

Arts-enriched evidence for Learning and Teaching

Daphne Loads

Institute for Academic Development

- We need evidence
- But not impoverished evidence
- We can restore richness...
- Through arts-enriched practices...
- In particular, poetic inquiry
- So why not....?



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“When evidence is reduced to mean effect size, the individual person or event is shut out, complexity is lost and values are erased.”

Wrigley, 2008:1

“We comfort ourselves in the belief that we are able to describe just what every 4th grader should know and be able to do by the time they leave the 4th grade. To do this we reify an image of an average 4th grader.

Of course, very few policymakers have ever visited Ms. Purtle's 4th grade classroom, where they might encounter redheaded Mickey Malone. Mickey is no statistic... particulars like Mickey Malone complicate life, but they also enrich it.”

Eisner (2002)



We need evidence to help us make good professional judgements.



But not impoverished evidence

Mathematical abstractions that “neglect the contribution of the practitioner’s accumulated experience, a sense of the students’ needs and wishes, and an understanding of social and cultural context.”

Wrigley, 2008:1

So how can we restore richness?



Strong tradition of arts-based research in education, including Higher Education

Thriving area of work currently : poetic inquiry

Don't hold me back!

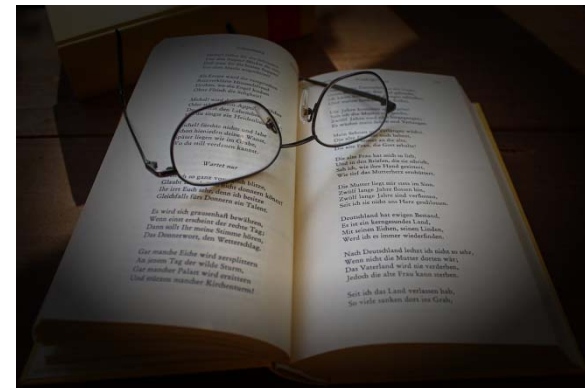


I came here from elsewhere*
Elsewhere there is a sense of being stifled
So if you're pushing the boundaries
there are people above you
that will try to pull you back
Here you've got a lot of autonomy,
the boundaries are open
'Go and explore,
go and develop yourself,
bring some expertise and knowledge from
outside
let's share and celebrate that.'
So the Money People saying 'No'
was just the big difference between
'Go and fly and explore the boundaries'
and somebody saying
'You can do it but we're keeping the engine,
or the oil
of this mechanism
and we're taking control over it.'
I'm in a different place now,
I want to fly,
Don't hold me back.

Poetic inquiry is...

Using poetry at any stage of the research process:

- Identifying research questions
- Creating data
- Analysing data
- Disseminating findings



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Poetic forms of inquiry can..

“...retain the voices of participants, communicate more evocatively and accessibly...counteract the hegemony inherent in more traditional texts...evoke emotional responses that bring the readers closer to the work, and ...permit silenced voices/stories to be heard.”

Butler-Kisber (2017)

Why not...?

Read a poem together with your students...
Ask what it says to them about their learning.



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Why not...?

Read an extract from a policy document with
your colleagues as if it were a poem...

What happens?



Why not..?

Distil transcripts of your research interviews into poems...

What do you notice? What do you miss?



Let's bring back the individual person and event into our evidence. Let's rediscover complexity and restore values into our investigations.



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