

# Spaces and Pedagogies



NEW ZEALAND TERTIARY LEARNING AND  
TEACHING CONFERENCE 2017 PROCEEDINGS

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CONFERENCE PROJECT TEAM Lucy Patston, Simon Nash, Laura Ewens-Volynkina, Kelly Handley, Ken Liu, James Oldfield, JJ Purton Jones, Bettina Schwenger

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[epress@unitec.ac.nz](mailto:epress@unitec.ac.nz)

[www.unitec.ac.nz/epress/](http://www.unitec.ac.nz/epress/)

Unitec Institute of Technology, Private Bag 92025, Victoria Street West, Auckland 1010, Aotearoa New Zealand

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# INTRODUCTION

LUCY PATSTON AND SIMON NASH

The 2017 National Tertiary Learning and Teaching Conference was hosted by Unitec Institute of Technology in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, New Zealand. The conference theme was Spaces and Pedagogies. Over two days, 170 delegates explored how the spaces that we teach in, whether real or virtual, cultural, social, commercial or otherwise, could be best designed for our learners. Conference strands delved into the design of learning environments and learning practices, with particular attention on how they reflected our students' lived experiences, catered for our students' practices, realities and traditions, and met the needs of employers and other stakeholders.

These proceedings are a partial record of the conference. We are very grateful to those conference presenters who developed full papers for these proceedings.

## EXPERIENTIAL SPACES: LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION ON AND IN PRACTICE

Ivor Heijnen from Ara Institute of Canterbury describes a challenging ten-day journey in Arthur's Pass undertaken by outdoor education students. This immersive experience through mountains led students to create deep connections to place along with critical understandings of environmental problems.

Ron Nicholls from the University of South Australia, and co-authors, share a similarly challenging process of 'learning on country' – an experiential pedagogical collaboration between Master of Design students and the Raukkan Aboriginal community in South Australia. In this physically remote and culturally dense space, values and beliefs were challenged and creative tensions harnessed towards gaining shared understandings of culture and environment.

Locally, John Stansfield from Unitec Institute of Technology considers the benefits for Social Practice students of learning outside the classroom on a picket line and at a protest march. Such actions are entered into to educate critical, reflexive social workers as part of community development praxis.

## WORKPLACES AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING: BRINGING LEARNING AND PRACTICE TOGETHER

Stephanie Kelly and co-authors from Whitireia New Zealand examines the effectiveness of a trans-disciplinary professional programme in health and social services that prepares practitioners for the complex, inter-professional spaces that they work in. Similarly, Herbert Thomas and co-authors from The Mind Lab by Unitec in Auckland explore the value of work-integrated learning in leadership training for teachers as a way to change practices and, more specifically, beliefs about leadership.

## HIGH-TECH SPACES

Lynley Schofield and co-authors at The Mind Lab by Unitec research the use of video-based evidence as an effective form of assessment, while Hugh Wilson and David Phillips from Unitec Institute of Technology consider the benefits and limitations of a 'flipped learning' approach.

David Parsons and co-authors from The Mind Lab by Unitec explore the use of 'crowdsourcing' as a method to gather views about the future of education. Here, the far reach of digital 'space' allows the researchers to capture wide-ranging views on education.

## COLLABORATIVE SPACES: SPACES RESPONSIVE TO DIVERSITY

Sharleen Howison from Otago Polytechnic and Xiaolan Zhou from Qingdao University in China investigate the importance of effective cross-cultural spaces to success for Chinese students in New Zealand. Similarly, Madeline Carroll from NMIT and Deryn Hardie Boys from Victoria University examine a learning environment that aims to be responsive and authentic for international English-language students working as government officials.

Stephanie Sheehan and co-authors from Unitec Institute of Technology describe their co-construction of a learning space where bridging education students can thrive. Here, students from diverse backgrounds, including those with Māori and Pasifika heritages, are encouraged to be creative and to share cultural values.

These proceedings would not have been possible without a huge amount of support from our conference team. Particular thanks go to our editorial team Laura Stephenson, Gwynneth Porter from ePress, Marie Shannon, our review committee and all reviewers, and our Committee Chair Dr Lucy Patston.

# A SHARED SPACE AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO INTER-PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND

STEPHANIE KELLY  
JOEY DOMDOM  
RUTH CRAWFORD  
MARIA ULLOA



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Contact:  
epress@unitec.ac.nz  
www.unitec.ac.nz/epress/  
Unitec Institute of Technology  
Private Bag 92025, Victoria Street West  
Auckland 1142  
New Zealand

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## ABSTRACT

This presentation describes a research project that aims to understand the experiences, needs and effects of the Whitireia/WelTec Master of Professional Practice (MPP) in Health and Social Services as a suite of programmes for students, graduates and industry stakeholders. Evaluating inter-professional education programmes and outcomes is becoming paramount in the emerging field of inter-professional practice.

This research seeks to evaluate how effectively the programme is meeting the needs of all programme stakeholders. It will inform curricular and programme development as well as adding to the body of knowledge in the inter-professional education field, aiming to influence outcomes for students, employers, industry, and health and social services clients. The research primarily asks: What are the experiences, needs and effects of the Whitireia/WelTec Professional Practice suite of programmes for students, graduates and stakeholders?

This project uses exploratory qualitative formative observations of engagement in class and online student assessments, student research projects, and qualitative interviews with the programme teaching staff, students and stakeholders. This research is being conducted in two stages. Stage one involves content analysis of documentation related to the Professional Practice suite of programmes, including a sample of student summative assessments, students' online discussions, and formal and informal student course and programme evaluations and reflective exercises. Stage two will involve focus groups with students, and face-to-face individual interviews with programme staff and stakeholders. Content (stage one) and thematic analysis (stage two) will be used in this research.

This paper presents preliminary findings from stage one of the study only.

## INTRODUCTION

### The need for transdisciplinary practice

Health and social service delivery is required to be increasingly collaborative and interdisciplinary. It is essential that health and social service professionals use an integrative and inter-professional approach to navigate the complexities of the health and social service practice environments. Terms such as 'multidisciplinary practice', 'inter-professional collaboration', 'inter-professional education' and 'trans-professional practice' are commonly used across a range of social services and health providers.

### Education needed to suit health/social industries

In Aotearoa New Zealand, one example of a health and social services inter-professional collaborative approach in curriculum design is the development of an innovative suite of tertiary programmes at levels 8 and 9, including the Master of Professional Practice, Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Practice, and Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice. These qualifications are the result of a strategic partnership between two tertiary institutions – Whitireia New Zealand (Whitireia) and the Wellington Institute of Technology (WelTec) in Wellington. Teachers and students in the programmes come from a diverse range of cultural, professional and personal backgrounds. In terms of students' cultural background, 24% identified as Māori, 33% as Pasifika and 56% as European/Pākehā/other.

Observation by teachers in the Professional Practice suite (PP) and students' reflective writing feedback indicate that students are coming to the PP with a range of different needs and interests. Some of these are specific to discipline

areas, and some are common issues of contemporary PP. They also bring diverse cultural identities to the programmes.

## Description of the suite of programmes and rationale

The programme courses use a blended learning approach incorporating the values and pedagogies of inter-professional education. Students are actively engaged in PP while undertaking their programme of study. The underpinning rationale for the PP suite of programmes is to provide practitioners in health and social services with the competencies required beyond their discipline-specific training to enable them to function in the complex inter-professional spaces that characterise their professional work environments. The programmes provide a framework for health and social service professionals to advance their scholarship, research skills and inter-professional competencies.

When constructivism is the epistemological methodology, professionals examine their practice in depth by deconstructing their professional knowledge and habitus (Bourdieu, 2005), and understanding what underpins their practice, its complexities and its potential. In line with this, particular foci for the programme include working with diversity, research for evidence-based practice and practice-based evidence, inter-professional education, and practice and leadership capability. These PP qualifications are designed to offer an alternative to discipline-specific qualifications and augment clinical/vocational programmes of study.

The PP suite of programmes qualifies graduates to apply a body of knowledge in a range of professional contexts in health and social service settings, including research, education for practice, policy, and leadership. Extended roles and new service delivery models are emerging in the health and social service sectors, which require skills, competencies and knowledge beyond traditional professional discipline-specific paradigms. Change and complexity (including increased diversity) are hallmarks of contemporary practice (Kannampallil, Schauer, Cohen, & Patel, 2011; Tope & Thomas, 2007). Practitioners need to be capable of leading, innovating, and working across sectors, using the best evidence for the benefit of diverse people and communities they engage with. A key point of difference for these programmes is that they are designed to cross traditional professional discipline boundaries and employment sectors to develop skills related to contemporary workplace needs (Leckie, 2011).

The effect of contemporary globalisation, represented in immigration, demographic shifts, technological development and newly emerging health and social challenges, are changing working environments and requiring knowledge and skills beyond traditional professional education paradigms. The health and social service workforce is already well served with discipline-specific postgraduate education such as nursing, social work, paramedicine, addictions and counselling. Graduates of the PP suite of programmes are instead equipped for advanced PP characterised by scholarship, research, leadership and inter-professionalism (WelTec/Whitireia, 2016, p. 5).

## Literature review

In this section, literature exploring the need for inter-professional education in the health and social services environment is examined. Health and social service work environments are becoming increasingly inter-professional, diverse and complex. Given this complexity, inter-professional teams capable of implementing new models of care are essential in ameliorating the tendency to deliver the fragmented care approaches that frequently dominate health and social organisations (Kannampallil, Schauer, Cohen, & Patel, 2011).

Inter-professional education (IPE) provides the means to improve both professional and inter-professional practice (IPP) (Crawford, Gallagher, Harding, McKinlay, & Pullon, 2016). The World Health Organization (WHO) recognises that an outcome of IPE is to educate professionals with skills to contribute at a community level by promoting mental, physical and social wellbeing (WHO, 2010). In their *Framework for Action for Collaborative Practice*, the WHO highlighted that both health and education systems must work together to coordinate workforce strategies (WHO, 2010). There is a need for integration of planning, research and policymaking in order for inter-professional education and collaborative practice to be fully implemented and supported.

Research on the effectiveness of IPE has been conducted in the last decade. A systematic review of literature by Hammick, Freeth, Koppel, Reeves and Barr (2007) found that staff development is an important influence on the effectiveness of IPE for learners. These authors highlighted that the design of an authentic and customised curriculum is an important mechanism for positive outcomes of IPE. The studies reviewed by these authors concurred that in the context of quality-improvement initiatives, inter-professional education is commonly utilised as a mechanism to enhance the development of practice and improvement of services. Another review emphasised the need to strengthen the evidence base for IPE, requiring further rigorous mixed-method studies of IPE in order to provide better clarity on its mechanisms and its effects on PP and patient/client care (Reeves et al., 2010).

Healy (as cited in Gray, Field, & Brown, 2010) identifies that in the social service sector, "service provision and its management necessarily involves battling with dilemmas, ambiguity, conflicting interests, incompatible expectations and judgement calls where there are not options that can rationally be chosen as the 'best'" (p. 64). Similarly, Fook and Gardner (2007) identify that social work practitioners indicate the need to find ways to continually develop knowledge and practice that fit with this changing and complex context. They observe that professionals are finding their previous formal and informal training is not adequate in helping them manage current work environments. These practitioners suggest a need for competencies, skills and processes that enable them to engage with, and constructively manage, changing work environments and the issues these present (Fook & Gardner, 2007).

According to Sun and Scott (2003), learning and reflection is needed in complex professional situations. There are barriers in transferring learning to all levels in the organisation (i.e., individual, collective, organisational, and inter organisational). To respond to the growing challenges in workplaces not up-to-date with modern pedagogies, education programmes are needed so staff can bring academic skills to contemporary workplace issues.

From the perspective of individuals working in health and social service environments, Fook and Gardner (2007) note the common issues faced by those working in human service organisations are a sense of powerlessness linked to uncertainty, fear of risk, and increased complexity. They go on to state that the organisational responses to these issues tend to be focused on the parts as opposed to the whole, on outcomes, on pressure to work to rules and procedures. Such responses can cause professional practitioners stress – they may find their traditional discipline-specific work manageable, but struggle with the nature of the organisation they work within (Fook & Gardner, 2007).

Current research suggests that collaborative models of health and social service work best when professionals have experienced inter-professional education (IPE) within their professional programmes (Darlow et al., 2015). Inter-professional collaboration occurs when learners from two or more professions engage in learning with, from and about each other to improve collaboration and the delivery of care (Freeth et al., 2005). D'Amour and Oandasan (2005) have already stated that learning with, from and about each other leads to better understanding amongst providers and stakeholders, assists with recruitment of professionals and provides better outcomes for patients and clients. These authors have appealed for inter-professional education programmes and approaches that demonstrate innovation, integration, sharing and development.

## **Identification of the need for research into the programme**

The PP suite of programmes responds to the need to provide a curriculum structure to support professionals to not only to extend their knowledge but to open their inter-professional communication, examine their practice from an inter-professional perspective and refine their understandings of working with diverse peoples and communities. The identified need for acquisition of inter-professional skills within educational contexts, as well as the impact and effectiveness of IPE to related services and industries, also highlights the need for evaluation.

Research in IPE and IPP is currently in the early stages of development. Recent scholarly work undertaken by Buhler et al. (2016) has focused on inter-professional communication among first-year tertiary students from ten health profession programmes. Findings suggest there is a need for additional investigation into the impact of communication and feedback styles in inter-professional classrooms, as feedback has a profound effect on the success of inter-professional teams. They have also highlighted that communication styles predominant to particular

professions have the potential to reduce interpersonal tensions and increase team collaboration effectiveness with benefit to client outcomes.

Previous evaluation research conducted using pre- and post-surveys and reflective writing from students found that students working in inter-professional educational environments have their teamwork collaboration strengthened, and their attitude toward clients significantly changed (Jacomino et al., 2015). Emerging research in the field identifies the need for effective development of research projects. It also identifies the need for examination of links between the learning outcomes of inter-professional courses and the courses' impact on services and practices. The eventual effects (of inter-professional courses) on client outcomes should also be examined (West et al., 2015).

All elements of the PP suite of programmes have been designed to provide key tools for practising inter-professionally: critical thinking and analysis, research skills, evidence-based practice and practice-based evidence, academic writing, critical leadership, diversity management, policy analysis, and advancing reflective and reflexive PP.

No detailed research exists about the inter-professional needs of modern health and social service workers. For the Whitireia-WelTec Professional Practice suite of programmes to continue to support students and related industries in their professional practice, there is a need to identify what stakeholder needs and expectations are, and how the programme is addressing these needs. Consequently, the programme staff developed and implemented an evaluation of the PP suite of programmes, which is described in this paper.

## METHODOLOGY

### Epistemological paradigm

The methodology underpinning the research and informing the choice of methods and analysis is social constructionism, as informed by Berger (2000). This methodological stance understands that reality is constructed by individuals in the context of their world, and it is in keeping with the epistemological foundations of the programme (WelTec/Whitireia, 2016). Key to learning success is recognition that students bring with them a wealth of experience and understanding about their social world.

These understandings inform the wider epistemological assumptions and approaches of the research. As Payne (2014) argues, constructionism underlies theory development. From a position of constructionism, while the programmes are built around key themes, what happens in the interaction between the student and the material, and among the students in a blended learning context, needs to be investigated in situ and the findings are not intended to be applicable outside this context. Constructionism also accepts the position of the researcher in contributing to the meaning-making process (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). In this case, the researchers are also the programme teaching and management staff, each coming from their own specific discipline areas, as co-constructors of shared knowledge on the PP courses and programme outcomes. Therefore, the research methodology is underpinned by auto-ethnography, as methodology and method, through the ethnographic participation of the researchers.

Furthermore, in stage two of this study, involving interviews with employers and wider stakeholders, participants will be speaking about their own workplace needs and their observations of the impact of the programme on the PP of the students in their work environments. As social constructionism acknowledges, context is critical and understandings of the transfer of learning from the academic setting into the workplace is challenging to identify. It cannot be assumed that what is taught and what is learned in the learning environment is what is put into practice in the workplace. This research endeavours to understand, more deeply, how this process is happening for programme stakeholders. The study received ethical approval from the Whitireia/WelTec Ethics and Research Committee on August 28, 2017.

## Procedure

The study is being conducted in two stages. Currently underway is stage one, which involves content analysis of documentation related to the PP suite of programmes. These documents include a sample of student summative assessments, student online discussions, formal and informal student course and programme evaluations, and student reflection exercises.

Stage two involves focus groups of approximately one hour with six students and graduates of the PP programmes. Face-to-face individual semi-structured interviews with programme staff and stakeholders (employers of students/ graduates from the programme) will be held, taking 30-45 minutes each. All focus groups and interviews will be recorded with a digital recorder. The focus groups and interviews will be conducted by an independent facilitator at a neutral venue. Participants will be provided with petrol vouchers as an incentive to participate in the study. Interview questions are attached in Appendix A.

## Analysis

The research team will carry out the content analysis from stage one using a collective/group approach. The research team will meet together to analyse data, and to identify key themes and gaps. The content analysis will further inform the stage two interviews and focus groups. Since the students and graduates are professionals working in organisations, data produced from the interviews will be compared and contrasted with stakeholder data, particularly that of employers.

Qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis are two commonly-used approaches in data analysis. Content analysis is used for systematically describing written, spoken or visual communication. Content analysis is also used to analyse, to classify and categorise open-ended responses to interview or survey questions. This analysis will be theory-driven, utilising relevant research findings as a guide for initial codes. The research team will use the constructivist framework and theory from inter-professional practice and education. A summative content analysis involves counting and comparisons, usually of keywords or content, followed by the interpretation of the underlying context (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Thematic analysis is defined by Braun and Clarke (2006) as a “method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data in (rich) detail. However, frequently it goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic” (p. 79). In this project, thematic analysis of interview data will be used in an inductive manner, by coding and theme development, within a constructivist theoretical framework.

Further examination of findings from stages one and two will be conducted to generate a deeper analysis. Based on these two types of content analysis and the thematic analysis, it is expected that trends and themes will be identified that will be useful towards evaluating the needs, effects, and impact of MPP curriculum to students’ practices from the perspectives of different stakeholders. Findings of this research will contribute to evidence-based practice about professional experiences and the needs professional practitioners and their stakeholders have for development of their professional practice, from practitioner, employer and stakeholder perspectives. This information will add to programme development, to the wider body of knowledge in the field, and ultimately improve outcomes for students, employers, industry, clients, and for Whitireia and WelTec.

## CONCLUSION

The study is timely, as the programme sees its first graduates in early 2018. This study will increase understanding of student and stakeholder expectations in the workplace and the programme. Further, the study will assess what is needed to inform curricular and programme development. Evaluation findings will demonstrate programme effectiveness to the providing tertiary institutions, presenting a measure of programme performance, evidence of pedagogical strategies for inter-professional practice, and also to act as a source of feedback to industry partnerships

about the needs, effects and impacts of the programme.

While there is literature available about the changing needs of professional and inter-professional work environments in health and social services, practitioner, educator and employer voices are silent in the literature. This research will refine the skills graduates of the programme require to practise in their fast-changing inter-professional work environments. There is also little debate about how 'training to do' limits the space available for epistemologies of and for practice (Stanley & Kelly, 2010). This research aims to add to this debate. Future research can build on the findings of the current study by using a wider range of tertiary providers, comparing PP programmes and employing larger data sets.

The findings from this evaluation show the development of critical practice skills around the common themes of the programme: research and evidence-based practice, education, leadership, working with diversity and advancing critical reflection of professional identities and inter-professional practice for students of the programme.

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## APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

### Students and graduates

1. What are/were your expectations for the MPP programme?
2. What do/did you need from the programme?
3. Can you identify any changes in your professional practice or your own work environment since you began studying in the programme? If so, please tell us about these.
4. Have there been/Were there any issues, for you in the programme? If so, can you tell us about these?
5. What do you feel has been the biggest impact of the programme for you? Personally? Professionally?
6. Do you have any suggestions for programme improvement?

### Programme staff

1. What are/were your expectations for the programme?
2. From your experience/observations, what do you see as:  
The biggest impact of the programme for students?  
The common experiences/themes for students?  
The challenges for students?
3. What is the impact of the programme on your own professional practice?
4. Do you have any suggestions for programme improvement?

### Employers

1. What are/were your expectations for the MPP programme? For you as an employer and for your employee(s) in the programme?
2. What do you need from the programme in terms of what it can offer for your employee?
3. Can you identify any changes in the professional practice of your employee or the work environment since the student began studying in the programme? If so, please tell us about these.

4. Have there been issues for you as an employer as a result of the programme? If so, please tell us about these.
5. What do you feel has been the biggest impact of the programme for the work environment? (Possible prompts: changes to employee's practice habits; changes to the immediate work environment; changes to professional relationships.)
6. Do you have any suggestions for MPP programme improvement?

## AUTHORS

Stephanie Kelly (PhD) has a background in research and teaching in sociology, social policy, social research, biculturalism and community research, and as a senior manager in tertiary education.

Joey Domdom (PhD) has a background in education, religious studies and philosophy. His current research interests include community development, teaching and learning research methods, and aged care.

Ruth Crawford (RN, PhD) has a background in nursing and health education. Her research interests are child and family health, inter-professional education and health workforce development.

Maria Ulloa (PhD) has a background in psychology, child psychotherapy and early childhood education. Her research interests are the emotional experience of learning and teaching, attachment research, the interpersonal neurobiology of learning and teaching, the emotional atmosphere of classrooms, and resilience.