

Simulation & Seduction in VET

We are in the third order, which is the order no longer of the real, but of the hyperreal. It is only here that theories and practices themselves floating and indeterminate, can reach the real and beat it to death (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 3).

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Paper and presentation inspired by:

Foucault and Competence Based Training

Edwards, R., & Usher, R. (1994). Disciplining the subject: the power of competence. *Studies in the education of adults*, 26(1), 1-14.

Institutional Ethnography and Competence Based Training

Jackson, N. (1995). These things just happen: talk, text, and curriculum reform. In M. Campbell & A. Manicom (Eds.), *Knowledge, Experience, and Ruling Relations: Studies in the Social Organization of Knowledge*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press

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Barthes, R. (1994). *Elements of semiology*

Benjamin, W. (1977). *Illuminations*.

Butler, R. (1999). *Jean Baudrillard: the defence of the real*

Chambers, R. (1984). *Story and situation: narrative seduction and the power of fiction*.

Chappell, C. (1996). *Post-compulsory education and training a modernist project*.

Ellsworth, E. (1997). *Teaching positions: difference, pedagogy, and the power of address*

Genosko, G. (1994). *Baudrillard and signs*.

Giroux, H. (1990). *Curriculum discourse as postmodernist critical practice*.

Grace, L. (2004). *Language and power in Vocational Education and Training: training packages and ruling relations*

McWilliam, E. (1995). *(S)Education: a risky inquiry into pleasurable teaching*.

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Key refereed texts:

Baudrillard, J. (1990). *Seduction*

Baudrillard, J. (1993). *Symbolic exchange and death*

Baudrillard, J. (1994). *Simulacra and simulation*

Baudrillard, J. (1996). *The system of objects*

Narrative, simulation & seduction in VET

Narrative & VET (unexpectedly from Walter Benjamin)

- Stories and storytelling are an essential way of distributing and contextualising knowledge
- Historically, tradesmen and journeymen played an important role spreading knowledge in the form of stories
- An increase in production spurred on by international trade changed the way workers were trained (skill shortfall)
- There was a move from storytelling and close mentoring of apprentices to the storage of skills in the form of information. Change from worker-apprentice to student-apprentice

Narrative, simulation & seduction in VET

Moving on: report of the high level review of Training Packages.

"without major changes to the ways in which Training Packages are currently **conceptualised, developed and implemented**, the model will struggle to achieve its purposes, and will ultimately fail (Schofield & McDonald, 2004, p. 12)".

...the language associated with Training Packages should shift from discussion about "rules" to discussion around "design" and more emphasis should be placed on working to design criteria and improving the design of Training Packages than adjusting the rules. This is not a sleight of words but an attempt to balance the regulatory function of Training Packages with their enabling function (Schofield & McDonald, 2004, p. 18).

- Key issues with Training Packages was one of 'design', this became the **central dynamic** of my research

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Form follows function

- A key tenant of the modernist project where usefulness and need comes before appearance and want.
- Training Packages as the root of policy driven curriculum are functional. They are intended do specific work. Their functionality is encapsulated in the AQTF and other **codified** documents.
- Training Packages have a reason for being, expressed through measurable outcomes, yet their functional design has been overtly preferred to the detriment of form.
- I argue that in an educational design context, function is policy, pedagogy is form
- Yet if the function of policy is faulty, form as its supplicant, will inherit the faults and fail to meet the learning aims.

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Design issues

- Understanding the history, intention and aims of any object invites us to understand its function and form.
- Good design is most effective when there is a balance between function and form.
- Finding a theory that engages with the mass production of texts that could be used to interrogate the formal and functional potential of design was necessary for this project
- The writings of Jean Baudrillard were used to understand the design attributes of Training Packages and their Units of Competence.

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[04 CAT Unit Template](#)

[Training Package Development Handbook Part 1 Style and Requirements](#)

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills/publications_resources/profiles/CAT.htm

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The Code

- The Code is expressed on multiple levels from the ideals of national training reform through to the theory of CBT and the rules of the AQTF.
- The codified production of a Unit of Competency is expressed in the Unit of Competency Proforma and The Training Package Development Handbook.
- The Code is functional it describes the rules and methodologies of production but in its modernist ideals of perfection in refinement it becomes "functionality pushed too far [so] becomes non-functional" (Butler, 1999, p. 74)
- This starts to push the UOC into the realms of the postmodern

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[ICPPP226B Produce interactive PDF files](#)

[RTE3115B Implement livestock husbandry practices](#)

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Baudrillard & simulation

- Baudrillard's theories of simulation describe the refinement and repetitious reproduction of an original so totally that it replaces the reality it represents and becomes a new reality.
- The simulation of reality is enacted by a **code**. There can be no simulation without the code.
- The simulation feeds back into the code and both strengthens and weakens it as the faults in the simulation are (re)absorbed by the code.
- There is then no longer a referent. The simulation becomes the new 'reality'. It overlays reality and is promoted by the code.

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However the code asserts that the Unit of Competence as simulation *must replace reality*, even though it is now different from the original. The difference between copy and original is ignored and the code pushes the simulation closer to the original. The code replaces reality with the simulation and so, faults and all, the simulation becomes the referential object overlaying the original. The simulated copy is now the referent.

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[it is] the genetic miniaturization that is the dimension of simulation. The real is produced from miniaturized cells, matrices and memory banks, models of control – and it can be reproduced an indefinite number of times from these. It no longer needs to be rational because it no longer measures itself against either an ideal or negative instance. It is no longer anything but operational. In fact it is no longer really the real, because no imaginary envelops it anymore. It is hyperreal, produced from a radiating synthesis of combinatory models in a hyperspace without atmosphere (Baudrillard, 1994, p. 2).

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Capturing workplace skill and refining them into Units of Competence

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The real is produced from miniaturized cells, matrices and memory banks, models of control – and it can be reproduced an indefinite number of times from these.

Miniaturized cells: Elements, Performance Criteria,

Matrices: employability skills

Memory banks: assessment benchmarking, validation

Modes of control: AQTF

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It no longer **needs** to be rational because it no longer measures itself against either an ideal or negative instance.

Language: The language of Units of Competence is disjointed, grammatically soft, passive in voice, jargonistic.

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Operational: Policy, compliance and institutional culture

no imaginary envelops it anymore: words devoid of a narrative

radiating synthesis of combinatory models: All Training Packages

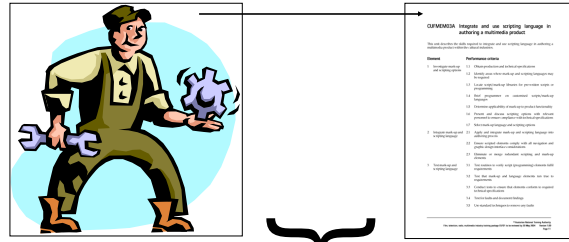
hyperspace without atmosphere: The Internet / www.ntis.gov.au

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The simulated process *miniaturises* reality, discarding crucial elements of the original and thus depreciating form (Baudrillard, 1996). There are things missing from the Unit of Competence. The model concentrates on functional skill development to the detriment of key elements of form: culture, history, and subjectivity. The latter become the *missing*.

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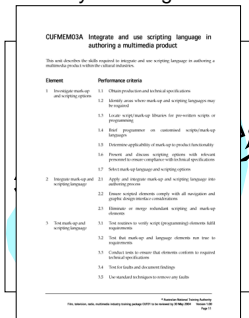
The code produces the simulation



Competency Based Training
AQTF
Training Package Development Handbook
Unit of Competency Proforma

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The simulation overlays the original and replaces it.



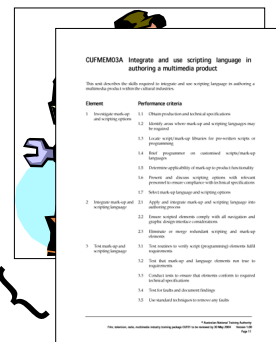
In doing so the aims of the simulation are reversed and the opposite effects intended by the code arise.

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In the process of simulation a gap between the original and the simulation is created.

The refined model of production ensures there is difference and exclusion.

The code is incapable of perfect reproduction.



The Gap

Baudrillard defines the gap as the space of seduction

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Something must make the functionality of the code desirable for the users of the simulation. What makes the simulation desirable or seductive is form. Form is the surface of the system, how it looks, and how it entices the user to *want it*, it is where the simulation is made useful

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Grasping Baudrillard's Seduction

- Baudrillard sees the process of simulation, of preferring the functional, as a masculine trope
- Seduction stands as a theoretical concept for disrupting the masculine principle of production
- Seduction is then a theoretical concept for both disrupting or enhancing functionality
- Seduction is **form**, it is the attractive and desirous interface between the user and the functionality of simulation
- Therefore for overly functional Unit of Competency to become useful it must become seductive, it must be encased in form

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Filling the gap with narrative

- Narrative is excluded from Training Packages; in their refinement individual stories, contexts and histories have been removed.
- It is narrative form, constructed and enabled as pedagogy, that is able to fill the gap between workplace reality and simulation.
- It is well planned teaching content, utilising narrative, that must be effective in the seduction of learners towards the outcomes of skill and knowledge.
- Seduction must also be realised and recognised for its place in the desirable pleasures of teaching.

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Pedagogical desire- the need for time & space

- The development of narrative time and space itself requires time and space. In contemporary VET, particularly TAFE, these things are hard to come by.
- To enable more complex learning and produce knowledge workers VET educators need the skills and resources to develop learning structures that tap into the power of narrative.
- Teacher skill development in TAFE must move beyond concepts of training and assessment and focus on the holistic development of workers by understanding their stories and combining them with those of the teachers into a new narrative of learning.
- The space of pedagogy is where the narratives of the teacher and the narratives of the learner overlap to create new narratives of learning.

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- Narrative provides a space for the inclusion of all that a Unit of Competence avoids: context, abstraction, and diversity.
- However, in planning and preparation for teaching it is hard to escape the world of the template, matrix and dot point

[Course Planner](#)

[Sequence](#)

[Planner](#)

[Assessment 1](#)

[Assessment 2](#)

[Assessment 3](#)

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Are Training Packages Postmodern?