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Re-viewing student teamwork: preparation for the 'real world' or bundles of situated social practices?

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Abstract

Research in Australian business education continues to emphasise the importance of students learning teamwork as an integral part of the undergraduate curriculum. However, entrenched conceptual and practical confusion as to what the term 'teamwork' means and how it ought to be enacted remains a vexed issue capable of distorting and diminishing teamwork, learning and related pedagogy. In this paper, we critically re-examine the view that developing teamwork in an undergraduate business degree equips students for work in the real world. By focusing on the 'real world' metaphor-in-use in a cross-disciplinary business capstone subject, we interrogate the spatio-temporal dimensions of teamwork and its realist conceptions and performance. The research draws upon the perceptions of interviewed academics conducting teamwork activities in undergraduate business courses and the lived experiences of the authors. The findings highlight how the use of multiple models of teamwork, constructed by competing discourses and linked to the dualities and invocations constructed by 'the real world' metaphor, further exacerbate confusion. We suggest re-viewing and re-valuing student teamwork as the performance of situated, social practices opening new spaces for student teamwork, learning and pedagogical practice.

Keywords

bundles, real, social, world, re, situated, viewing, practices, student, teamwork, preparation

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Research in Australian business education continues to emphasise the importance of students learning teamwork as an integral part of the undergraduate curriculum. However, entrenched conceptual and practical confusion as to what the term ‘teamwork’ means and how it ought to be enacted remains a vexed issue capable of distorting and diminishing teamwork, learning and related pedagogy. In this paper, we critically re-examine the view that developing teamwork in an undergraduate business degree equips students for work in the real world. By focusing on the ‘real world’ metaphor-in-use in a cross-disciplinary business capstone subject, we interrogate the spatio-temporal dimensions of teamwork and its realist conceptions and performance. The research draws upon the perceptions of interviewed academics conducting teamwork activities in undergraduate business courses and the lived experiences of the authors. The findings highlight how the use of multiple models of teamwork, constructed by competing discourses and linked to the dualities and invocations constructed by ‘the real world’ metaphor, further exacerbate confusion. We suggest re-viewing and re-valuing student teamwork as the performance of situated, social practices opening new spaces for student teamwork, learning and pedagogical practice.

Keywords: student teamwork; practice-based; metaphor; collaborative learning

Research in Australian business education continues to emphasise the importance of an undergraduate curriculum that supports student acquisition of generic skills such as teamwork (Wood et al. 2011). Studies from internal higher education sources, government regulatory bodies such as Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), industry, professional and business accreditation bodies demonstrate a high level of unanimity about the importance of business graduates possessing high quality team working skills (Freeman et al. 2008; Freeman and Hancock 2011). According to Freeman and Hancock (2011) following the Bradley Review (Bradley, Noonan, Nugent and Scales 2008) ‘a new era’ for Higher Education in Australia has been ushered, based on a demand-driven system linked to increasing national productivity and policed by the new regulatory body TEQSA. The new strategy requires the development and implementation of academic standards for learning and teaching (ABDC 2010) to ensure graduates are achieving Threshold Learning Outcomes commensurate with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). While the standards for many business disciplines are still being developed, one of the learning standards already established in the Accounting discipline is teamwork and communication (ABDC 2010). It appears, therefore, that teamwork will continue as a key area of student learning in the future of business education.

In this paper, we seek to contribute to the debate that is marked by consensus on the importance of teamwork but dissensus on what teamwork is; its purposes and practical performance. In so doing, we critically re-examine one widely held view that the purpose of learning teamwork in an undergraduate business degree is to equip students for the ‘real world’. The notion that teamwork is described, and thus oriented, primarily as preparation for a future and obscure ‘world’ is under scrutiny, especially in cases where the advantages of teamwork are: “an authentic form of assessment in terms

of a students' later employability"; to ensure "that students develop transferable skills" (Davis 2009, 564); and, where the university "insulated from real world circumstances" is said to provide an appropriate and desirable forum for skill development (Davis 2009, 574). Such conceptions, we suggest, are open to potentially damaging misinterpretation.

As a means of developing a critical analysis, we develop a conceptual frame with two related parts based on iterative use of interviews collected from participants. First, we interrogate the 'real world' metaphor and its uses in constructing teamwork practices. The study of a metaphor-in-use has an exposing resonance which enables an exploration of the multiple meanings and power relations embedded in ubiquitous and seemingly taken-for-granted phenomena (Oswick, Putnam, and Keenoy 2004). For example, in studying the use of metaphors in the context of professional development, Boud and Hagar (2012, 18) have concluded that "dominant metaphors about learning, and a failure to appreciate their limitations, have served to distort the concept of professional development". Therefore, while metaphors are useful and commonplace ways of reconceptualising difficult concepts by linking the concrete to the abstract, they may also add to conceptual and practice confusion.

Second, in order to better understand and deal with the complexities associated with teamwork performance, we re-view teamwork as the performance of a social practice drawing on the work of Schatzki (1996) and Rouse (1987), two of a growing number of philosophers and social theorists, who position social practices as 'the primary social thing' (Schatzki et al. 2001). Practice-based research has been undertaken in various fields to examine complex social phenomena such as safety practices (Gherardi 2006); professional development practices (Boud and Hagar 2012); practices of social justice (Keevers, Treleaven, Sykes and Darcy 2012) and reflective practices (Sykes and Dean 2012).

The paper is structured as follows: First, we discuss how student teamwork is conceptualised and enacted in business higher education research. Second, we explore the use of metaphor as an analytical frame to expose teamwork as preparation for the ‘real world’. Third, we present a practice-based approach to teamwork that supports multiple conceptions of teamwork. Fourth, we introduce an illustrative case study of teamwork based on a capstone subject and focus attention on four general areas of academic shaping of teamwork practices: design, governance, formation and performance: Fifth, we present analysis and findings of the study demonstrating the ways that conceptual confusion is embedded and enacted in teamwork practices where the ‘real world’ has developed a clichéd, rather than metaphoric meaning. The paper concludes with a set of reflective questions teachers can utilise when designing teamwork practices in higher education.

Conceptualisations of teamwork in business higher education

There is no one generally accepted definition of teamwork and while for some this may be problematic, we follow Tsoukas’ (2009, 288) interpretation of Wittgenstein who suggests “we understand general concepts because we have been taught to *use* them in particular cases, although we find it difficult to define them. Definition, however, is not a precondition for concept use. On the contrary we first use concepts then reflect on them”. Thus in this case, different conceptions are held depending on the academics’ and students’ interpretations of teamwork and its uses.

The benefits of using teamwork are articulated differently by stakeholders depending on their interests; whether formative – developing teamwork skills, or summative – delivering products or outcomes. For academics, perhaps the most important factors are formative based on the strong evidence supporting the efficacy of

the process and responsibility of collaborative forms of learning (Hansen 2006).

However, a range of other practical benefits are well known including: reduced teacher assessment load (Biggs 2003); expanded capabilities to undertake more complex work (Gibbs 2002); increased knowledge base (Hansen 2006) and improved multi-cultural relations (Hansen 2006; Carroll 2005).

In contrast, for industry and professional associations, teamwork is perceived as an outcome commonly considered to ameliorate generic skills sought by employers (James, McInnis and Devlin 2002; Johnson and Johnson 1996) such as: communication and interpersonal skills; analytical and cognitive skills; and, organisational and time management skills (James et al. 2002; Wood et al. 2011). This view is reinforced in the design of undergraduate business capstones as students are prepared for the 'real world'.

Notwithstanding the cited benefits of teamwork, a raft of challenges or negative aspects are identified by those involved with student teamwork. Complex and powerful social relations become active as students position and reposition themselves and their competing interests. Social loafing or free riding is regarded as the greatest single factor in derailing a group's effectiveness, contributing to dissatisfaction with the team and project (Aggarwal and O'Brien 2008; Hansen 2006). Other challenges may concern lack of leadership, scheduling conflicts, lack of team cohesion and dealing with students who prefer to work autonomously (Hansen 2006). Students may experience behavioural or attitudinal problems in teams; feel they have inferior skills to their peers, or that the team experience is stifling individual innovation or creativity (Hansen 2006).

Additionally, team dynamics may negatively affect cohesion and effectiveness resulting in feelings of being ill-prepared (Hansen 2006), breakdown of trust (Huff, Cooper and Jones 2002), inadequate rewards (McCorkle et al. 1999) and perceived inequitable workload contributions (Pfaff and Huddleston 2003).

In a business education context, teamwork as a key learning process allows students to undertake larger projects particularly in their final years where capstone subjects, designed with the resemblance of ‘real’ practices in the workplace, are increasingly popular (van Acker and Bailey 2011). Capstone subjects in undergraduate degrees¹ are often described as drawing together disciplinary strands or as a bridge between the university and student’s postgraduate experience (Rowles et al. 2004; Goldstein and Fernald 2009). How academics approach the design, implementation and assessment of capstone units and in situations where it is perceived as a transitioning device to a professional experience or employment, projects often simulate the workplace environment (Ras and Rech 2009; van Acker and Bailey 2011) through “realistic projects and conflicting situations” (Ras and Rech, 2009, . 554). To this end, when interpersonal or team skills are embedded as a form of collaborative activity students are said to be better prepared for their professional life (Gomezdelcampo 2006).

In what follows, we develop our twofold analytic frame. First, we outline the use of metaphor as a linguistic mechanism that provides a conceptual or analytical frame to study discursive meaning. Second, we re-view teamwork as a social practice in order to more adequately address the complexity, heterogeneity and differences that are part of student teamwork.

Teamwork and the Real World Metaphor

Metaphors are powerful linguistic devices where separate conceptual domains, one abstract (secondary) and one concrete (primary), are compared to link the unfamiliar with the familiar (Llewellyn 2003; Sobolev 2008). The study of a metaphor already in

¹ While the term ‘capstone subjects’ covers a range of different approaches and designs that are not necessarily designed around authentic student experiences, in this paper we follow van Acker and Bailey (2011) who show the recent expansion in acceptance of such a conception.

existence (such as the ‘real world’) not only exposes multiple meanings and innovative perspectives (Grant et al. 2004) but also has potential to legitimate actions (Oswick et al. 2004). Metaphorical transference requires a certain ontological shift from the concrete or objectified phenomena to the abstract or socially constructed. Since only certain characteristics of the secondary or abstract concept are transferred, metaphors provide only partial insights and therefore may obscure others (Morgan 1988) or infer characteristics or deterministic behaviour that does not exist as in the case of over-used or dead metaphors. Dead metaphors operate as clichés (Punter 2007) or are “lexicalized” so that the figurative meaning is used as conventional language or literal meaning (Billig and MacMillan 2005, 461). This semantic move is more prevalent with spatial metaphors, such as the ‘two worlds’ of university and work, university and the ‘real world’, but also occurs with temporal aspects of the future world or lived experience which are also dualised as then, not now.

Undertaking a critical analysis of the ‘real world’ metaphor in the context of teamwork practices supports further consideration of the practice implications of the semantic move along two lines of enquiry. First, in the case of a dead metaphor, it serves to recover the metaphorical meaning (Billig and MacMillan 2005) and expose the ontological framing academics use when talking about teamwork. Second, the disruption of a metaphor or the reinvigoration of a dead metaphor is a means to explore both conceptual and practice anomalies that arise from the concepts of teamwork that are understood in the particular contexts in which they have been used (Tsoukas 2009).

Teamwork as a practice

The term practice is commonly used to denote a range of heterogeneous individual and social activities. Hager (2012, 2-3) suggests the term is used both inclusively – “almost

anything that humans do” – and exclusively – “only human actions that meet very specific and strict criteria” to demarcate what should count as practices. Similarly, Schatzki (1996, 91) identifies two categories of practices: dispersed practices are “sets of doings and sayings held together by an understanding they express . . . and are widely dispersed among different sectors of social life”. In contrast, integrative practices are more complex, and are described by Schatzki (1996, 103) as “sets of doings and sayings that are linked by understandings, explicit rules (principles, precepts and instructions) and teleo-affective structuring (hierarchies of ends, tasks, projects, beliefs, emotions and/or moods)”.

Thus we locate teamwork as an integrative practice that necessitates students and teachers developing shared understandings of what actions – ‘doings and sayings’ – are required to perform effective teamwork; understanding the norms and rules that determine good from poor teamwork; and developing a commensurate affective commitment to specific ends or outcomes. Such an approach supports multiple conceptions of teamwork depending on areas such as: context; socio-material arrangements and temporal aspects relating to the duration of the project and frequency of meetings etc; as well as, providing minimum criteria for naming a practice as teamwork.

For Rouse (1987), practices and, in particular shared practices, are also a locus for the operation of ‘capillary’ or micro-level power and political actions. In the case of teamwork practices, power operates in multiple, often contested, decisions by students and teachers as teamwork is performed. For example, the determination and enactment of design criteria; the size and composition of teams - who is in and who is out; how conflict will be dealt with; how teams allocate roles, turn taking, seating arrangements etc., as well as in the ongoing governance and operation of the teams. Such areas of

practice are often overlooked or ignored as inconsequential by academics but may be crucially important both for formative and summative dimensions of teamwork and their inseparable linkages to related student learning practices.

Boud (2009, 31) suggests “[p]rofessions, occupations and many other activities can be regarded as sets of practices. To talk of them as practices is to acknowledge that they are not just the exercise of the knowledge and skills of practitioners, but to see them as fulfilling particular purposes in particular social contexts”. Teamwork can thus be conceived as one practice in the bundle or set of business practices students undertake as part of their university studies. We now turn to examine the use of the ‘real world’ metaphor and its shaping of teamwork practices in an illustrative case-study of teamwork.

The study

As business academics with more than 30 years combined teaching experience in Australian business faculties we were well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of teamwork in our own subjects but uncertain as to how colleagues experienced teamwork in different subjects and disciplines. Therefore as opportunity arose a study of teamwork was located within a larger development project being carried out within the business faculty of a regional university. The purpose of the development project was to formally introduce cross-disciplinary capstone subjects to final year undergraduate business students. A research grant supported the researchers to focus specifically on teamwork practices in the faculty and allowed the opportunity to identify the extant policies, practices and challenges for conducting effective teamwork. This enquiry aimed to identify how student teamwork might be improved in the newly-created cross-disciplinary business capstone subjects.

Since teamwork is embedded across the full spectrum of subjects in the degree we attended to teacher conceptions and how they were operationalized and shaped teamwork practices. The case-study material was collected using thirteen, forty-five minute semi-structured interviews with selected business academics who were identified as utilising teamwork that session in their teaching across a range of undergraduate subjects. Questions probed interviewees' views and practices in relation to: teamwork philosophy; selection of teams and the scaffolding used to support team development and formation; strategies to deal with conflicts and disputes; and, approaches used related more broadly to pedagogy. Based on iterative use of interviews collected from participants a conceptual frame was then developed with two related parts.

Conceptions of the Real World

When questioned about their current understanding and reasons for using teamwork, eight of twelve academics interviewed refer directly, on one or more occasions, to the 'real world' and two indirectly².

By examining the interview transcripts, we identified several overlapping and, at times, contradictory conceptions of teamwork linked to the 'real world' metaphor. First, there was a conception that teamwork in the 'real world', in its most ideal form, occurs in industry or a professional world not in student teams at university. However, the details of what this world is like, how teamwork is performed there remain unspecified. For example, "a real work situation...so it's more reflective of what actually happens in industry" [4] (no details followed). In contrast several interviewees consider the

² Student feedback has been collected from the capstone unit and, while not relevant for this project on academic conceptions, interestingly, 60% used some direct or indirect conception of the real world when discussing their teamwork experiences.

impossibility of replicating workplace teamwork at university “it’s never going to reflect what actually happens in industry” [3]. “You use teams at work, you don’t tend to use teams in the classroom...or...sport teams but not academic teams” [7] and “true teamwork...never develops” [12]. Here the metaphor of the ‘real world’ is a dichotomy separating temporally and spatially the here and now student experience from the unattainable, other world – a privileged ideal space.

Several academics link notions of teamwork in the ‘real world’ with competing conceptions of how teams deal with decision making or judgment and power operations. For one academic, ‘real world’ teams are characterised by a lack of choice and as a place “...where you don’t choose your group members, it reflects a real work situation where you are going to work on this project for this organisation and away you go. So it’s more reflective of what actually happens in industry” [3]. In contrast, another conception was that the ‘real world’ is an opportunity to work independently to solve problems. “It’s a negative thing but that’s the real world out there. You have to learn how to work with things that work and don’t work and figure out how to solve this problem” [5]; and “and you get out in the workplace and no one’s going to hold your hand...[4]. While in a different conception, the real world is a place where identification and categorisation is based on homogenous abilities or qualities;

I formed all the HD students together, all the Pass students together, all the Credit students together...Because I think in that way I could really end up with some really good work, good quality work...so I thought I think this is fair because this is like in the real world. [6].

It is not surprising that, considering disciplinary and subject differences as well as academic individualism, multiple conceptions of teamwork and the relationship to the

practice of teamwork exist. These differences have implications for the student teamwork practices such as design, governance and formation as outlined in the following section.

How were teams designed and governed?

The 'real world' is enacted in multiple and, at times, contradictory approaches to teamwork design and governance practices. In one example, the lecturer acts unilaterally, controlling all aspects of the teamwork including such practices as - you don't choose your group members, to support team formation "more reflective of actually what happens" in the workplace [3], "because I grab the students and I put the students into groups of three. They have no say about what group they're in or what subject topic they're doing, they're just advised, this is your group, this is when you're presenting and this is what you're presenting on and away you go...and also very, very clearly outlined that there's no discussion about changing groups..." [3].

In a related approach, the interviewees described various scenarios where teams need to work independently and not rely on academic guidance in relation to problem solving both in understanding substantive content and formative aspects of team development and dynamics. In one situation students are given directions through lectures and tutorials on team management and problems and they "have to deal with it" [2]. In others, the lecturer acts unilaterally but divests all responsibility for decisions to student teams "the hope is that when the time comes you just throw them into the deep end and let them float up theoretically, practically and reflect on their own skills" [4]. Students are imbued with the idea that they must use their own resources and judgment without resorting to help or support from overseers which is viewed as weak: "you are grown-ups...you are not kids at school" and when you face problems "what are you

going to do, go crying to the managing director? You are going to get a smack on the head if you do that, better [that] you learn here” [2]. This approach is contrasted to others who were much more flexible in their approach to design and governance, “a laissez-fair kind of attitude” [5] to teamwork. Finally, one academic suggests a more concrete conception by including the idea of specific, external industry standard methodology to regulate the teamwork practices “...basically what we do is apply an industry standard continuous improvement methodology” [10].

Team formation and formative development

Again a range of practices characterise preparation for the ‘real world’ practice of work from “I assume they already know how to participate in a group” [3] and “I mean even if you were first year I would assume that you would know how to work in groups” [5]; to “because I allow for variations in how you cooperate, like whether you do alternate from week to week or you divide the assessments on a weekly basis or something like that [5]. One academic provides clear guidelines on formative development issues such as conflict resolution and goal setting:

In this subject I devote one tutorial whereby students list all possible conflicts that could occur during the session. I ask them to talk with each other about what should we do if those kinds of situations arise? [Examples are then given] What if we have different goals? What if someone wants a HD and someone just wants a Pass? How do we deal with these things? [Areas of equality are then discussed] How do we make sure everybody contributes equally to the work? How do we deal with different personalities? What if someone is very bossy? What if two people want control? I tell them that this is important because in the real world

when you go out to work you will face teamwork and you will not be able to choose who is in your team [6].

Others facilitated social dynamics by controlling the space and materials used to create a more conducive setting for teamwork: “I’ll rearrange the seating. They’re generally in like straight lines but I arrange into two tables so only maybe four people maximum can sit around” [10]. By introducing more concrete outcomes:

I’m intentionally using different terms because in the workplace there are projects that are assigned with measurable outcomes, you have to produce something. At a very minimum it’s a consultant’s report or it might be a new work process or a new outcome. People are paid to be on that team and so they are censured if they don’t do their work [12].

The examples above illustrate a range of individual approaches to teamwork formation, structure and governance relating to the idea of the ‘real world’ which may or may not be aligned with university or course outcomes. The employment of metaphors as analytic tools highlights the inherent tensions and contradictions between teamwork conceptions and practices.

Tensions and contradictions

Metaphorical confusion and teamwork power relations

The authors consider that the conceptualisation of the ‘real world’ is a dead metaphor operating as a cliché from its hackneyed use in university discourse. Since the term is devoid of the subtleties and nuances that one generally acknowledges when confronted

with a metaphor³ it reinforces a realist ontology and provides a pedagogical frame in which courses are devised and delivered, outcomes measured and assessments designed. It constructs 'realities' in an unquestioned way so that the interactional aspect of metaphorical transference and the spatial aspect of containing experience in a 'world' as the concrete/primary domain separates the university as asocial and apolitical and structures academics and teachers in a bounded space.

The 'real world' fails as a discursive construct to categorise the temporal-spatial practices and experiences of both academics and students. Merely collapsing such distinctions by the use of the blunt metaphor 'real world' only exacerbates student confusion. The 'real world' is the other, the future profession separate from this place or institution, the university. As if both academics and students have no experience or practice in the workplace, notwithstanding that a great number of students are already engaged in work activities and academics do not reside cognitively or physically in an ivory tower. Additionally, given that full-time students generally undertake four subjects per semester, usually taught by different academics, there is a reasonable probability that they may encounter multiple, conflicting conceptions of the 'real world' and therefore how teamwork is to be undertaken.

Unfortunately, the faculty and school structures that maintain academic separation support individualised or self-styled approaches to learning and teaching that are shown to be contradictory. Individual academics implement practices consistent with their respective views of teamwork and the 'real world', and in so doing, shape power relations internal to the subject and the working of teams.

Similarly, use of the teamwork metaphor by the interviewees is confusing. As discussed earlier, metaphors are limited as interpretive devices and when their

³ For example, when one speaks of a fighter or boxer as a tiger one does not assume that a tiger will enter the ring.

abstraction is over-used or clichéd they may obscure more than they reveal (Boud and Hagar 2012). The ‘real world’ points to important issues in undertaking teamwork that may be better resolved by re-viewing and enacting teamwork as a series of complex social and material practices operating differentially across space and time. Different contexts and assessments will necessitate adapting teamwork practices that may appear ontologically as different teamworks depending on factors such as the positioning of the viewers and the context (Mol 2002). Teamwork when enacted will have its own set of practices, interrelationships, tools, artefacts, spaces and power-dynamics. We suggest academics need to specify more clearly what is meant by teamwork and its enactment and in what follows, we suggest some guidelines for academics in relation to teamwork practices.

Enacting teamwork practices

As discussed above, teamwork can be re-conceptualised and enacted as the performance of practices, where practices are “materially-mediated activities centrally organised around shared practical understanding” (Schatzki 2001, 2) and inseparable from complex micro-power relations and situated contexts (Rouse 1987). Returning to the conceptual frame developed earlier, in order to accentuate ‘shared practical understanding’, we outline four areas of consideration for re-viewing teamwork as practices in light of the illustrative case study.

Awareness that teamwork is multiple

Multiple interpretations of teamwork are evident and clearly contribute to the confusion and discussion focused on teamwork. However, as the multiple conceptions are linked to the sensitivities associated with individual teaching practices, underpinned by

contentious notions of academic freedom, it is unlikely that one conception will achieve unilateral adoption. Therefore, to develop shared practical understandings (Schatzki, 1996) and minimise confusion, several suggestions are offered. First, those responsible for curriculum and managing pedagogy at the school and faculty levels need to disseminate the purposes and practices or what Schatzki (1996) terms ‘rules’ of teamwork in the curriculum and programs of study, when, where and how it ought to be utilised and when it should not – for example whether it should be used in first year classes. Second, as one interviewee suggests, facilitating workshops where academics participate in simulated teamwork practices may assist in the development of a greater understanding. Identifying key areas and issues for consideration when planning and developing teamwork will also help make tacit assumptions explicit and orient the work teleo-affectively (Schatzki 1996). Questions to support practices as situated, materially-mediated activities with shared practical understanding are presented in Table 1. Third, individual lecturers ought to clearly explain their teamwork approach and specific requirements to students at the beginning of the subject. The development of shared understanding supports specific, individual and group formative development, helping students develop teamwork practices that are transferrable to multiple contexts and ‘teamworks’ both within their university work, current employment and in their future professional career.

Table 1. Developing a shared understanding of teamwork

Design	<p>What are the learning outcomes for the subject and how does teamwork fit in?</p> <p>What is the purpose of including assessable teamwork? If to develop transferrable skills useful in the workplace, how will these be assessed against industry standards and by whom?</p> <p>How does teamwork in this subject fit in with other related subjects for example</p>
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	<p>in the program or major?</p> <p>In which room(s) will the teamwork be undertaken? Do the rooms support the governance, formation and performance practices?</p> <p>What other materials will be needed? How will teams access these materials?</p>
Governance	<p>How will the teamwork practices be supervised?</p> <p>What is the role of the lecturer? How does this link to the learning outcomes?</p> <p>What is the role of students? How does this link to the learning outcomes?</p> <p>Are other people to be involved for example, tutors, if so how?</p> <p>What documents are to be provided for example, guidelines for good teamwork, rubrics etc?</p> <p>How will disputes/conflicts be dealt with?</p>
Formation	<p>Who will form the teams and how? What size will teams be? Why are they to be formed in this way?</p> <p>Will a leader be allocated/suggested in each team? How will the team resolve discrepancies? What processes are in place to deal with team conflicts?</p> <p>When and where will teams be formed? Will guidelines be provided to students on good practices for team formative development?</p>
Performance	<p>What is the team to achieve and by when? How will the work be undertaken and shared? Where is the work to be undertaken? Will team meetings be required, how many? When and where will these take place? Will guidelines be provided for team meetings covering areas such as meeting notes, task allocation and timelines?</p>

Understanding complex capillary power relations

A second area worthy of academic consideration relates to the dynamic internal power relations operating within teams. The above questions are suggestive of this dynamic, internal ‘capillary-level’ power (Rouse, 1987) at work in contrast to the ‘juridical power’ operating in lecturers’ positioning, for example, in some interviewees’ autocratic approaches to constructing teamwork in the likeness of the operations of the ‘real world’. This constructive, micro-level view of power operates in boundary-making practices such as the design, governance and formative decision-making, for example, what sort of teamwork? Where and when undertaken? Who is included/ excluded in

teams and on what basis? Whether unarticulated or explicit boundary-making practices are dynamic, internal power relations linked both to systemic structures for teamwork in a faculty and each lecturers' conception of teamwork and its purposes. By establishing collaborative decision-making based on accepted teamwork practice rules, clear expectations linked to ongoing formative development, power operates constructively in shaping and supporting shared practical understanding of the operations of particular approaches to teamwork

Adapting to spatio-temporal contexts

A third consideration relates to the positioning of teamwork practices in specific spatio-temporal contexts. Contexts change for example in the case of the 'real world' metaphor in contrasting the university and industry worlds. The notion of a metaphor that has lost its tropic or imaginary capacity is evidenced by discursive representations of teamwork and the relationship with a 'real world'. The use of this metaphor reinforces a view of the real world as both spatially and temporally separate and existing independently from their discursive construction. As one interviewee states "you don't want people coming out of university and going and doing that" in the business world [2]; or "when you work in industry outside" [4]. Further, the spatial separation is linked to temporal separation (Schatzki 2010). Multiple notions of time overlap – chronological or objective time, as students study within semester and class times, is juxtaposed with subjective or experiential notions of time, as lecturers convey stories of their past experience in the workforce and students prospective experience in the workforce. The changed contextual dynamics are also evident in the multiple internal contexts of the university; different subjects, disciplines, rooms, team formations and assessments have spatio-temporal implications and shape teamwork practices.

In contrast to the conflation of different approaches in the use of ‘real world’ metaphor, evident in the multiple approaches and contexts presented in the interviews are multiple ‘teamworks’ in multiple contexts. Studies undertaken in multiple disciplines have demonstrated that such translations of practice across different contexts do not automatically result in homogeneity (Gherardi and Nicolini 2000).

Interviewees project what they think teamwork is or should be, or what it was or could be prospectively in the spatio-temporally workplace. In making this projection, they are assigning norms to teamwork or making a recipe for ‘successful’ teamwork. This prescriptive model is reminiscent of the ‘technical rationality’ - set problems and set answers critiqued by Schön (1987). Such, conceptions of teamwork may be linked with an essentialist notion of teamwork in the ‘real world’, that this ‘thing’ happens under certain conditions of practice, an ‘other-ness’ that must be mirrored here in the classroom, but remains chimera-like in student experience.

Developing reflexive expertise

An often overlooked aspect of teamwork formation relates to the social practices of respect and cooperation (Sennett 2003, 2012). Only one of the twelve academics interviewed provides details of formative team development. Others absolved themselves of any responsibility for teaching or training students in formative team development, either assuming that students ought to know how to work in teams or that they could learn on the run. We suggest that in every teamwork experience students need time both to communicate with the teamwork supervisor – whether lecturer or tutor, and with their team members. Sharing information about themselves, their background, workload, interests and goals for the teamwork are part of crucially

important practices of respect and cooperation. Turn-taking, listening, negotiating different views and coming to agreement, honouring and delivering on work allocations, awareness of personal space and body language, and developing sensitivity to international or culturally different students are some of the practices of respect and cooperation.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to critically re-examine one widely held view that the purpose of learning teamwork in an undergraduate business degree is to equip students for the 'real world'. In doing so, we examined conceptions and practices of teamwork adopted and enacted by teachers and suggested ways of clarifying or de-mystifying teamwork through reflecting on the taken-for-granted assumptions about the practice of teamwork. While it is unlikely and indeed unnecessary that the dissensus on what teamwork is and its purposes will change to a unilateral view, confusion can be avoided by explicitly identifying and classifying different approaches and forms of teamwork and how they are constituted. In light of the multiple conceptions of teamwork operating in the faculty, it is more accurate to constitute teamwork as multiple – 'teamworks'. Similarly, reducing teamwork for purely teleological purposes distorts and diminishes its value for students in their present experience. Important formative benefits for students learning teamwork practices are easily overlooked when driven by an imperative such as preparation for the 'real world'.

We suggest that the use of the cliché 'real world' is a chimera that remains unquestioned, operating in the broader discourse that impacts practice. In a spatio-temporal context it has the power to include and exclude and thus create and re-create boundaries of 'acceptable' teamwork practices. Its use constructs a binarised world

where the 'real world' and 'university' are pitted against one another as discrete and competing. Temporally, the importance of the present, the here and now, is diminished in comparison to the future, or even past experience of the 'real world' that exists beyond the boundaries of life at university. While this paper provides a critical analysis of the use of the 'real world' metaphor and the re-viewing of teamwork practices, we suggest that future work could focus on how teamwork experiences can be designed to foster the skills connected with teamwork.

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