

Shifting the locus/ts

Evidence and insights into academic power & knowledge from recent Australian adult, vocational & community education research

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Where does our evidence & our insights come from?

- Completed field research using mixed methods (interview & survey).
- In-progress field research (WA DET, NSA, *Learning to be drier - UB/Deakin*).
- Reading of the literature.
- Research interest in the power of story telling/narrative
- The power of learning through 'being in place'.

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Inspiration for the paper

- Metaphorical grazing and gleaning.
- A need to shift the locus of our research.
- A need to write about how we research (as well as what we find out).
- The 'Wide Plains' Vignette.
- Hearing and empowering all participants (and non-participants).

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The essentials of our research approach

- Primacy of community & place.
- Valuing the experiences of informal learners *through* organisations in community settings.
- Multiple sites, contexts & organisations.
- Two+ site visits (reconnaissance, data collection).
- Working through trusted informants.
- Relevant and attractive Plain Language Statements.
- Writing & reporting in diverse ways to diverse audiences, including participants.

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Insider/outsider & Indigenous approaches to research

- Metaphor of 'the story'.
- Who tells and retells, for whom & for what purpose?
- *Kaupapa Maori* approaches.
- The importance (and difficulty) of telling the full story.
- The wider applicability of the Indigenous research paradigm.

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The shield & sham of ethical access

- The difficulties posed by our ethical 'shield' (research ethics approval).
- Researchers as 'seagulls' & plagiarists.
- Ethics getting in the way of hearing and telling the 'whole story'.
- Silencing those who resist our research.

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Conclusions

- Acknowledging our power relationships in the research process.
- Placing Indigenous/community values at the centre of the research process.
- Honouring the knowledge, views & values of learning through 'being in place'.
- Sharing what, why, how and when research is done (and how it is written up & shared).

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