esteem' proved to be an almost universally agreed purpose, ranking alongside 'helping people reach their full potential'. What flows from this logic is a heavy investment by these teachers in the development of a positive and friendly teacher-student relationship. And this is achieved in turn, by getting to know the students as individuals. Such determination is not to be thought of as *prying* but as seeking appropriately to teach the 'whole person'.

How much do we need to know about a person in order to teach them? I have a colleague who asks teacher trainee students this question to be told pretty much the same story. 'Everything', they tell her. 'The birth history may be important (not enough oxygen to the brain), a history of alcoholism in the family, sibling rivalry, whether they have ever been sexually abused, had remedial reading' and so on. 'So what do I need to know about you?' she then asks. They are usually more circumspect in their response to this question, less willing to give permission to pry. But the point is nevertheless made. The good teacher builds and maintains a close warm relationship with students and this means knowing 'the whole person', whether or not we want to be 'known' as a psychological subject. In this rationality, 'openness' is a marker of the good student and 'interest in the person' a marker of the good teacher.

My point is not that we should be looking to return to a culture defined by the lofty arrogance and elitism of academics, but that one that respects students enough to challenge them by messing things up with and for them. The role, as Geoff Garrett, Head of Australia's CSIRO put it at a recent senior management forum, is to become 'chief disorganiser'. I have heard Lyndon Crosby, spin-doctor for the British Conservative Party make this same point somewhat differently to those who seek out his advice: "I can *please* you or I can *help* you – your choice!" Where pleasing and helping can only be thought as synonymous, important opportunities for disorganisation, disruption and disappointment are lost.

Deadly habit No.7: Our disciplines can save the world.

It is my hope that I have demonstrated the problem with Deadly Habit Number Seven in my treatment of Deadly Habits One to Six. The approach I have taken to my own unlearning has been

to range across academic disciplines and outside them in search of bright and shiny objects that can be used to generate different pedagogical thinking. Unfortunately, I have for some time now found relatively few compelling ideas about pedagogy coming out of mainstream education research, or professional development or leadership and management literature broadly defined.

So rather than relying on one field or even one scholar, I have deliberately mirrored the 'cut-and-paste' strategy of the creative assembler, and I acknowledge the drawbacks inherent in this sort of work: it rarely gets into one set of disciplinary-specific ideas in any depth, and it runs the risk of epistemological chaos as ideas get moved around, set beside and against each other. I share with Nikolas Rose (2004) a guilty sense of myself as "creeping up on" people's work in order to "steal a few concepts and then run off and use them in whatever way seems productive…" (p.176). I am, however, heartened to find such an eminent scholar as Rose admitting to this "very bad practice" (p.176) – it gives me licence to continue in this vein without the necessity of donning a hair-shirt as I assemble my scholarly fragments.

Finally, I intend to save myself from another deadly habit of academic authorship – the deadly habit of summarising main points at the end of a paper. This will allow the reader to dispense with the deadly habit of needing to be reminded about them. In Bauman's terms, the invitation is both to remember and to forget.

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