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BRILL

A Beautiful Risk Enacted: Editorial

Pedagogical Provocations

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Abstract

This editorial explores education as a beautiful risk and its embodiment in the Association of Visual Pedagogies (AVP) Twitter Conference. The conference aimed to co-construct visual pedagogical provocations and engage participants through Twitter. The authors formed a diverse organizing team and leveraged their strengths in technology, pedagogies, global networking, and organization to create an invitational dialogue. Twitter was recognized as a powerful tool for professional networking and accessible resource for conference participation. The call for visual pedagogical provocations generated diverse responses across educational sectors, fostering connections and expanding visual pedagogy possibilities. The conference showcased various visual forms, challenging conventional notions of pedagogy. It inspired a community of practice, with participants sharing artistic, informative, and thought-provoking contributions. This editorial concludes by sharing a video compilation

of selected provocations, inviting readers to explore the transformative potential of visual pedagogy.

Keywords

pedagogical provocations – education – visual pedagogy – Twitter conference – beautiful risk – dialogue – community of practice



FEATURE This editorial comprises a video, which can be viewed [here](#).

– This editorial is part of the special topic ‘Pedagogical Provocations’, edited by Philippa Isom, Bridgette Redder and Lynn McNair.

On the evening of 16 June 2022, in Aotearoa, New Zealand, after a one day Association of Visual Pedagogies symposium and the annual general meeting, I (Philippa) found myself having dinner with a table of strangers. I was not supposed to be there, but serendipity had made it so and by the end of that evening I had acquired a curious group of friends, a new nickname, and had agreed to help Bridgette bring together a Twitter Conference. Through a collegial connection, serendipity then brought Lynn to our organising team all the way (digitally) from Scotland. Bridgette, Lynn and I brought varied skill sets to this project where we would invite participants to co-construct the meaning of a visual pedagogical provocation and then engage in dialogue through the medium of a hosted Twitter conference.

Biesta (2013) invites readers to consider education as a beautiful risk. Education without predetermined outcomes or (over)planned delivery but

where the outcome is neither guaranteed nor secure. Biesta (2013) asserts that education must be a dialogical process that “requires engagement from the other” (p.3). What better way to engage in a beautiful risk of education than to put it on the open platform which is Twitter for others to engage with. The Twitter conference had no pre-determined outcome, but an interest in engaging with what others might consider a visual pedagogical provocation. Furthermore, how might participants then pick up those provocations as a beginning of a new learning journey in what can only be described as an Arendtian act of freedom (Arendt, 1958).

As creators of the AVP Twitter conference we found ourselves embarking on this beautiful risk together with multiple beginnings from each of us which we then took up and advanced in our own contexts. Our individual strengths in technology, pedagogies, global networking, and organisation created a framework on which we could build the conference as an invitational dialogue. Even through the frustrations of dancing across timezones, every time we got together the enthusiasm for the Twitter conference was tangible. We found ourselves to be very motivated and we were keen to encourage and support motivation in others.

Twitter. For many people it is just another social media platform, for others it is a leader among social media platforms (Power, 2022, npn) which can be used as an important professional networking tool. Additionally, it is an accessible resource, which enables individuals who may not have had the opportunity to participate in a conference to do so. For us, Twitter is a place of powerful community connection where short text, images, and video can be shared that invite further interactions and considerations. When we imagined the Twitter Conference as an Association of Visual Pedagogies offering calling for visual pedagogical provocations we didn't have any expectations of what we might get and to that end we received a selection of interesting provocations that then fired off in all directions much like an out of control catherine wheel on guy fawkes night.

By our definition, the question of “what is a visual pedagogical provocation?” was better framed as “what *isn't* a visual pedagogical provocation?” What was initially a call specifically for “Video and/in/as pedagogies: Provocations!” developed into “Visual and/in/as pedagogies: Provocations!” to encourage more participation. We supported potential participants by encouraging them to bring anything in a visual form that would invite others to think about learning and teaching and open a discussion to consider pedagogical practices. Our call for participants had responses from across education sectors from Early Childhood Education to tertiary teaching and everything in between. The connections that were then made during the conference across these sectors

brought new thinking for everyone involved to consider the offerings through various different lenses.

The visual world and visualities have become more increasingly central to our teaching practice (White, 2020). Engaging with the provocations posed when the visual and/in/as pedagogy is prioritised and dialogue is opened up that explores ways teaching and learning can be initiated and fostered through the visual medium in exciting ways as seen in the video compilation of the Twitter presentations and Philippa's video article titled *Unseen*. Philippa's article is one example of what was offered through the Twitter Conference. The intention was to bring often unseen life experiences that effect teaching and learning to be revealed through the use of video. In the making of the video, Philippa has combined a series of visual events, moving from a slow reveal through to quick succession, provoking a feeling of blurring of what has been seen into what is unseen in the normal flow of life.

The visual provocations illuminated in the Twitter conference pedagogical events represented a multiplicity of forms from traditional teaching demonstrations to video, image, memes, animation and more – challenging what is typically thought of as pedagogy and highlighting how visual provocation possibilities are limited only by imagination. The potential of visual provocations is when enacted they connect across educational sectors and disciplines – opening up pathways for people to think, feel, and imagine differently and engage more critically with what they see and how it is then enacted pedagogically.

The conference inspired a community of practice, as the participating individuals shared the image-rich pedagogical provocations in innovative ways with on-going conversations and sharing both in Twitter and on various other platforms. The visual contributions were artistic, informative and thought provoking and as the comments flowed in, both in real-time and over the following few days, participants and organisers alike were part of the beautiful risk of education enacted.

What better way to demonstrate this risky enactment than to show you. Following is a video compilation of some of the provocations and resulting interactions. We sincerely hope you too will take up this beginning.

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