



**OTAGO**  
**POLYTECHNIC**  
Te Kura Matatini ki Otago



## Transforming Doctoral Learning and Transformed Graduates

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Tēnā koutou katoa  
*Greetings to you all*



# Today's Journey

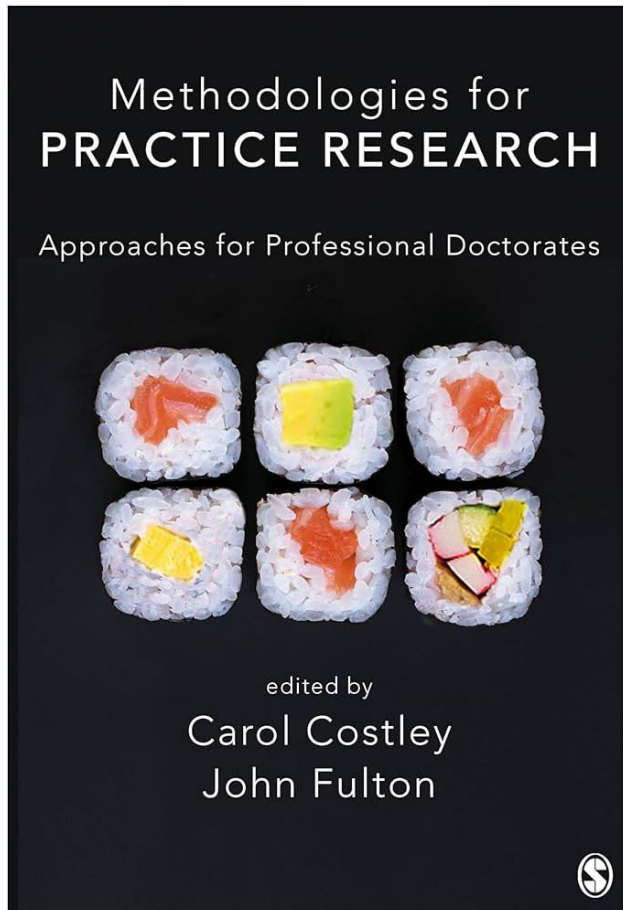
- Introducing the WBL DProfPrac
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  - Transformation
  - Learner journeys
  - Transforming communities
- The study
- *How doctorateness transforms\**
- *Transformations of selves*
- *Transformation of practice and sites of practice*



**A doctorate focused in this area must be concerned not only with knowledge, but with capability (the ability to create effective change) and wisdom (the ability to see beyond the immediate and integrate the needs of the present and the future, the local and the distant) (Lester, 2004, p. 9)**

“There is a need for a more fine-grained analysis of the effects of professional doctoral research – not just graduate destinations, that is, but effects over time in graduates themselves, in terms of their professional identity, and in the organisations and fields they work in” (Lee, et al., 2009, p. 284).

# Introducing the WBL DProfPrac



- Year 8 – 14 completions – And 10+ in 2025
- Sole practice-led postgraduate WBL doctoral delivery\* in Aotearoa
- Middlesex model – promulgated widely (Robinson, 2018)
- Maximises contribution to professions (Larmer, et. al, 2019)
- Central role of autoethnography (Costley & Fulton, 2018)
- Different: alternative, creative, authentic, subversive, iterative methodologies and formats (aspirations to Gen 3)

\*University of Otago has 150 "professional doctorate" learners

# Introducing the WBL DProfPrac: Portfolio



## Bricoleur / Transforming identities

“This person is an artist, a quilt maker, a skilled craftsperson, a maker of montages and collages.

The interpretive bricoleur can interview; observe; study material culture; think within and beyond visual methods; write poetry, fiction, and autoethnography; construct narratives that tell explanatory stories; use qualitative computer software; do text-based inquiries; [use] focus group interviews; and even engage in applied ethnography and policy formulation”

(Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, pp. 681–682).

# Introducing the WBL DProfPrac: Some Affordances

- *Work-Based\**: Learners grounded in work (average age 42)
- *Epistemology*: 'Disorienting dilemma' → enquiry
- *Signature heutagogy*: Channelling existing work practice to articulate a new frame of practice/ mind
- *Regenerative practice*
- *Treaty of Waitangi* articulation



# Introducing the WBL DProfPrac: Some More Affordances



**Double-loop learning:** Learners consider 'problem' and resultant action + reflect on problem-solving problems + implications for learner's (revisited) actions and beliefs

**Critical reflection:** Evolution of the new 'me' (Autoethnographic 'I')

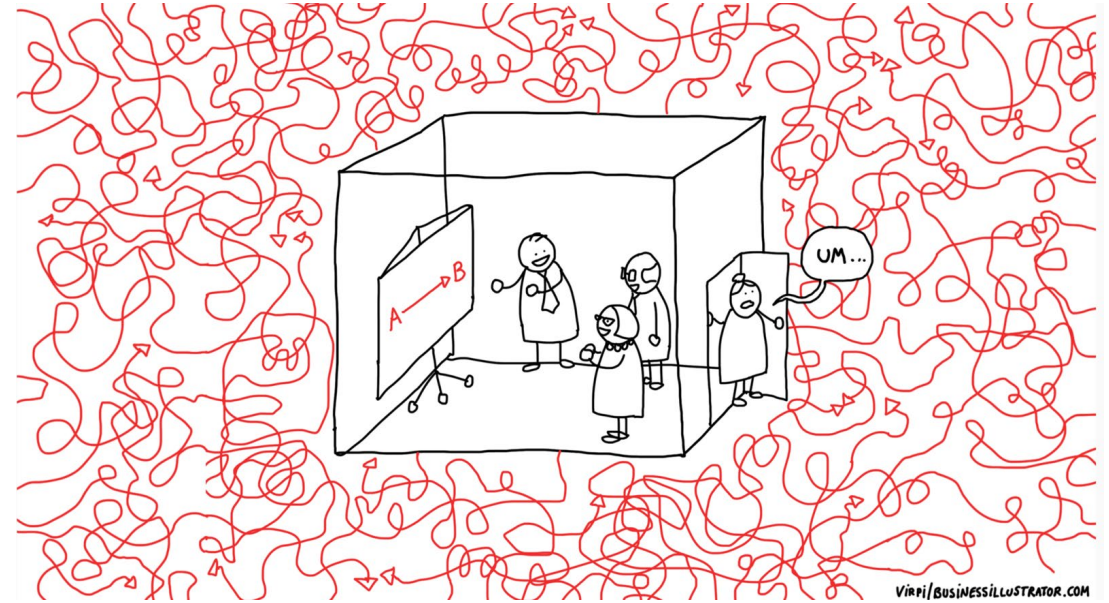
**Transdisciplinary:** Tackling real world messy/ wicked/ complex problems among multiple stakeholders in a solution-focussed, socially robust way (Hoffmann, Pohl, & Hering, 2017).

# Transformation

Mezirow (2009): Transformative learning  
"...learning that transforms problematic frames of reference to make them more inclusive, discriminating, reflective, open, and emotionally able to change" (p. 22).

"...the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action" (1991, p. 12).

"**BANI**" - Brittle, Anxious, Non-linear, and Incomprehensible (Casico, 2020).



# Transformation

1. Refining or elaborating our meaning schemes (existing frames of reference)
2. Learning new meaning schemes (new frames of reference)
3. Transforming meaning schemes (habits of mind)
4. Transforming meaning perspectives (points of view)

(Mezirow, 1999, p. 49)



# Learner Journeys

Co-Negotiation: Polkinghorne et al. (2023, p. 48) timely doctoral supervision or mentoring is relational: “a collaborative process ... that the relationship between the supervisor and the doctoral student is of key significance” → Trust (critical friendship)

Features of doctoral heutagogy: Supervision as *coaching* (Bordogna & Lundgren-Resenterra, 2023) and as *facilitation* (Carpenter & Ker, 2021) and as *practice* (for mentors and mentee, Lambrev, 2021)

Elements of mentorly facilitation: “Relationship building, listening and questioning skills, facilitative (reflective) questioning and connecting, as a coach or counsellor would do” (Carpenter & Ker, 2021, p. 34).



# Learner Journeys

Mentors **build bridges** between professional experience and learning in practice (*Retrospective critical autoethnography*) ...

Identity focus: approach centres on (un)**becoming** and ultimately **being a researcher - belonging** to and socialising into a community of practice (*Habitus*).

Styles and Radloff (2001): **motivation, beliefs, management strategies** affect confidence, independence and autonomy, increased grounding in advanced professional practice.



# Transforming Communities



- Change leader / agent
- New roles, relationships
- Change by addressing a perceived *need* (c.f. gap, problem)
- Change via 'innovation' or 'enquiry'
- 'Knowledge' (*Knowing*) for 'area of endeavour'
- Evidencing impacts on workplaces/ communities
- Evaluation from within the workplace/ community

# The Study



- What features of the Doctor of Professional Practice degree do graduates identify as transformative?
- What are the impacts of completing the Doctor of Professional Practice degree on individuals, their sense of professional practice and their workplaces, communities or area of endeavour?

Author	Title	Award date
Alkema, Anne	The case of Tapatoru: Building the capability of Foundation educators through professional standards	2021-11-30
Bartlett, Suzie	Tertiary learner mental health and wellbeing: The development of a national framework	2022-03-10
Biddle, Kathy (Te Urikore)	Tōia Mai	2023-11-18
Geyer, Sandra	A practitioner inquiry and framework for seeding entrepreneurial leadership as part of identity formation in teenagers	2023-04-27
Goode, Claire	An excellent adventure: Investigating the stories of Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awardees	2021-11-02
Karetai, Mawera	The evolution of an identity activist: An indigenous autoethnographic journey	2021-11-03
McNeil, Alec	Product stewardship: Linking waste back to primary production	2021-11-29
O'Brien, Ray	Leadership by Learning Design: Designing learning for a thriving future	2023-08-11
Robinson, Bonnie	Small decisions towards social justice: How leaders of not-for-profit social services can be supported to include social justice in decision-making	2023-08-04
Tan-Smith, Charlene	Medicalised ketogenic therapy practice	2023-11-21
van Beek, Kathryn	Keyboard warriors: Writing as a tool for positive change. Practitioner thesis	2023-09-07
Wilderspin, Helen	Embodied creativity: Creative play as a catalyst for adult learning, spirituality and a ludic (playful) mindset	2023-02-03
Woodhouse, Adrian	Torn identities: A Kāi Tahu Pūrākau of whiteness	2021-06-28

+ two others

Emotional Stretching Expansive Enjoyable Proud  
**Transformative**  
Resilience-building  
Building confidence  
Confidence-building Validating  
Mind-bending Transformative  
Key to self-belief  
Illuminating  
Empowering Physical  
Reassuring Validating  
Bringing self-efficacy Liberating Frustrating  
Bringing reflexivity Rewarding Challenging  
Transformative Enriching Powerful



# How doctorateness transforms

A

"I think that that does **give you credibility professionally**, but it also gives you it **gives you some credibility personally** as well."

"...Leads to people **talking about me differently**. It's got me, perhaps on to I'm I'm on the board of an editor of a vocational educational journal, which I probably wouldn't have been able to do".

C

"...**a quiet confidence** I can actually do this now – I would say that's the biggest difference in myself... I think back to graduation day and it's **self-validating**; the achievement...(At conferences) **seeing people's reactions** to the findings... **incredibly encouraging and affirming**, really people like what they're seeing".

# How doctorateness transforms

M

"I supervise how I was supervised: human-centered practice, affirming, reciprocal, bringing multiple critical lenses, the way we hold a team together".

"My son has become a second-generation identity activist, writing for publication at the age of 14, but I always ask him 'where's your evidence?'"

AW

"Realising there are **no truths** as such, **just a series of lenses**"

"I've been invited to speak on the marae at Rakaia – for me that that's pretty powerful when you know they're like, **you can get up there and speak for the whanāu**"

"My own sense of **confidence about how to do things and decolonize things and change things** in my own discipline, and it's **filtered down to the other staff ...**"

# How doctorateness transforms

S

"...The **flexibility and the ability to be open** ...I became sure about certain worldviews in watching the way that certain things were treated..."

"When I feel **more confident, I also know that there's so much that I don't know**" (Over-reflection in action)

"Professionally, the way people perceive you is different - I've always wanted to get away from others' perceptions and just be who I could be. **It's lonely on the pedestal**"

K (a positive pivot)

"[It] was quite **transformational** for me and I was actually really lucky that it ended up being the way it was going through that horrible restructure meant that my doctorate really got divorced from my communications work and **became a creative practice DPP**, which is much more up my alley - a silver lining to a terrible time ... **developing and maturing as a writer**".

"My supervisors made all the difference - **empowering**".

# Transformations of Selves

A

"It **consolidated** my practise, it **extended** my practise. It made me look more in depth at particular methods and methodologies and that all resulted in me feeling more confident and it gave me, I think, the **confidence** to to lead"

C

"...becoming more **independent** in my choices and decisions, and being asked more for advice...Their belief in me counteracts my imposter syndrome"

"Don't know yet about **transformational** – I don't think aspirational is overstating it...

Refusal to give up maybe.  
Yeah, I think that's it absolutely. For me, it's been **transformative**. Yeah".

# Transformations of Selves

*M (Sustainability lecturer)*

"All of a sudden, I became somebody who everybody wanted to give a job to and I'm I'm constantly being asked to come and work on projects - it's really meaningful work".

"I'm a different person for that journey. A different person completely. I see the world differently - My students say that they feel like I care about them – *manaakitanga*; the *tuakana-teina* relationship"

*AW*

"...the doctoral space provides you with an opportunity to go into that space and open it up a bit more and maybe bring it into relevance for you ... exploring your 'minority' questions ... without the need for permission"

"... it's allowed me to step into into a space within my community, my *whanāu*, my wider community. People come to me about *whakapapa* – there's been a lot of invitations".

# Transformations of Selves

*S (South Africa leadership literacy):*

"From the minute I was then *qualified* [they wanted] to take my expertise in .../...*it has blown me closer to who I am...I have found my purpose now*".

*Story of SA vs NZ:* "If it makes an impact on *200 students in New Zealand versus 20,000 in South Africa*, well that's OK... it makes a massive difference in South Africa..."

"It's *putting me out the front* of products rather than just the products."

*K (writing for change)*

"I think ... learning about *reflection for action* was a big thing because ...you reflect, you get torched. That reflection is useful ... for work"

"I approach my writing with *more intention*, which has been really good... I feel like I'm working from a bit of bedrock... becoming the Burns fellow; now I'm in Comms" (at the council).

# Transformation of Practice and Sites of Practice ('Workplaces')

A

*(On community perception)*

"...**Enhanced...credibility** speaking to Local Council or Community Board"

*(On vulnerable research participants)*

"...it's about kind of that **treading carefully** and ensuring that they feel safe in the research process"

C

*(On perception of her model in the T&L community)*

"They find it **incredibly relatable**. They can see themselves in the model, despite where they are in their career. That it is encouraging and takes the focus off targets and rankings and that kind of thing. **They appreciate the humanity** in the model".

# Transformation of Practice and Sites of Practice ('Workplaces')

*M (Bay Trust; lecturer)*

"I'm a better practitioner for the experience, bringing the idea of people being empowered to learn in their own way, to be in control of their own reality, to my own practice... you become somebody who's got a voice that's worth listening to".

"I've watched the change in the practise of my colleagues; I've watched the change in their approach - And they're now starting to care for the learner".

*A (Curation)*

"I work in a space where I help people who put their professional personal lives on the table and I help them curate that into something that looks like a portfolio of work. Completing a doctoral degree is is pretty much that ...decolonising curricula"

My ability as a facilitator escalated because I can look at things. I can see patterns I can propose, "Is this what your work looks like?"

# Transformation of Practice and Sites of Practice ('Workplaces')

*S (South African ed. tour)*

"...some of the the school principals actually stood up and said...if it wasn't for people like you that were doing, we would not have these insights and - thank you for bringing them to us"

"... 'copy publishers have raised the bar of excellence again' ... that was such a compliment to me because we've done such good work in South Africa in terms of getting the textbooks out that we do and the support to educators".

*K*

"I moved from being a creative writer, writing a thesis in my natural not academic or creative voice, to becoming an essayist – a skill useful to my work in communications"

"I really like it. And I've had some good kind of success with it and I don't know if I would have done that without the DPP to be honest - an unexpected outcome".

# Conclusions

- **Design features for transformation** – heutagogy, manaakitanga, flexibility, multiplicity, systematicity, bricolage/portfolio, scaffolding needs of professional context, both becoming and **unbecoming**
- **Transformative potential** (affordances) – mentoring for change agency/ leadership, critical rigour at all stages – empowerment with future-focused mindset; inferred power of being doctored - credibility
- **Transforming communities/ workplaces** – confidence/ fearlessness/independence/intentionality as personal capital (e.g. in problem-solving), continuing journey as social capital, community leadership/advocacy (*within* and *for*) as cultural capital ...

# Mauruuru koe mo te whakarongo



He patai?

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